



Nebraska State Fair Animal Welfare Policy, Emergency Action Plan & Evacuation Plan for Livestock and Horses

STATEMENT OF ANIMAL CARE

The Nebraska State Fair is a showplace for animal agriculture and animal care for the state. The Nebraska State Fair considers ourselves animal welfare advocates and requires the humane treatment of all animals on the grounds. All animals and livestock shown, housed, or displayed shall receive care that is humane, healthful, stress free and consistent with public expectations. Cruelty, neglect or indifference to animal comfort and welfare will not be tolerated and will constitute immediate disqualification and grounds for removal from the premises. Ample feed and clean fresh water will be provided to all livestock, horses, poultry, and other animals consistent with sound animal husbandry practices and with rules and regulations set by the Nebraska State Fair Board. All animals entering the grounds for display or competition must meet all State of Nebraska and Nebraska State Fair Health Requirements. The environment in which animals are kept must be clean and sanitary at all times. Professional veterinary care will be provided as needed. Animals experiencing illness, injury, discomfort or even death will be attended to as quickly as possible and only by a licensed veterinarian authorized by the Nebraska State Fair Board and its management.

ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY: Ratified 6/19/2026

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Nebraska State Fair “Animal Welfare Policy” is to address issues of animal care and welfare which include:

- The philosophy of the Nebraska State Fair regarding animal care and management
- Appropriate care and management of animals while on the Nebraska State Fair fairgrounds by exhibitors. Mistreating any animal or using unethical practices will not be tolerated and will be reported to proper authorities.
- Providing educational programs for exhibitors and patrons of the fair.
- Handling expressions of concern for animal care from the public.
- Providing a plan in case of need for quarantine or evacuation.

GENERAL PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS:

- Society does not tolerate animal cruelty, abuse, neglect or even discomfort.
- For many people, a fair may be the only contact they have with livestock or equine.
- The image of quality treatment and care is as important as the reality.
- The Nebraska State Fair is committed to providing education to the viewing public about farm animals and livestock, as well as the overall agricultural industry.
- Standards of animal care have changed over the years, and many confuse tradition with acceptable standards. They may not always be the same.
- The role of animals, especially companion animals, in the quality of life of many members of the public has dramatically increased.

STATE FAIR RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Ensure safety and health of public, exhibitors, and animals.
- Ensure welfare of all animals.

- Ensure biosecurity to livestock, livestock producers and the public.
- Provide opportunities to inform and educate the public on animal treatment and use.

SUPERINTENDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Ensuring that acceptable standards of animal care are followed by enforcing all rules and regulations of the fair.
- Animals, contests, displays, pens and the related environment should be seen from the perspective of the fair visitor, who may know very little about animal husbandry. Therefore, it is important that all animals should be clean, well-bedded, fed and watered at all times.
- Concerns or problems should be called to the attention of the exhibitor immediately.
- Violations, such as animal abuse or neglect, should be dealt with in a professional manner. Such violations will be cause for removal from the grounds. This action should be taken care of by the Nebraska State Fair Management.
- Rules require that all animal treatments, injections or administration of any medications must be approved and given by the Nebraska State Fair Veterinarian. This means ALL animals, ALL classes, **with no exceptions.**
- Watch all animals for signs of discomfort or distress, especially heat related, and take action as necessary. This action may include contacting the State Fair Veterinarian. Any signs of infectious or contagious disease must also be handled immediately.

NEBRASKA STATE FAIR VETERINARIAN:

- The Nebraska State Fair Veterinarian is responsible for the delivery of veterinary services and performance of health procedures at the fair.
- All issues of animal care, welfare or health should be referred to him/her.
- The State Fair Veterinarian will report all major health and animal care issues to the Nebraska State Fair Management.
- The State Fair Veterinarian, along with State Fair Management, will make determination as to the need for quarantine and removal from the grounds of any animal or animals.

HOW DOES THE NEBRASKA STATE FAIR FULFILL THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Veterinary Checks & Health Papers – Identifying animals and ensuring that said animals are apparently free of contagious or infectious disease.
- Animal Welfare – Adequate food, water, shelter, comfort, and freedom from stress and pain; medical care available 24-7; adequate facilities for surgery if needed plus quarantine areas; constant observance by personnel watching for animal misuse or abuse; slaughter arrangements for terminal injuries if needed; dead animal disposal and isolation arrangements if needed.
- Educational materials, Birthing Pavilion
- State Fair needs to be cognizant of any potential biosecurity hazard that may arise prior to, or during the State Fair. They will be involved in the quarantine or evacuation process.

