Background:
During 2014 USDA confirmed that Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea virus (PEDv) had been identified in the United States for the first time. PEDv was not a new virus, nor is it a regulatory/reportable disease; it is widespread in many countries and is not a trade-restricting disease. The concerns associated with PEDv and production-related disease, did however, cause the Maryland 4-H program (along with 4-H programs in other states) to modify tagging, weighing and showing procedures during 2014. The concerns associated with PEDv also caused us to draw extra attention and emphasis to biosecurity measures that all exhibitors should normally follow to minimize risks and to take extra precautions.

It is important to note that the process of exhibiting any animal is one that has inherent risks of exposing the animal to disease due to commingling with sick animals. The safest way to protect an animal is for the 4-H member to not participate in or attend exhibitions. However, most members choose to participate in exhibitions as part of their 4-H experience and, as such, should take steps to minimize risks. Livestock exhibitors are reminded to be attentive and practice good biosecurity protocols when visiting animal auctions, farms, fellow exhibitor’s farms and livestock shows.

For the 2015 livestock season Maryland 4-H will return to weighing, tagging, and showing procedures commonly used prior to 2014; however, we will continue to place a heightened level of attention to following many of the biosecurity recommendations put into place during 2014.

Maryland 4-H Swine Weighing and Tagging Procedures for 2015:
Maryland 4-H is implementing the following protocol for 2015:

1. Maryland 4-H will conduct spring weighing during tagging events for swine for purposes of establishing eligibility for Maryland 4-H Shows and Classes.
2. Rate-of-gain requirements for Maryland 4-H Swine Shows are reinstated for 2015. As such, rate-of-gain classes at Maryland 4-H Swine Shows may be offered.
3. Tagging animals is an important step in validating ownership of 4-H project market animals. As in the past, tagging of 4-H animals shall be supervised by UME 4-H faculty/staff or an appointed designee. On-farm tagging/validation is not permitted.

Recommended Biosecurity Protocol

Before exhibitors load animals on their trailer:

1. Clean all handling equipment, vehicle, trailers and animals before loading. Many diseases transfer via feces and survive in manure for extended periods of time. Anything contaminated with manure can be a source of infection.
2. No pigs that have active disease symptoms or have been exposed to disease in the last 30 days should be loaded.
4. Exhibitors should only bring the minimum number of people from their farm necessary to weigh and tag animals.
5. Exhibitors should change their clothes and footwear before entering their vehicle.
6. Other animals, such as dogs and cats, can physically transfer pathogens. To prevent spread of diseases, pets should be kept home and not brought to tagging and exhibitions.
7. If there are non-exhibit animals on the farm, exhibitors should work with their veterinarian to plan and prepare a location to isolate animals when they return from tagging and exhibition events.

After exhibitors return home from tagging/exhibition:
1. When returning to the farm after the tagging/exhibition, the animal(s) should be separated (quarantined) from the rest of the herd or flock for at least two weeks; 30 days is better.
2. Animals should be watched closely during the quarantine time period for signs of disease. If an animal changes behavior or seems ill, exhibitors should contact their veterinarian.
3. Exhibitors should thoroughly clean and disinfect equipment, clothing, shoes, and vehicles/trailers that were used at the tagging/exhibition.
4. Chores for the animals in the quarantine area should be completed as the last task of the day after exhibitors have already worked with their other animals.
5. Have dedicated boots and coveralls for use with quarantined animals only. Supplies such as buckets and feed pans should not be shared between pigs in quarantine and other animals on the farm.

Disinfectants that may be used when cleaning boots, trailers and equipment:
Use 1-Stroke Environ, Virkon ST, Nolvasan, Tek-Trol or other veterinarian approved disinfectants. Mix disinfectants according to label directions. You can also mix bleach and water (3/4 cup to one gallon of water). Important: Handle bleach with care. Diluted disinfectants should be mixed up just before using. Clean boots and equipment, removing all organic material; all disinfectants are more effective when all organic material is removed prior to disinfecting.

Final Reminders:
Following good biosecurity practices is very important. Producers and exhibitors should follow good health monitoring and biosecurity practices. Transmission of disease can be minimized by using proper biosecurity methods, including washing trucks and trailers between loads, washing boots and clothing, and establishing a line of separation between clean and dirty areas. The National Pork Board has developed a wide variety of biosecurity information that is free and available at http://www.pork.org/.
Sources:


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