

April Hall
Extension Educator 4-H Youth Development
Maryland Cooperative Extension-Cecil County
126A East High Street, Elkton, MD 21921
Phone-410-996-5280 Fax-410-996-5285
adhall@umd.edu
<http://extension.umd.edu/local/cecil>

David Gordon
Faculty Extension Assistant 4-H Youth Development/Agriculture and Natural Resources
Maryland Cooperative Extension-Montgomery County
18410 Muncaster Road, Derwood, MD 20855
Phone-301-590-2813 Fax-301-590-2828
dgordon3@umd.edu
<http://extension.umd.edu/local/montgomery>

Keeping You, Your Animal and the Public Healthy at Animal Events
Poster Session Proposal Outline

Why should 4-H youth educators be concerned about animal borne illness in humans at livestock events? A journal of American Veterinary Medical Association article in 2004 reported that more than 25 human infectious disease outbreak cases during 1990-2000 are associated with visitors of animal exhibits. Animal visitors have become ill, hospitalized, had kidney failure and even died all of which have been traced back to direct or indirect animal contact.

In 2005, the Maryland Association of Agriculture Fairs and Shows held a two-day Consumer Protection Workshop on how fair directors, 4-H educators, and livestock volunteers can protect themselves from lawsuits relating to animal borne illness, most notably *E. coli*. From this seminar we have developed a “kid friendly” program that can be implemented with Livestock Quality Assurance Programs, Animal Safety Programs or be taught individually to educate youth about proper techniques to protect both themselves and visitors at livestock events. Kid friendly activities and programs were developed to complement the Centers for Disease Controls report “Compendium of Measures to Prevent Disease Associated with Animals in Public Settings, 2005”. This report recommends educating exhibitors regarding the risk for disease transmission.

Our objective during this poster session is to provide hands-on activities and handouts to 4-H educators on how to teach youth about the disease risks that animals pose. Moreover, how you can implement proper hand washing techniques, animal care techniques and signage.

In this poster session we will show how coming in contact with an infected animal can be spread to visitors. We will use the Fight Bac! glow germs to infect stuffed animals while others will not be infected, have “visitors” touch the animals and check their hands with a black light for germs that could potentially end up in the mouth or on food that they consume later if they do not properly wash their hands. This real life fair simulation is a great opportunity to share with youth so that they understand how people can become contaminated. In addition we will share with educators a PowerPoint entitled “Keeping you, your animal, and the public healthy at 4-H Animal events. This program can be used with youth to teach about zoonotic diseases, disease transmission, animal facility management and preventative actions. Program evaluation tools will be provided.

It is important to educate not only the parents but the youth so that they can understand that prevention involves everyone. Youth will find these resources useful as they become advocates of disease prevention in regards to the animals they raise. Youth will be equipped with user friendly resources to help them confidently teach the public about this important health issue and strengthen personal life skills of sharing, communication, and disease prevention. These efforts are a proactive approach to protect against devastating lawsuits which could ultimately bring an end to 4-H animal events. Due to educational efforts our 4-Hers now ask the public to please wash their hands after they touch an animal, don't bring toys and strollers in the area of animals and please don't eat food in animal areas.