

4-H Petting Zoos and Interactive Animal Displays Frequently Asked Questions

updated 9/2023

1. What is 4-H policy for petting zoos?

The 4-H California Youth Development Program Policy Handbook ([Chapter 11, Section XX](#)), sets forth the following standards for hosting a petting zoo:

1. *Petting zoos must only feature small (i.e., animals weighing 100 pounds or less), miniature, or young animals. Full grown cows, horses, hogs or other large animals pose a greater risk of injury to petting zoo visitors and may not be featured in 4-H YDP sponsored petting zoos.*
2. *Petting zoo animals shall be screened to eliminate those that exhibit aggressiveness, signs of illness, or other types of poor behavior.*
3. *Newborn animals are not appropriate for petting zoos and shall not be featured.*
4. *Petting zoo pen and enclosure areas shall be effectively managed and supervised to provide environments that are safe and healthy for both visitors and animals and their interactions.*
5. *In addition to any state or local regulations or fair policies, groups operating petting zoos shall follow the recommendations of the most current version of the Compendium of Measures to Prevent Disease Associated with Animals in Public Settings, published by the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians (NASPHV).
<http://www.nasphv.org/Documents/AnimalsInPublicSettings.pdf>.*

2. Where can I get signs or posters to inform visitors of safe practices for petting zoos?

To prevent the spread of disease, it is important that visitors practice good hygiene and do not eat or drink when they are in contact with animals or proximity to the animal enclosures. Pacifiers, bottles and strollers should be prohibited from the petting zoo or animal display areas. Educational materials and warning signs are a good way to let visitors know of these practices. The ANR Environmental Health & Safety website has links to signs that can be downloaded and printed for use at fairs or petting zoos at: http://safety.ucanr.edu/4-H_Resources/Petting_Zoos/.

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3. What insurance coverage is available for 4-H petting zoos?

Different types of insurance coverage may apply to a 4-H petting zoo event:

Liability Insurance: *The University of California (UC), through its self-insurance program, may provide liability insurance coverage for supervision of 4-H events by 4-H YDP staff and certified adult volunteers. However, this insurance does not provide coverage for any personal or real property that is not under the care, custody or control of the University. For example, since the University does not own the animals at a petting zoo, it is not responsible for damage or injuries that may be caused by animals. It is the animal owners' responsibility to obtain insurance coverage for animals. Additionally, since UC does not own the animals, UC cannot agree to waive claims, indemnify, or defend other parties for damages that may occur as a result of a 4-H petting zoo.*

Accident and Sickness Insurance: *In the case of injury to 4-H members or adult volunteers, there is limited accident and sickness insurance coverage under a blanket insurance policy through The Hartford when taking part in or attending an approved, regularly supervised 4-H activity. This accident and sickness coverage is extended to one-time participants attending an approved, regularly supervised 4-H activity. Policy limits, exclusions and how to file a claim with The Hartford can be found at http://ucanr.edu/sites/risk/Insurance/Hartford_Volunteer_Insurance/*

Workers' Compensation Insurance: *Employees (either UC or County employees) who are injured in the course of their work duties are covered by workers' compensation insurance from their employer. Volunteers are not employees and are not covered by workers' compensation. For more information on insurance and liability, please consult the ANR Risk Services website for detailed FAQs on [Accident/Sickness Insurance](#) and [General Liability and Automobile Insurance](#).*

For more information about safety or risk management for petting zoos, please contact:

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