

# FARM AND ANIMAL PETTING ZOO VISITS:

## Disease Prevention Information for people hosting Petting Zoo Visits

### Keeping Your Visitors Safe

Farm and Animal petting zoo visits can be educational and fun, especially where they give children the opportunity to touch animals they may not usually see. All animals (even healthy animals) carry a range of micro-organisms (bugs). There are risks as some of these can be transmitted to humans and may cause illness.

- By touching animals.
- Through contact with droppings, urine, secretions or contaminated surfaces.
- In contaminated food, water and raw milk.

Types of diseases transmitted from animals to humans may include stomach infections (that cause vomiting and diarrhoea) skin infections, flu-like illnesses and infections to unborn babies (e.g. Listeriosis)

Infection hazards are real and can be very serious, but they can be controlled by simple measures such as effective hand washing.

#### REMEMBER:

It is natural that children will touch animals and this will mean that they will come into contact with animal droppings.

**Hand washing and good supervision are**

**ESSENTIAL**

### ✓ Checklist for hosting a Farm and Animal Petting Zoo Visit

#### Before the visitors arrive have you:

- Organised enough hand washing and drying facilities with soap and running water or hand sanitising supplies at the:
  - ⇒ Toilets?
  - ⇒ Exits from animal contact areas?
  - ⇒ Eating areas?
  - ⇒ Places where soiled footwear might be removed?
- Advised whether the farm water is clean and safe to drink or not?
- Put up display signs at appropriate points to remind people to wash/dry their hands?
- Arranged a designated eating/picnic area which is away from the animals and near to hand washing facilities?
- Advised/discussed with the visitors the level of adult supervision?
- Ensured that there will be appropriately trained staff supervising areas where children will be touching animals?
- Made sure that access to manure, compost heaps and any soiled equipment is minimised?
- Made sure that all the enclosures are adequately fenced off?

## The day of the visit:

- ❑ Meet with the visitors and reinforce the rules for the visit especially the hand washing and drying and safety messages.
- ❑ Ensure adequate staffing/child ratio supervision.
- ❑ Ensure the areas that are open to visitors are being kept free of animal droppings. If a pen is moved be aware the area is likely to be dirty and may need to be closed off.
- ❑ Ensure the animals that are being touched are clean and healthy. (Avoid using animals that have just been born or just given birth).
- ❑ Check the animals regularly to make sure they are kept clean and comfortable.
- ❑ Remember to tell children that animals deserve respect and care, and that sudden movements/shouting may startle and frighten the animals.
- ❑ Do not offer or allow visitors to drink raw milk.

## After the Visit

If you are informed that any of the visitors show signs of illness (e.g. sickness or diarrhoea) after the visit, advise them or their caregivers to visit the doctor and explain that they have had recent contact with animals.

## General Hygiene Advice

- Monitor animals daily for illness
- Provide clean water for animals
- Keep the animal areas as clean as possible
- Do not offer or allow visitors to drink raw milk
- Supervise any animal feeding
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## How to wash your hands

- Wet your hands with clean, running water.
- Apply soap.
- Rub hands together (for at least 20 seconds) and scrub well including back of hands, between fingers and under fingernails.
- Rinse hands.
- Dry hands using a clean paper towel or air dryer. Do not dry hands on clothes.

### Checklist



The checklist format style of this pamphlet will help make visits safer, healthier and more enjoyable.

If you would like more information about diseases that can be contracted from animals, please contact a **Health Protection Officer at Community and Public Health**

Christchurch

Phone: 03 364 1777

Fax: 03 379 6125

Greymouth

Phone: 03 768 1160

Fax: 03 768 1169

Timaru

Phone: 03 687 2600

Fax: 03 688 6091