

Market Connection



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Take steps to minimize *E. coli* O157:H7 on your farm

Escherichia coli O157:H7, or as it is better known, *E. coli* O157:H7, has been making the US, Canadian and UK news lately as there have been more *E. coli* infections associated with direct contact with animals. Traditionally, *E. coli* contamination was through food or water; however, during the last 10 years we have seen more than 20 cases associated with animal contact through animal displays or petting zoo type operations.

E. coli O157:H7 is a very potent bacteria. One cow can shed over 1 million bacteria in 1 gram of manure. It takes less than 1,000 bacteria to make an adult customer sick. This small amount coupled with the rapid progression and severity of the disease makes it a major issue to any NAFDMA member who has animals. While everyone is susceptible to the disease, young children, the elderly, pregnant women and individuals with a reduced immune system are high risk. For many farms, this means that target customers, including grandparents and young families, fall into that high risk category.

In this newsletter, we share with you some recommendations given by the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians which are endorsed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). However, I think it is important

that we take a look at underlying research and specific cases to see how NAFDMA members can apply what is known or has been learned, in order to manage this risk.

Research and *E. coli* cases

During the last 5 years, several studies looked at *E. coli* contamination. Here are some findings that may affect NAFDMA members:

—In 2002 a Netherlands study found that two out of 11 petting zoos in the study had *E. coli* O157:H7 infected animals.

—In commercial cattle there is some seasonality to *E. coli* discharge. Unfortunately for our apple and pumpkin farms, the peak is in late summer through early fall.

—A 2001 study indicated that recently moved, stressed, young animals are more likely to produce *E. coli* discharge.

—The majority of cases involving *E. coli* and direct animal contact indicate food consumption and lack of hand washing facilities were contributing risk factors. This is why most recommendations deal with hand washing.

—While cattle are a primary source for *E. coli*, studies have shown that sheep, goats, horses, dogs, birds, and rabbits carry the organism. Note that these are



Rob Leeds, NAFDMA board member, enjoyed feeding the animals during an animal safari in North Carolina.

the same species common in NAFDMA animal displays.

In 2003, Thomas Wittum, Ohio State University associate professor, was involved in a study of 31 fairs in the Midwest and one in the southern United States. The study indicated *E. coli* infections in 13.8 percent of beef cattle, 5.9 percent of dairy cattle, 5.9 percent of hogs, 3.6 percent of sheep and 2.8 percent of goats.

“One of the most interesting findings in this study was about flies.”

However, one of the most interesting findings in this study was about flies. The study included blow flies, stable flies and house flies and found that 7.1 percent of them were contaminated with *E. coli* O157:H7. I talked to Dr. Wittum, and he

indicated that these findings are consistent with what you would find in commercial operations and even though we have no research, he suspects that results from on farm animal displays would be similar. This research indicates that most of the animals you find in our traditional displays have the potential to carry *E. coli* O157:H7. It also indicates that fly control would also help reduce the risk of contamination.

—Another OSU veterinary researcher, Jeff LaJeune, has conducted *E. coli* research on animal bedding and how it affects the survival of *E. coli*. Dr. LaJeune looked at dairy cattle and found that the presence of *E. coli* was significantly lower in animals bedded with sand than with sawdust. He said that the rea-

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Petting Zoos or Farm Animal Displays?

By Brent Warner
Victoria, BC



All across North American and Europe, farms that attract the public for a visit are facing more and more issues with on farm liability and ultimately insurance.

If you've been involved with NAFDMA during the past 15 years, you know that this scrutiny started in earnest with the apple cider and *E. coli* 0157:H7 event sparked by the Odwalla case out California in 1996. The apple juice industry changed dramatically with the mandatory warning labels on unpasteurized cider and a move to pasteurization which caused many small producers to simply quit producing apple cider.

The current focus for the majority of the negative news that is about our industry concerns what has become known as petting farms or petting zoos.

And, folks, we're at a turning point or a watershed for our industry.

I sincerely believe we have about 2 years to make a concerted effort INDUSTRY WIDE to raise the bar on standards at these farm animal displays before something like the Centers For Disease Control (CDC) regulates them out of existence or insurance rates escalate to the point that they're just not economically viable anymore.

