

Keeping your sheep healthy

Biosecurity is another way of saying “infectious disease control.” Biosecurity is a combination of management practices designed to prevent the introduction and transmission of diseases into and throughout a herd. Infectious diseases can be transmitted by animals, people, equipment and vehicles. Livestock exhibitions are events where animals have an increased risk of getting infectious diseases due to the commingling of animals from different sources. Taking some simple precautions can help reduce that risk and keep your animals healthy. Below are some biosecurity recommendations for ensuring the health of your show sheep.



Before the Show

- Read all guidelines for each show to be sure your animals meet all entry and exhibition requirements.
- Evaluate your sheep’s health prior to going to the show. Never take an unhealthy animal to a show. Signs of illness can include decreased appetite; fever; lameness; abscesses; circular, crusting skin lesions; or blisters on the mouth, teats, and/or hooves. If you see any of these signs, please contact your veterinarian.
- Be particularly vigilant for signs of sore mouth (orf) or club lamb fungus (ringworm) as these can be easily passed to humans.
- Take only clean and disinfected equipment to the show to prevent any potential disease transfer from your sheep to others.

During the Show

- Monitor your sheep daily for signs of illness. If you suspect your animal is sick, notify a show official right away.
- Avoid personal contact with animals other than your own.
- Do not share feed, feed/water tubs, grooming supplies, or other equipment with other exhibitors at the show.
- Keep your area and equipment clean of manure contamination.
- Wash your hands frequently with warm soapy water after contact with animals or equipment.

After the Show

- Isolate the sheep you took to the show from the rest of your flock when you return home.
- The show sheep should be as far from the other animals as possible, but they need to be at least far enough away to prevent nose-to-nose contact. Your veterinarian can help you establish a good location.
- Modify your chore routine to care for the show sheep last each day. Do not share equipment between show sheep and any other animals at home.
- Monitor the show sheep daily for signs of illness, including those signs listed in the “Before the Show” section. Contact your veterinarian if any animal shows signs of illness.
- Clean and disinfect all equipment, shoes, vehicles and trailers you took to the show. Allow them to dry completely.
- Talk to your veterinarian to determine the best biosecurity practices for your sheep.