

Animal gatherings

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This guidance is for England

Good standards of biosecurity on farms, at animal gatherings (which includes livestock markets, collection centres and livestock shows or exhibitions) and on livestock vehicles must be maintained to reduce the risk of the spread of disease.

Livestock markets, shows / exhibitions and collection centres are known collectively as 'animal gatherings'. Such events must be licensed by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), which is an executive agency of the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). There are statutory fees payable for licensing of premises by APHA. One day shows (where no public sale or auction of animals takes place), and gatherings solely for the purpose of an inspection to confirm that animals possess specific breed characteristics, are exempt from licence fees.

Biosecurity

Whilst the risks from diseases such as foot-and-mouth remain the same, the methods of mitigating and dealing with those risks have, in recent years, been subject to a comprehensive and industry-led review. Controls are in place to mitigate disease risks and it is the responsibility of the industry to oversee and control certain biosecurity measures. However, enforcement authorities can still take action if there is a biosecurity risk at an animal gathering.

More information on general biosecurity can be found on the GOV.UK website.

Points to note

Please note the following, which will affect you when delivering / sending livestock to an animal gathering:

- arrive at the time you are allocated, if applicable, to prevent any unnecessary waiting or congregating of vehicles
- all cattle, sheep, goats and pigs must be identified, and movements recorded and reported, in accordance with the relevant legislation
- leave 'disease' where it is by following good biosecurity measures every time you leave a premises

with livestock

- ensure that you know the signs of notifiable diseases in animals and, if in doubt, seek veterinary advice as soon as possible
- do not come on to the premises with clothes or a livestock vehicle (including a vehicle used to pull a trailer) contaminated with mud or other farm contamination
- facilities are provided for you to cleanse and disinfect your boots and scrub your hands. Use them if you need to
- handling animals can spread disease. You should wash your hands and clothing / footwear before you leave the premises
- cleanse and disinfect your livestock vehicle on site before leaving if at all possible
- be alert for any signs of disease in animals. If there is a suspect case of disease while you are on the premises, be prepared to cooperate with the authorities in implementing the disease control contingency plan
- vehicles / trailers used to transport livestock into the gathering must either be cleansed and disinfected or an undertaking to cleanse and disinfect completed before leaving the gathering
- destination addresses on the ARAMS-1 (sheep and goats) or eAML2 haulier summary sheet (pigs) must always be that of the gathering being moved to and not the final / end destination
- all livestock must be fit for the intended journeys both into and from the gathering. Guidance on welfare in transport can be found on the GOV.UK website.
- in addition to livestock needing to be fit to travel, livestock will be considered unfit to be at an animal gathering if they are:
 - lame
 - injured
 - ill, infirm or fatigued
 - diseased
 - likely to give birth

GOV.UK animal gatherings guidance gives essential advice to supplement the legal obligations of those people running a market, as well as those attending in whatever capacity.

For further information on the day of a gathering, please speak to the licensee or animal health inspector on duty.

Penalties

Failure to comply with trading standards law can lead to enforcement action and to sanctions, which may include a fine and/or imprisonment. For more information please see 'Trading standards: powers, enforcement and penalties'.

Key legislation

Animal Health Act 1981

Welfare at Markets Order 1990

Disease Control (England) Order 2003

Welfare of Animals (Transport) (England) Order 2006

Cattle Identification Regulations 2007

Sheep and Goats (Records, Identification and Movement) (England) Order 2009

Animal Gatherings Order 2010

Pigs (Records, Identification and Movement) Order 2011

Animal Gatherings (Fees) (England) Order 2018

Last reviewed / updated: August 2020

In this update

Information added about exemption from fees

Please note

This information is intended for guidance; only the courts can give an authoritative interpretation of the law.

The guide's 'Key legislation' links may only show the original version of the legislation, although some amending legislation is linked to separately where it is directly related to the content of a guide. Information on amendments to legislation can be found on each link's 'More Resources' tab.

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