OTHER PERSONNEL:

- The Executive Director is the spokesperson for all livestock related issues with the public and the media.
- It is the responsibility of Board Members, employees, volunteers and especially the exhibitors to help provide and enforce high standards of animal care at the Nebraska State Fair.

- Confrontation should be avoided if possible. Animal abuse or neglect will not be tolerated. Concerns should be reported to the Agriculture Director, Livestock Manager, Equine Coordinator, Department Superintendents, responsible employees, Veterinarians or Board Members.

PROTESTS AND DEMONSTRATIONS:

- The right of free speech may not be abrogated on public property.
- No person or group of persons shall banner, picket, march protest, demonstrate or caucus on the NSF grounds before or during the NSF in any manner that interferes with the convenience and safety of an NSF patron, exhibitor or employee.
- Because of the great interest in the safety and orderly movement of large crowds and vehicular traffic flow, any activity engaging or impeding the fair-going public or interrupting the orderly flow of the fair-going public outside of an approved, licensed and contracted booth space is strictly prohibited.
- No individual or group may interrupt the normal activities of the fair.
- If confrontations or marching protests occur or appear likely to occur, notify the Livestock Manager, Equine Coordinator, Agriculture Director, Executive Director, Head of Security and/or President of the Nebraska State Fair Board immediately. Do not take personal action or direct action.
- Parents and exhibitors should be advised of these policies.
- Media questions about protests, picketing or issues related to animal care and welfare should be addressed by the Executive Director.

BIO-SECURITY:

- Hand Washing Stations will be provided throughout the fairgrounds for use by the public.
- Signs about the importance of washing hands are posted all over the Fairgrounds.
- We work closely with the Department of Health and the State Veterinarian's Office to ensure the safety of the public and livestock.
- Being alert and observant can do a lot to help protect the livestock industry.
- Signs that address prevention or introduction of contagious foreign animal diseases are posted throughout exhibition areas.
- Questions regarding these matters should be addressed to the State Fair Veterinarian.

QUARANTINE:

- There are several stages of possible quarantine: specific animal, proximity, specie, or all animals. The stage of quarantine will be determined by the State Fair Veterinarian and State Fair Officials.
 - Areas are set up in various locations around the grounds, away from the public, in case an animal or animals need to be quarantined.
- Animals will be transported to these locations by State Fair vehicles as needed.
- Those quarantined animals will only be accessed by authorized personnel.
- Those animals will be cared for under the direction of the State Fair Veterinarian.
- The length of quarantine and/or release of the animal/animals are strictly up to the State Fair Veterinarian.

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN FOR LIVESTOCK and HORSES

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this plan is to be prepared for any potential emergencies and outline Standard Emergency Responses to be implemented by Staff in case of any situation that may act as a risk to the safety of Guests and/or Staff.

Exhibited livestock (cattle, horses, sheep, goats, swine, poultry, rabbits, dogs) are normally well broke and under control by their handler. These animals are normally not wild, but they are not pets. They are, however, always at risk to get loose or to panic in an emergency situation. Even though it is the responsibility of the exhibitor to care for and to have that animal under control at all times, situations do happen where an animal may get loose. Also, in time of an emergency, severe weather, fire, etc., procedures must in place to provide for the safety of the animals as well as for the Staff and Guests.

SCOPE:

Livestock/horses which are being exhibited at the Fair are normally tied up or loose in pens, crates or stalls. However, during the course of being exhibited, these animals are not in said pen, crate or stall. An animal can easily become spooked and get loose from its handler/exhibitor and potentially pose a threat to people as well as other animals.

In case of severe weather, fire, etc. an animal may be forced out of its pen or loosened from its tie area.

Animals can also become injured and may need emergency services or die. It is imperative that any services be administered quickly and as much as possible, away from the public.

