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Summary of Control Measures Industry Code of Practice

Summary of control measures

This is a summary document only and is not a substitute for reading the whole document and applying the code to your specific site. Detailed information including photographs and case studies of good practice can be found in the full Industry Code of Practice.

It should be assumed that animals at visitor attractions carry a range of micro-organisms, some of which can be transmitted to humans. Diseases passed from animals to humans are known as zoonoses. Some zoonotic diseases are more serious than others.

There are a range of zoonotic diseases that could be acquired from animal contact at visitor attractions including: Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) (including *E. coli* O157) and *Cryptosporidium parvum*. Therefore, as with many other activities, visits to such premises can never be considered free from all risk. However, implementing the control measures in the Industry Code of Practice (summarised in this guidance) will help ensure that the risk of infection from contact with animals is low.

Background

All animals naturally carry a range of micro-organisms, some of which can be transmitted to humans, in whom they may cause ill health, which in some cases may be severe or life threatening.

People can become infected by zoonotic diseases such as *E. coli* O157 or *Cryptosporidium parvum* through consuming contaminated food or drink, through direct contact with contaminated animals, or by contact with an environment contaminated by animal faeces.

Very low numbers of micro-organisms can cause human infection and so it is important that those responsible for the premises control the risks to visitors. Controlling the risks from *E. coli* O157 and *Cryptosporidium parvum* will also control the risks from most other organisms, which are transmissible to humans by the hand to mouth route.

Assessing the risk

Every attraction should carry out a site-specific risk assessment. A risk assessment would typically involve: identifying how the public could be exposed to micro-organisms (or other risks on the farm), the likelihood of it happening, the possible consequences, and what measures need to be taken to reduce the risks to an acceptable level. The risk assessment should also indicate the need to carry out further assessment after a specified interval.

When undertaking your assessment you should:

Assume that all animals (including birds) carry micro-organisms such as *E. coli* O157 that could represent a hazard to human health. Animals carrying infection can still appear healthy and clean.

While ruminants (e.g. cattle, sheep, and goats) are regarded as the main carriers of *E. coli* O157, other animals can also be carriers of *E. coli* O157 or other zoonotic diseases.

Recognise that, although tests are available to detect the presence of *E. coli* O157 and other micro-organisms, a negative test result does not guarantee the animal is free of infection.

Acknowledge that any zoonotic disease may be introduced to your premises at any time by new stock, wild birds and animals, or by visitors.

Bear in mind when selecting animals for petting areas that young stock, stock under stress, pregnant stock or stock unfamiliar with people etc. are more likely to excrete micro-organisms such as E. coli O157.

Accept that other animals on the premises, including pets, may acquire the bacterium through contact with faeces etc. Exposure to micro-organisms and infection can occur when people come into contact with animal faeces or saliva by:

- Touching or kissing animals in petting areas or during bottle-feeding.
- Feeding, stroking or touching animals through gates or pens.
- Touching gates, or animal pen divisions, or other structures contaminated with faeces.
- Picking up contaminated feed from the floor.
- Removing contaminated footwear or clothing.
- Eating, drinking and smoking with contaminated hands.
- Using contaminated play equipment.
- Touching personal items taken on to the premises that have become contaminated e.g. dropped toys or dummies and pushchair wheels.

Being bitten.

Remember, just because something (an animal or an object) is not visibly contaminated with faeces, this does not necessarily mean it is free from contamination or risk.

Controlling the Risk

Premises layout and routes

You should:

- Decide which areas you do and do not want visitors to have access to on your site.
- Your farm area is likely to be a mixture of designated “animal contact” and “non-contact” areas. Be aware of “look and see” or areas where animal contact may not be allowed or intended but is still possible. Control measures should be put in place for “look and see” areas based on the level of risk.
- In “non-contact” areas, your visitors should not be able to contact higher risk animals such as ruminants, pigs, chickens etc or their faeces or potentially contaminated equipment such as fences.
- Make sure routes around the premises prevent visitors from entering prohibited or non-access areas, e.g. places where work is going on or where manure is stored.
- Consider areas of potential contact such as single fenced fields on the visitor route.
- Consider how you will prevent entry to prohibited or non-access areas. For example, providing suitable fencing and warning signs.
- Ensure that safety risks on visitor routes and access areas are assessed and controlled e.g. being kicked / bitten by animals, vehicle movements, falling objects etc.
- Ensure that visitors pass by washing facilities as they leave any “animal contact” area, before they access eating and play areas and before leaving the premises. Washing facilities should be located so that they are convenient for visitors to use when passing

through these three areas or when leaving site. Washing facilities should also be suitably signed.