All of you are likely aware of one incident or another, be it at a local fall fair or the recent cases in Florida. Included in this issue of the NAFDMA newsletter are several articles on where the industry is in response to this serious issue and if you want even more you should also read online "Agritainment Today" by Randy White at www.whitehutchinson.com. He has tracked the entire history of *E. coli* 0157:H7 and makes some sound recommendations, based on work by the CDC. The CDC is also *recommending*, not yet *requiring*, that "**ALL**" animals be tested for *E. coli* 0157:H7 prior to being displayed at a fall fair. This could have a huge impact if these become mandatory, as each test is currently worth more than \$30.

To keep the public confident in the safety of NAFDMA farms, it's time for NAFDMA to collectively start the

process of developing Best Management Plans or Quality Standards, for what I would prefer to see labeled Farm Animal Displays, or FADS, which may or may not contain a handling or petting area.

I believe this issue of the newsletter is the starting point, and we'll be following up with sessions in Texas.

To reduce your risk if you're running a FAD, you should keep the following in mind:

1. Children under the age of 5 are at the highest risk when in contact with farm animals.
2. Ruminant animals, especially cattle, are the highest potential risk.
3. No one can tell you when or how *E. coli* will appear in an animal.

You MUST:

1. Have a separation between food areas and animal areas.
2. Have hand wash sign information available at entry and exit points and on all materials.
3. Have hand washing facilities (preferably hot water but not required), with soap and NEW, Clean paper towels (gels are not adequate)
4. Have supervision at all times of the people in contact with your animals. There are many other issues regarding safety and farm animals, both for the animals and the customers. Like the time I watched in horror as a father placed his 3 or 4 year old on the head of a buffalo (between the horns), and yes I do have the picture! (See page 3!)

You SHOULD:

1. Have a controlled entry and exit to the "petting" area of the FAD (see CDC).
2. Wish to consider keeping the ruminants in the area of the FAD that is only display (lowers your risk exponentially!)
3. Consider using feeding tubes so that the customers can still purchase feed, and feed the animals, but have no direct hand to mouth contact.

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National Clean Hands Week is Sept. 18-24

The Clean Hands Coalition wants everyone to wash their hands—and have fun doing it.

You read that right. There really is a Clean Hands Coalition, and it has declared Sept. 18-24, 2005, as National Clean Hands Week.

According to the coalition's Web site, the Clean Hands Coalition "is a unified alliance of public and private partners working together to create and support coordinated, sustained initiatives to significantly improve

health and save lives through clean hands."

The coalition's primary target is young children. No matter where children are, the bottom line is still the same: children—and adults, too—can stay healthier by regular handwashing.

"The Centers for Disease Control estimates \$61 billion as the cost per year of people not washing their hands," says Barbara Koukol of Western Illinois University, Macomb, Ill. "Our goal is to

educate people about when to wash their hands—such as after petting animals and before eating."

Farms are welcome to join the coalition, and there's currently no fee for joining.

Farms who join are sending a message to customers that clean hands and customer safety are important.

"If you don't do something, your organization is at risk," she says.

The coalition has a colorful, bubbly poster with the message, "Clean hands save lives." It would look great in the rest rooms at your farms, whether or not you have animals.

This poster and other items are available for purchase at www.cleanhandscoalition.com.

Contact Barbara A. Koukol at 309-298-4005 or e-mail cleanhandscoalition@wiu.edu.

Web resources

Many resources are available on the Internet. You can also access these via the Back Forty at www.nafdma.com.

Compendium of Measures to Prevent Disease and Injury Associated with Animals in Public Settings: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5404a1.htm

Centers for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov/

Clean Hands Coalition: www.cleanhandscoalition.org/

USDA/FDA Foodborne Illness Education Information Center: peaches.nal.usda.gov/foodborne/fbindex/Handwashing.asp

KidsHealth: Why is Handwashing so Important? www.kidshealth.org/parent/general/sick/hand_washing.html

National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety: research.marshfieldclinic.org/children/

Petting Farms & Zoos: www.interiorhealth.ca/Health+and+Safety/Health+Alerts/Seasonal/Petting+Zoos.htm