PLAN:

Animals when spooked, become scared just like people. The first rule is to REMAIN CALM. If Staff and Guests become scared, then the animal will become even more agitated and scared. In order to get the situation under control as quickly as possible, everyone needs to remain calm. No yelling or screaming; and LET LIVESTOCK PEOPLE handle the situation. If an animal is loose in the barn, one or more doors/gates may need to be closed to keep said animal confined to the barn area. In case an animal is not caught quickly and gets out of the confines of the building, immediately contact the nearest State Fair Staff Member or Security. Guests should not attempt to engage the animal at any time. In most cases, livestock personnel will be able to get the animal back under control or into a confined area.

In case of an impending weather situation, alerts will come from the National Weather Service. Safety of the Guests, Exhibitors and Staff takes priority over livestock. If there is ample time to lead or drive the livestock out of the barns, then those animals need to be directed to a designated area. Evacuation routes will be determined by any damage done to the facility. Exhibitors are totally responsible for their livestock in the case of weather situations. Staff personnel are responsible for directing exhibitors and guests out of a potentially risky area. In case of a tornado, staff will direct people into the tornado shelters (wash racks in the barns). No livestock will be allowed in the shelters.

In case of fire, call 911. They will notify the Fire Department and a determination will be made as to whether evacuation is necessary. At that point the Agriculture Director will direct the evacuation as Emergency Action Procedures will commence. Even if the fire is put out the Fire Department will still need to be contacted.

In case of an injury or a sick animal, the Livestock Manager or Equine Coordinator must be contacted immediately. The Livestock Manager or Equine Coordinator will then immediately contact the State Fair Veterinarian. Staff personnel will be responsible for isolating the situation and for keeping the Guests away from the incident. The veterinarian will then decide as to the severity of the injury and call for a transport vehicle if necessary. That animal will then be transported to a local animal hospital for further observation or service. If an animal is injured during a performance, livestock personnel will immediately cover the animal until the veterinarian is called. This is to be done quickly and professionally. **Remember, the public has cameras on their phones and they will use them.**

In case of an animal dying, the Livestock Manager or Equine Coordinator must be called immediately and in turn the State Fair Veterinarian and Operations Director must be called. At that point the determination will be made as to the disposal of the animal. No determination will be made without the owner/exhibitor present. It is also imperative that the public be kept away from the dead animal.

EVACUATION PROCEDURES:

Aurora Cooperative Pavilion, Grand Island Motor Company Cattle Barn, JBS Show Barn, Five Points Bank Arena, Horse Barns

A. Fire and/or Explosion

1. Each staff member/employee will know the location and operation of each fire exit and fire extinguisher.
2. The person discovering the fire will sound the alarm and phone 911; be sure to give the area and building designation. (buildings are designated on the outside, i.e. west, north, south, east, etc.)
3. The superintendents/show manager present will ensure that all departments in the building have received the alarm, either in person, test or by messenger.
4. The superintendents / show manager present will ensure that the office radio is picked up, if accessible and will notify Security.
5. Even if the fire is small and able to be extinguished, the fire department must still be notified.
6. All employees/staff members and patrons will assemble in the parking lot west of the barns.
7. Each department head will account for their employees.
8. The superintendents/show manager present will designate a person to guide the emergency vehicle.

B. Natural Disasters/Severe Weather Warnings

1. In the event of a severe weather warning (if time permits) proceed to the wash racks on the west end of the Cattle Barn or Sheep Barn or staff and/or security will assist in placing people in the hallways, stairwells or men's / ladies' restrooms away from glass windows and doors. If time does not permit, place yourself in the smallest room available, away from any glass windows or doors. Remain under cover until staff or security has determined that the situation is all clear.

During such time as deemed necessary by local, state or federal authorities, the Nebraska State Fair, and/or its officials may, temporarily or permanently evacuate the Fonner Park Campus under the authority of the Homeland Security Act. Incidents such as, but not limited to, extreme weather conditions, bomb threats, acts of war, declarations of war, code red of the Homeland Security System, etc., will be acted upon in accordance and cooperation with local, state, and federal authorities. Priority evacuation will be given to human life, then livestock and/or property. In such cases, exhibitors will turn over the care of their livestock or property to the State Fair, or as directed by governmental authorities. Proper animal husbandry practices will be followed within reasonable expectations. At such time the evacuation notice is lifted, exhibitors will be allowed to re-enter Fonner Park and claim their livestock or property.