- Avoid directing visitors across tracks or routes regularly used by stock and farm vehicles. If this is not possible, make sure visitors do not have to walk through any build-up of faeces, liquid effluent, or soiled bedding material. For example, regularly clear or clean routes used by livestock or when cleaning out pens etc. If necessary, consider providing duckboards or similar so that visitors avoid contaminating their footwear.
- Keep the premises as clean as practicable and ensure areas to which visitors have access are free from any build-up of faeces.
- Consider producing a site plan showing key areas such as visitor routes, “animal contact” areas, “look and see” areas, play areas, eating areas and wash stations. Incorporating a site plan and key health and safety information into visitor leaflets and boards around the site is a useful method of giving visitors the information that they need.

Animal contact and Look and See areas

You should:

- Identify all areas on your site where contact with animals is allowed or intended e.g. petting or feeding areas. These areas should be treated and managed as “animal contact” areas.
- Identify all “look and see” areas on your farm. “Look and see” areas are any areas of the attraction where visitor contact with animals may not be intended or allowed, but is still possible, e.g. fields, pens or paddocks containing animals where it is possible for visitors to make contact with the animals if the animals are close to the fence.
- Any “look and see” areas must be considered as part of the site-specific risk assessment to determine appropriate control measures.
- Each “look and see” area on your site may pose different levels of risk to people, so each may need addressing separately in the risk assessment.
- All “look and see” areas should be controlled according to the level of risk they pose to visitors. You should be able to identify from the risk assessment, the level of risk and the control measures in place, or required, for each “look and see” area on your site.
- Some of the factors which may determine the level of risk from “look and see” areas include:
 - The number of visitors who may walk by the “look and see” area.
 - The type and age of animal that the “look and see” area contains.
 - The likelihood that visitors will (even with prohibitive signage in place) make contact with the animals in the “look and see” area to feed or pet them.
 - The size of the “look and see” area and the number of animals that it contains.
 - The risk of contamination from “look and see” area fencing.
 - Other control measures such as supervision of the area, signage, nearby hand-washing facilities.
 - Any other issues specific to your site.

- Where premises wish to ensure that visitors do not make unintended contact with animals or potentially contaminated fencing in “look and see” areas, the “look and see” area could be double fenced. If properly used, double fencing should prevent visitor contact with animals and potentially contaminated fencing while still allowing visitors to look and see the animals, therefore not impacting on the visitor experience.
- Depending on the level of risk posed to visitors by the “look and see” area, double fencing may in any case be a reasonably practicable control measure. This should be considered when assessing and applying control measures.
- Decide which animals are suitable for “animal contact” and “look and see” areas. Sick or injured animals should be excluded from contact with the public.
- Not allow the public to enter pens where animals are housed (this is because faeces or contaminated bedding will be underfoot and may contaminate visitors, their shoes and clothing. In addition visitors may themselves carry infections on their footwear that could put your animals at risk).
- Ensure that all feeding of animals (especially ruminants) where there is potential for animal contact is supervised and visitors are then directed to supervised hand washing areas.
- Ensure adequate and suitable washing facilities are available and are used by visitors when leaving “animal contact” areas. Washing facilities should be located near to the exit points of “animal contact” areas and should be well signposted. Staff supervising “animal contact” areas can also verbally remind visitors to wash their hands when leaving “animal contact” areas.
- Ensure that entry to “animal contact” areas is controlled. Unsupervised children should not be able to access the area.
- Ensure fencing and other barriers are regularly inspected and properly maintained.
- Ensure that “animal contact” areas where visitors stand or walk are as free as possible from any faeces. Put in place measures to prevent contamination from liquid manure or surface run-off where necessary.
- Regularly clean and disinfect pen divisions and gates in “animal contact” areas where visitors can touch them. A variety of cleaning methods are available. Not all disinfectants are suitable so take advice from your vet. Putting in place a schedule of cleaning will help to ensure that this is done.
- Don't allow faeces to remain on and contaminate walkways or other areas used by the visitors.
- Don't allow contaminated bedding or run-off material to contaminate walkways or other areas used by visitors. Solid boarding at the base of pens can be used to prevent spillage onto walkways.
- Take all reasonably practicable action to prevent visitors from eating (including sweets, gum and ice cream), drinking, putting contaminated items in mouths (including dummies, pens and pencils), and smoking when they are in “animal contact” areas. Signs should be displayed instructing visitors of this requirement.
- Ensure that there is an adequate number of trained staff for “animal contact” areas at all times when they are used by visitors, and that those staff have clear instruction on their role and responsibilities.
- Where eating and play areas are adjacent to areas containing animals, ensure that measures are provided to prevent members of the public touching the animals, e.g. by