Field Trips to the Petting Farm: www.interiorhealth.ca/NR/rdonlyres/AC0981E4-54B9-484B-B3AF-077A1BC9A2B8/2222/Pettingzoos.pdf

Virginia Farm Bureau news article on cleanliness: www.vafb.com/news/2005/april/041405_4.htm

Petting Zoo and Animal Farm Exhibit Safety Tips: www.hotelfun4kids.com/travelsafetytips/pettingzoos.htm

Kids and Petting Zoos: Simple Steps Can Prevent Infections at Petting Zoos: my.webmd.com/content/Article/14/3606_464.htm?printing=true

Tacoma/Pierce County Health Department—Petting Zoo Guidelines: www.tpchd.org/files/library/2f9d751e6e99bc29.pdf

Tacoma/Pierce County Health Department—Animal Safety: www.tpchd.org/page.php?id=58

How a NAFDMA member is addressing safety: www.hillridgefarms.com/safety.shtml

Good Agricultural Practices Program: www.gaps.cornell.edu/index.html

My Farm Assessment: www.gaps.cornell.edu/PUBS/my_farm.pdf

Petting Zoos and Farm Animals Action Plan: www.gaps.cornell.edu/PUBS/petting_zoo.pdf

How to Run a Farm Tour: www.oznet.ksu.edu/neareaoffice/farmtours.htm

How to wash your hands:

1. Wet hands with running water
2. Pump soap into palms
3. Rub together to make a lather
4. Scrub hands vigorously for 20 seconds
5. Rinse soap off of hands
6. Dry hands

Source: Compendium of Measures To Prevent Disease and Injury associated with Animals in Public Settings, 2005; National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians

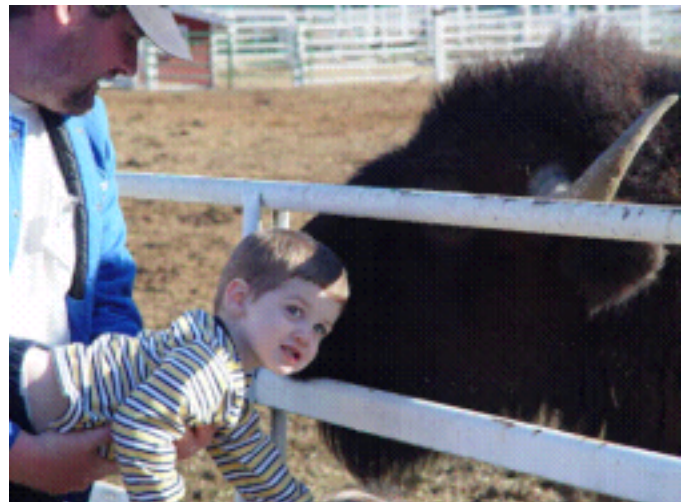
Petting zoo or FAD?

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The times they are a changing, and like it or not, the NAFDMA as an industry has to show leadership for both members and our consumers. It is critical that the Association be devoting as much energy as is required to keep our members informed. As Randy White points out in his

article, one incident caused by an operator not doing their absolute best to minimize the risk of farm animals to their customers, could be disastrous for the entire industry.

So let's get out there and cast a critical eye at our farm animal displays and see if they measure up!



Minimize *E. coli* O157:H7 on your farm

Continued from front page

sons why are complex, but one reason may be that sand has less available organic matter, nutrients and a lower water content than sawdust. These factors would inhibit the growth and survival of the bacteria once in the bedding.

He also cautions farmers that *E. coli* O157:H7 can move into the air as it is handled. Two of the five cases in the United States from 2000 to 2002 indicate a strong likelihood that the bacteria was airborne.

In an Ohio case, 19 people got sick after a dance in a barn that had a sawdust floor.

The barn had earlier held cattle, sheep, horses and dogs. They tested the building 10 months after the barn dance for *E. coli* bacteria and found it in the rafters, walls and sawdust. In this case they could find no risk associated with food consumption or hand washing. CDC concluded the only common risk factor was the barn, and that the “airborne dispersion of bacteria contributed to the contamination”.

