

What are Wyoming Livestock Board Veterinarians Looking For?

The state fair is a statewide event to recognize high quality Wyoming livestock and the effort put into raising and caring for exhibition animals. That being said, it is the goal of Wyoming Livestock Board (WLSB) veterinarians to ensure only healthy animals enter the fairgrounds, and that animals stay healthy throughout the duration of the fair. WLSB veterinarians have five main goals during the fair:

1. All animals coming onto the grounds are free of infectious or contagious disease, and stay healthy during the fair.
2. Preserve public health.
3. Zero tolerance for adulteration of animals.
4. Uphold animal health, welfare, and the public perception of animal agriculture.
5. Animals are identified appropriately.

Let's dig deeper into each of these goals.

Freedom from infectious or contagious disease: Animals entering the fair must have a current certificate of veterinary inspection (CVI) completed by an accredited veterinarian within 30 days of arrival on the grounds. Once on the grounds, animals are examined for signs of infectious or contagious disease by veterinarians. The most common signs of infectious disease may differ between species, but there are some specific signs to look for in all animals. Abnormal skin appearance, coughing or nasal discharge, enlarged lymph nodes, lameness, diarrhea, fever, and wounds are all possible signs of infectious disease. It is extremely important to monitor for these signs to prevent possible introduction and spread of a disease on the grounds. This protects your animal from contracting a disease, and minimizes disease spread among animals during the fair.

Preservation of public health: Certain diseases can spread from animals to humans. These are called zoonotic diseases. The state fair is a time for promotion of animal agriculture to the public, and it is important to protect both exhibitors and the public from contracting a disease from livestock. Notify a WLSB veterinarian immediately if an animal becomes ill, so it can be examined for infectious or zoonotic diseases. It is also recommended that exhibitors and attendees wash their hands after interacting with livestock and keep their shoes clean when walking around the grounds. Implementing biosecurity measures while at the fair will help protect animals and humans from disease.

Zero tolerance for animal adulteration: Any harm to animals or animal adulteration will not be tolerated at the state fair. Masking illness or injuries, or using methods to alter the physical or mental appearance of any animal is strictly prohibited. These actions violate animal welfare and jeopardize animal health. The wellbeing of all animals is of utmost importance, and is monitored by WLSB veterinarians. Per Wyoming State Fair rules, drug testing will be performed on specific classes of animals. Veterinary exams may be conducted to help identify physical adulteration.

Animal health, welfare, and public perception: An immense amount of work has been dedicated to raising and exhibiting livestock at the state fair. Thus, the health and welfare of animals must be upheld throughout the fair to promote the animal agriculture sector they represent. This includes notifying a veterinarian of potentially ill animals, and providing adequate food, water, and clean bedding throughout the fair. Additionally, August weather in Wyoming can be hot. Keeping yourself and your animals cool and hydrated is vital to the wellbeing of all.

Animal identification: To confirm animals are being represented and exhibited properly, livestock must be individually identified with USDA official identification. Forms of official identification for livestock species include scrapie tags (sheep and goats), RFID tags (sheep, goats, cattle, swine), metal National Uniform Eartagging System tags (cattle, pigs), or registration papers and registered tattoos (goats with short ears). Horses do not need official identification but must match the physical description on the certificate of veterinary inspection.

WLSB veterinarians are on the fairgrounds throughout the entirety of the fair, and may be contacted through your barn superintendent. We are in the barns throughout the day; please reach out with any questions or concerns. WLSB veterinarians look forward to seeing you at the 2024 state fair!