providing double fencing. This should be positioned at a distance that will prevent visitors reaching through to touch the animals and to prevent animals reaching over or through the fence to contact people.

- For some “look and see” areas, it may not be reasonably practicable to provide double fencing. This will need to be assessed on a case by case basis but examples include working livestock farms that open very occasionally, such as on Open Farm Sunday. In such cases, the areas should be clearly signed to inform visitors they are entering an area where touching, petting and feeding of animals is not allowed. You should be able to demonstrate that any decision to rely on single fencing and signage rather than double fencing has been properly considered in your risk assessment. Depending on the circumstances and level of risk, for farms opening to the public more frequently, double fencing may well be considered a reasonably practicable control measure for “look and see” areas.

Eating areas

You should:

- Site eating or picnic facilities away from areas where animals can be contacted, or where windblown contaminated material (e.g. straw from muck heaps) might be present. Preferably site eating and picnic facilities at the end of any farm trail, walk or tour, or outside the main areas of the premises.
- Ensure that visitors must pass through or by washing facilities before entering eating areas.
- Ensure visitors are advised verbally as well as by signage during the visit and in “animal contact” areas to wash their hands before eating.
- Exclude animals including captive birds from eating areas. They could contaminate eating areas with faeces. Consider wing clipping, double gates into eating areas and adequate fencing to exclude them.
- Ensure that eating areas are kept clean. Putting in place a schedule of cleaning and a recording system will help to ensure that this is done.
- Where eating areas are adjacent to “animal contact” areas, prevent animal contact e.g. by providing double fencing. This should be positioned at a distance that will prevent visitors reaching through to touch the animals and to prevent animals reaching over or through the fence to contact people.
- Provide adequate waste bins and clear discarded food from eating areas to discourage wild birds and rodents from feeding and contaminating the area.
- Locate ice cream and sweet kiosks in the “non-contact” areas of the premises, such as the eating areas or at the exit where visitors have passed washing facilities. Remind visitors using the kiosks, by notices or verbally, to wash their hands before touching or eating purchased food or sweets.

Play areas

You should:

- Site play areas away from areas where animals can be contacted, and preferably at the end of any farm trail, walk or tour, or outside the main areas of the premises.

- Ensure that visitors are advised both verbally and by adequate signage, to wash their hands before and after using play areas.
- Exclude animals including captive birds from play areas. They could contaminate play areas and equipment with faeces. Consider wing clipping, double gates into play areas and adequate fencing to exclude them.
- Where play areas are adjacent to “animal contact” areas, prevent animal contact, e.g. by providing double fencing. This should be positioned at a distance that will prevent visitors reaching through to touch the animals and to prevent animals reaching over or through the fence to contact people.
- Ensure that play areas and equipment are designed so they can be cleaned on a regular basis to remove any contamination.
- Ensure that play areas are regularly cleaned. Putting in place a schedule of cleaning and a recording system will help to ensure that this is done.
- **Washing facilities**

While the primary control measures should focus on reducing and eliminating faecal contamination, the most effective method of removing dirt and contamination remains hand washing with soap and running hot and cold, or warm water followed by hand drying. Soap bars can easily be dropped onto the floor and become contaminated. Liquid soap is a better solution and should be used.