After talking to Dr. LaJeune, I think we need to be more aware of the bedding materials we use in our animal displays. We want to use bedding material that inhibits

the growth and survival of the bacteria and will not be easily carried by wind currents.

Suggestions:

Hand washing stations

—Adequate hand washing stations should be available with signage; instruct and encourage their proper use.

—Layout should put hand washing stations between animal area and food concession

—Food and drink, or food and drink containers, should never enter the animal area.

—Special attention should be made to high risk customers including children less than 5, the elderly, pregnant women and persons with a reduced immune system.

Minimize animal stress

—Stressed animals are more likely to shed *E. coli*:

—If you are bringing in animals for a display, do it well in advance of opening day so the animals can get used to the new surroundings.

—Make sure ill or stressed animals do not come in contact with the public.

To address airborne issues:

—Food and drink should never be housed in the same barn as animals, and if possible, move the food concessions upwind of the area.

—Buildings used for animal displays should be adequately ventilated.

—Buildings used for animal displays should be cleaned and disinfected before being used for other activities.

—Flies can be contaminated with *E. coli*; fly control should be a priority.

—Use straw or sand for animal bedding and remove manure promptly from the animal area.

—Develop ways to interact with the animals without coming in contact with them.

As always, as you develop your risk management plans for animal displays, it would be an advantage to make sure your insurance agent sees what you are doing. We have had some reports of farms finding out that *E. coli* cases are not covered on their insurance policy. I know it’s difficult to ask the hard questions, but it’s better to know now if you have coverage than to wait until you have a claim.

Animal displays have been a major part of NAFDMA farms since the beginning, and we members have been talking about the *E. coli* issues for almost 10 years now. Now is the time NAFDMA members need to assess the animals in their operation. If we limit the risk associated with these displays, they will continue to be a source of enjoyment for our customers.

An *E. coli* Q&A

This issue of *Market Connection* is devoted to a special topic that has been in the news lately: Farm Animal Displays (FAD). Specifically, *E. coli* O157:H7 has heaped negative publicity on FADs both on the farm and at fairs.

What is *E. coli*?

E. coli is a bacteria found in everyone’s intestines. It works with other intestinal bacteria to allow us to absorb Vitamin K and B-complex vitamins.

So why does it make people sick?

E. coli usually doesn’t make people sick, although a few strains can give people mild cases of gastroenteritis. The real thug here is its mutant cousin, *E. coli* O157:H7. This bad boy, according to the Centers for Disease Control, produces a powerful toxin and can cause severe illness.

The first case of *E. coli* O157:H7 was reported in 1982 and was traced to contaminated hamburgers. In fact, the CDC notes that most outbreaks have been connected to eating undercooked, contaminated ground beef.

What are the symptoms of *E. coli* O157:H7 infection?

The main symptoms are severe bloody diarrhea and cramps with little to no fever. It usually clears up in about five days.

Children under 5 years old and the elderly are most at risk of infection. They are at risk of developing hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), which can lead to kidney failure.

According to the CDC, 2 percent to 7 percent of *E. coli* O157:H7 infections result in HUS.

How can I minimize the risk of having *E. coli* O157:H7 on my farm?

You can take several steps to keep you and your visitors safe. Please read the accompanying articles for details.

Cleaning & Disinfection

- Remove and dispose of animal manure appropriately (several times a day)
- Replace animal bedding daily
- Clean visible fecal material from any surface with soap and water as soon as possible
- Clean fencing and rails daily with soap and water or when grossly contaminated with feces
- Disinfect fencing and rails after cleaning (1 part bleach/10 parts water solution or Lysol following container directions)

Source: Washington State Department of Health

Finger lickin' good?

How to Keep Little Fingers Safe

By Kerry Engel
Canada West



NAFDMA members know there is nothing more heart-warming than watching children interact with animals. That's why many are industry leaders when it comes to keeping your customers safe with innovative fencing and safety precautions.

Davis Farmland (photo at right) has integrated a unique fencing and signage strategy to help identify the temperament of animals using a coded green, yellow and red hose system. **The Natural Gardener** (photo below) reminds visitors in a humorous and clearly visible way, to use caution and to wash their hands.

