March 16, 2020

Re: Pets, livestock, people and the novel corona virus causing CoVid19.

Dear 4-H community,

Questions are circulating about domestic animals (pets and livestock) and the novel coronavirus. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, infectious disease experts and multiple international and domestic human and animal health organizations agree there is no evidence at this point to indicate that pets become ill with COVID-19 or that they spread it to other animals, including people. More detailed discussion on [this topic](https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19?utm_source=email-mem&utm_medium=coronavirus200315&utm_campaign=coronavirus&utm_term=link&utm_content=coronavirus-alias) is available from American Veterinary Medical Association FAQ’s under SARS-CoV-2 and domestic animals, including pets.

The principles of healthy living, best practices for raising healthy animals, and a community that helps one another are core to 4-H programs and will help us navigate this unique situation.

As a reminder to minimize spread between people, handwashing is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your family from getting sick. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Avoid touching your face. Cover your sneeze or cough with a tissue or direct into an elbow to prevent transmission of respiratory droplets.

This spring many of you are picking out young animals for your 4-H projects. Here are 3 basic reminders:

\*Always choose the healthiest animal to bring home. It may be more expensive at the onset but it is a better investment than the small, underweight, dull-eyed herd mate that appears to need rescuing.

\*Keep the newly purchased animal isolated from the home herd for 14 days to be sure that it is healthy and not incubating a disease. Quarantine includes using different equipment with the new animal and handling that animal after you have tended to the healthy home herd.

\* If visitors want to see your animal, make sure they don’t bring any infection from their animals. Insist they wear clean shoes and clothes before handling. Have them wash their hands before and after handling animals.

This spring will be stressful for everyone. Remember to be kind and thoughtful. Enjoy your 4 H projects for the joy of learning. Take care of yourselves and each other. Have fun.

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