

Keeping Visitors Safe at Your Agritourism Business

Are farm tours safe?

Farm tours give people of all ages an exciting opportunity to interact with animals face-to-face. This allows people to learn more about animals and agriculture, but it can also put people at risk for becoming ill from farm animals.

What are zoonotic diseases?

Zoonotic diseases are infectious diseases that can be spread between animals and people. Some examples include:

- *Campylobacter*
- *Salmonella*
- *E. coli O157:H7*
- *Yersinia enterocolitica*
- *Cryptosporidium*

The symptoms include can diarrhea, abdominal pain, fever, vomiting, cramps, and bloody diarrhea. People with mild symptoms usually recover without treatment. However, these illnesses can lead to hospitalization.

Is it common to find these types of germs on a farm?

Yes, some germs occur naturally in the intestines of healthy livestock and poultry and are passed in the animals' feces. Even if an animal appears healthy, it could still pass these germs to people.

How do people get sick from these germs?

People get sick from these germs by swallowing them. They may end up on your hands after contact with typical farm and petting zoo animals and their environments. Once the

germs are on your hands, you can accidentally transfer them to your mouth while eating, drinking, or during other hand-to-mouth activities such as smoking or thumb sucking.

Young animals are especially likely to have these germs because they have not had a chance to become immune to them.

How can I reduce my visitors' risk of getting sick?

- Position fully stocked handwashing stations with running water and soap where guests will use them after visiting animals. Stations should be accessible to children and persons with disabilities.
- Hand sanitizer should supplement, not replace, soap and water, because it does not kill parasites like *Cryptosporidium*.
- Do not allow visitors into pens. Only allow petting of animals over/through barriers.
- Manure/soiled bedding should not be transported through public areas.
- Remove from exhibit animals showing signs of illness such as diarrhea, skin lesions, or coughing.
- Have transition areas between non-animal and animal areas. Signage should be at the entrances (i.e., no food or drink allowed in animal areas). Exit areas should have handwashing stations so that visitors cannot miss them.
- Keep food, drinks, baby bottles, pacifiers, toys, and strollers out of animal areas.
- Supervise children younger than 5 years old while with the animals and during handwashing. Young children are more likely to get sick because they are more likely to put their hands in their mouth.

What animals carry which germs?

Table 1. Types of germs commonly found in farm animals

Species	Bacteria	Parasite	Fungus	Virus
Cattle	<i>Campylobacter</i> <i>Salmonella</i> <i>Escherichia coli</i> O157:H7 <i>Leptospira</i> <i>Coxiella burnetii</i> (Q fever)	<i>Cryptosporidium</i>	Dermatophytosis (Ringworm)	
Sheep	<i>Campylobacter</i> <i>Salmonella</i> <i>Escherichia coli</i> O157:H7 <i>Coxiella burnetii</i> (Q Fever)			
Goats	<i>Campylobacter</i> <i>Salmonella</i> <i>Escherichia coli</i> O157:H7 <i>Coxiella burnetii</i> (Q Fever)			
Llamas	<i>Campylobacter</i> <i>Salmonella</i> <i>Escherichia coli</i> O157:H7			
Pigs	<i>Campylobacter</i> <i>Salmonella</i> <i>Leptospira</i> <i>Yersinia enterocolitica</i>		Dermatophytosis (Ringworm)	Influenza
Chickens, ducks, turkeys	<i>Campylobacter</i> <i>Salmonella</i>		Dermatophytosis (Ringworm)	Influenza
Rabbits			Dermatophytosis (Ringworm)	

Table 2. Common symptoms in animals and humans

Germ	Symptom in Animals	Primary Symptoms in Humans
<i>Campylobacter</i>	Diarrhea (cattle, sheep, and goats may have abortions)	Diarrhea, fever
<i>Salmonella</i>	Cattle may have fever, diarrhea, and abortion	Diarrhea, fever
<i>E. coli</i> O157:H7	None	Bloody diarrhea, cramps
<i>Cryptosporidium</i>	Calves may have diarrhea and scours	Watery diarrhea, fever, nausea, vomiting

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