Your **attraction entrance** signs should include the following statements:

1. Wash hands with soap and water after touching animals and dry hands thoroughly.
2. Parents/adults should supervise hand washing.

Your signs need to capture attention in a positive and effective manner.

3. Wash hands with soap and water before eating.
4. Avoid touching your hands and face.
5. NO food or drink is to be brought into the petting farm.

As we all know, signs are only good if people read them. If you don't already do so, have a **'Meet and Greet'** session with your visitors to review your basic rules and to point out your safety signs and potential hazards.

And don't forget to wash your hands!



Educational, informative sign that's designed for the target audience: children.

Boo Boo Station

Staff nearby

animal attraction safety checklist

- Emergency Plan** - reviewed with staff
- Animal center **supervisor** identified
- Hand washing station for anyone who may be in contact with animals
- Staff with basic **first aid** and **CPR** identified
- Well-stocked **First Aid Kit**, clearly marked. Location identified.
- Radio/cell phone rules reviewed.
- Clearly posted signs** marking where people are and are not allowed to go.
- Hazards marked**. Some hazards can simply not be roped off because common sense may not prevail
- Water/ponds clearly marked** and cordoned off so that children cannot access them. Do not assume that parents will always watch their children and keep them safe.
- Fire extinguishers** and water hoses accessible and in good repair. Locations identified.
- Smoke and **fire alarms** in good repair (in all buildings). Locations identified.
- Ambulance or other **emergency vehicle access identified** & clearly marked.
- Address** of the farm is listed so it can be given to emergency personnel.
- Web site/brochure/answering machine **offers tips** for visitors regarding appropriate clothing to wear.

Got livestock in your blood? Then keep reading...

This newsletter is dedicated to on-farm safety as it relates to interaction between the public and animals. Kudos to all the authors of the articles, to the scientists who provide us with the facts, and to Kelly for packaging a well-rounded newsletter that speaks to various perspectives among our members (and there are many perspectives).

For my part, I've written an article that reaches out to the few operators in our industry who believe they have enough knowledge and background to know better than those darn book-learned experts and know-it-all scientists.

My one goal is to help a few farmers think, "*Hmm, I never thought of it that way.*" Because, one thing I've come to understand is that *how* we think has more impact on our every day actions than *what* we think.

If we think we're doomed, we often are. If we think it's impossible, it is. If we think life is a competition, we compete. If we think life is a journey, we never arrive.

A tiny portion of today's population grew up with livestock and still want critters in our lives. We have it in our blood. We love the animals, we respect them, and we have pretty fully developed notions that they serve a certain purpose. It drives everything we think about them, including their health, their safety, their value, and even what we think other people should think about them.

The truth is, we're pretty set in our ways, and we're not real thrilled with outsiders telling us how to work with our own animals.

Lots of folks who get into farm direct marketing have limited understanding of animals and figure out that crit-

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ters are good for business. And they're fun. Most Canadians and Americans have animals in their background somewhere. Horses, cattle, hogs, and chickens had a huge impact in the development of this continent. Emus, llamas, and pot-bellied pigs have had a little less. One can certainly make the case for goats, sheep, turkeys and donkeys. (You need a donkey to make a mule, don't you?!)

This crowd can be just as guilty of cutting corners on farm safety as everybody else.

How many times, and how many ways, can it be said? ***The moment you make the choice to mix the public and animals, you're not just a farmer or rancher.*** You're now in the business of managing people.

People come with a much higher level of intelligence (one would think) than animals. They are therefore MUCH harder to manage and difficult to control, and it's downright impossible to predict their every action. Make no mistake, when it comes to customer safety on the farm, it's about the people, not the animals. Exercise every bit of good advice you can get on animal husbandry. But put your emphasis on the actions of people.

Some customers learn by reading signs. *Some* learn by being told. *Some* learn by making mistakes. Yup, they're all your customers. Nearly all people learn things based *only* on their predispositions or their previous life lessons. You have no control of that.

Second-generation children from the inner city who have seen animals only at the



city zoo will act around your farm animals just as they've seen other kids act at the zoo. They'll scream, run, make funny noises as if to talk to the animals, and eat crackers sold by the zoo for animal consumption only.