The provision of adequate numbers of washing facilities and their location is crucial to preventing ill health. Facilities can be individual taps and basins, and/or long sinks with a number of running water outlets. If they are not located adjacent or very close to the following areas it is much less likely that they will be used by visitors. In short, handwashing facilities must be located so that they are convenient for visitors to use.

They need to be provided and easily accessible at or near:

- Areas where visitor contact with animals is allowed or intended, such as petting barns. If there is a one-way system for visitors through the contact area, they should be provided immediately adjacent to the exit. If there is a two-way flow of visitors, they should be provided immediately adjacent to entrances and exits. A one-way system may help to ensure that washing facilities are properly used.
- Entrances to eating areas.
- Within reasonable distance to play areas (so that they can be used before and after using the play areas).
- Exits from the premises.
- Any other areas as identified by your risk assessment.

All washing facilities should be/have:

- Accessible by all visitors, i.e. at the right heights for both children and adults or with raised standing areas provided for children. Check these do not create tripping or falling hazards.
- Running hot and cold, or warm water (e.g. mixer taps). It is easier to create soap lather with warm water, and it may encourage visitors, especially children, to wash more thoroughly particularly in cold weather. Warm water supplies should be fitted with a means of restricting the temperature to no more than 43°C to avoid scalding.

- Liquid soap as soap bars can become contaminated.
- A suitable means to dry hands. Paper towels are better as they provide an additional opportunity to remove contamination. Hot-air hand-dryers are also suitable but may lead to queues that discourage visitors from washing their hands. Reusable hand towels are not suitable.
- Properly maintained and cleaned regularly as required, at least daily. A cleaning schedule and recording sheet is a useful way of ensuring that this is done.
- Replenished with paper towels and liquid soap as necessary.
- Open or pedal operated waste bins that are emptied as necessary.
- Arranged so that visitor throughput and/or water overflows etc. do not make the immediate vicinity muddy and put people off using the washing facilities.

Cleaning footwear, pushchairs, wheelchairs etc

The layout of the premises should be planned to minimise the likelihood of contamination of footwear, pushchairs, wheelchairs etc. Where this unavoidably occurs, you will need to consider providing suitable facilities to allow visitors to clean contaminated footwear and wheels on pushchairs and wheelchairs. The facilities should be arranged to reduce the risk of personal contamination from manure, liquid run off etc. during the cleaning process and be located so that people can easily wash their hands after this has been done. Ideally these facilities should be located close to the exit to the site.

Visitor information and signage

Information should be provided to visitors covering the:

- Risks to health.
- Precautions put in place by the site to minimise risks.
- Personal responsibility of visitors to minimise risks, including complying with hygiene precautions and carrying out hand washing.
- Site plan, map, route directions or other information as necessary.

An information sheet aimed at members of the public who visit farms has been published by Public Health England and is available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/796824/Farm_visits_avoiding_infection.pdf

Animal visitor attractions may wish to use this leaflet when communicating health and safety messages to visitors.

There are many ways to communicate important health and safety information to visitors, including through the attraction's website, through site maps and handouts given to visitors, and verbally by staff, on tops and t-shirts worn by staff etc.

It is important that the attraction does not rely solely on one method e.g. signage. Using different methods will increase the chances of the messages being heard, understood and followed by visitors. Information such as leaflets, DVDs, website links or pre-visit packs for schools and other organised groups should be provided to help teachers and others to plan their visit and educate children on safety, prevention of illness and hand washing.

Remember the following:

- Information should include short clear notices at all entrances to the premises to remind visitors of the need for good personal hygiene and to inform them that they should only eat or drink in the designated areas. If notices are too long, they will be ignored.
- Consider handouts or stickers for visitors which explain about hand washing.
- Clear, simple signs should be erected in appropriate places reminding visitors to wash their hands when:
 - leaving “animal contact” areas,
 - before eating,
 - before entering and after leaving play areas,
 - and when leaving the premises.
- Washing facilities should have signs showing how to wash hands properly.
- Remember that young children may have dummies or toys that they put in their mouths. You should remind accompanying adults not to put dummies that have fallen to the ground back into their children’s mouths.
- Pictograms, audio devices, continuous loop videos or other media may be useful. These will have more effect if placed in strategic locations such as entrances to the attraction where all visitors are more likely to see and hear them, or at entrances to areas where animal contact is likely. It allows short but clear messages to be consistently given to visitors.
- Information should be clearly legible and may be required in languages other than English.

Key health and safety messages must be given to visitors before they are exposed to risk from animal contact. Introducing videos or short presentations at the start of the visit can give consistent messages in a specified time. This can also ensure that visitors are verbally given key safety messages at least once before they are exposed to risk. The entranceways to attractions can be designed so that visitors are given key information before moving into the site.

Training and supervision

You should:

- Ensure staff are trained and instructed about the human health risks associated with animals and the necessary control measures. Don’t forget that training should also be provided for temporary or seasonal staff.
- Trained staff should understand the control measures in place for your site and as a minimum be able to:
 - Identify all “animal contact”, “non-contact” and any “look and see” areas on site.
 - Identify all wash station locations on site, or at least the nearest wash station location to where they are working.
 - Identify all visitor go and no-go areas.
 - Identify all areas where hand washing must occur e.g. after visiting “animal contact” areas, before entering eating / play areas etc.
 - Explain why hand washing is important.
 - Be able to explain the nature of the health risks from animals e.g. zoonoses, causes and possible consequences.

- Explain what the site does to convey the above messages to visitors.
- Ensure staff are trained and instructed on what visitors should or should not do.
- Provide guidance to staff on how to explain the hygiene message to visitors including the importance of thorough hand washing, particularly for children.
- Arrange adequate and appropriate levels of supervision in “animal contact” areas for any time while they are being used. The number of supervisors will depend on the size of the area and the number of visitors permitted or expected in that area at one time.
- Depending on the level of risk and other control measures in place, consider whether supervision is needed as part of your control measures for any “look and see” areas.
- Ensure that children are supervised while they wash their hands. Part of this responsibility rests with parents or teachers, but in some cases, staff may need to help in supervision or remind people to wash hands.
- Remind supervisors in “animal contact” areas to ensure that visitors do not eat, drink or put items in their mouths while in these areas and until they have washed their hands on leaving the contact area.
- Ensure supervisors understand that they should not allow people (especially children) to kiss the animals.
- Stress to your own staff the importance of setting a good example and following good personal hygiene, e.g. thoroughly washing their own hands when necessary, and not eating or drinking in “animal contact” areas.

Livestock management procedures

You should:

- Consider producing an animal or farm health plan in consultation with your vet to help reduce the risks from zoonoses.
- Assess whether animals are healthy before moving them to “animal contact” areas or “look and see” areas where visitor contact with animals is possible. Remember that animals carrying STEC or other zoonotic diseases do not necessarily show signs of illness.
- Ensure that animals that have just given birth, or been born, are not put in “animal contact” areas, or “look and see” areas where visitor contact with animals is possible.
- Immediately remove any animals showing signs of ill health or stress from “animal contact” areas or “look and see” areas where visitor contact with animals is possible, until they have recovered. Seek veterinary attention and advice promptly.
- Keep animals and their housing clean. It may be appropriate to put in place a cleaning schedule for animal pens to ensure that it is done regularly.
- Do not use “deep litter” systems.
- Ensure that staff entry to animal housing is properly controlled to ensure that faecal matter is not transferred to areas of the site where visitors will have access; if it is, ensure that the areas are properly cleaned and disinfected before visitors are allowed back into the area.
- Consider whether replacement stock can come from within the premises rather than being brought in (this would reduce the likelihood of new infections being inadvertently brought on to the premises).
- Where possible, source replacement livestock (especially young animals for bottle-feeding) from a reputable supplier with known health status where the stockkeeper will

have ensured that they have received an adequate supply of colostrum after being born.

- Try to minimise movement and mixing of animals from different groups. This is particularly important to minimise the shedding of STEC and other zoonotic diseases by ruminants such as cattle, sheep and goats.
- Regularly check all animals on display for evidence of illness, consulting your vet as appropriate.
- Regularly empty and clean water troughs and provide the animals with clean drinking water.

Manure and compost heaps

You should:

- Position manure or compost heaps well away from areas that visitors can access or fence them off. • Prevent or contain any liquid run-off where this might contaminate visitor areas or routes.
- Prevent dried contaminated material (e.g. bedding) being blown onto clean non-contact areas.
- Not allow visitors to collect and bag their own compost or manure.