How many times have we seen the best behaved children wash their hands after touching animals, then proceed on the school tour to milk the plastic cow after 10 other kids, then go eat a pizza or a hot dog with no utensils.

Let's face it, the first kids in the plastic cow line are first because they didn't take the time to wash their hands properly! The ones in the middle washed well because they were told to do so, but did anyone stop to think that the artificial teats are now coated with everything the first 10 kids touched?

The kids at the end of the line are constantly pampered and overprotected by Mom and Dad (likely today's chaperones). Those kids have no immune system at all. They were never allowed to eat a little dirt or taste a pink hamburger. Your farm is *not* the place to test these kids' systems. They're simply not like yours and mine. That's reason enough to take this issue seriously.

If you have chosen to be a farm direct marketer, you cannot look the other way on this issue.

By choosing to mix animals and people, you've selected yourself to be held to the highest standards.

Don't blame the regulators. Don't blame the media. Don't blame the scientists.

You're in a different league than those who milk cows in private, produce apples without animals around, or retail country gifts without country sounds and smells.

I'm not passing judgment on anyone here. You've made the choice. You'll need to treat the animals right. You'll need to protect the people from themselves.

As I said earlier, maybe this article will help one stubborn farmer like me look at people differently. Maybe it'll help one horticulturalist to take animal husbandry nearly as seriously as spraying and high ladder pruning. Maybe it'll help prevent that one *E. coli* outbreak that might have broken the backs of this industry. Maybe I could encourage you to share this article with that one non-member of NAFDMA you know I'm talking about. Share the rest of the newsletter, too, okay?

As a lifelong livestock producer, may I please remind all of my fellow farmers and ranchers with livestock in their blood that in today's world, if you've chosen to mix the public with your livestock, it's no longer about the livestock; it's about the public.

To our colleagues who've chosen to mix animals with the public, please be responsible, and don't earn the rest of us good animal folk a bad reputation.

It *could* happen to you!

“That can’t happen here. That won’t affect me. I’m in an ‘out of the way’ spot. They’ll never find me.” If any of you recall having said or thought these things, you’ll want to read some of the items in this newsletter about farm animal displays and safety issues. I believe farm animal displays have become the hot button for 2004/2005.

E. coli, specifically *E. coli* O157:H7, stirred up a bad case of fairsteria earlier this spring. The Florida Department of Health traced the outbreak to petting zoos at central Florida fairs in March. The fairs were all run by the same business. Most of the people who became ill were children.

Years ago, while serving as a director on Pennsylvania’s Apple Marketing Board, we were faced with some incidences of *E. coli* in apple cider. Children died. Those oc-

currences changed what cider looks (and tastes) like in many areas of our nation.

I’m not writing to be an advocate for or against pasteurized cider. I do, however, want to call to your attention the importance of taking this issue seriously if you have even one animal in a barn that children can come in contact with. Safety starts in the animal barn with healthy, content animals. Be sure to read Rob’s article to learn about the benefits of sand in suppressing the presence of *E. coli*. Read Kerry’s article to be educated on the



importance of good signage, good fencing and even better—staff training. Hand washing is the best line of defense in spreading bacteria. All of us need to be reminded of the importance of wash-

ing hands—whether or not we have animals!

Sometimes, when an incident has created hysteria, it helps to put things in perspective.

*** An average of 66 people** are killed by lightning strikes each year (National Weather Service).

*** An average of 61 people** die annually from *E. coli* bacteria (Centers for Disease

Control).

*** Approximately 600 people die each year with acute salmonellosis**, which is most often caused by eating contaminated food.

Why do we tend to hear so much more about *E. coli*? Maybe it’s because we make our livings from farm operations. Or maybe because often it’s children who die, and our heartstrings are pulled.

Whatever the reason, don’t bury your head in the sand (or sawdust). Don’t allow your farm to become the one where the media are staked out to cover an outbreak of *E. coli*.

Take matters into your own hands now—clean hands, that is.

What’s wrong with this picture?

Even a simple animal display can cause problems.



rots as well as fingers.

The farm has made a good attempt at signage, but it’s designed for adults (and not all adults will bother to read the sign).

How could it be improved? For starters:

1. Create new signs that are more visual and that kids could understand.
2. Use a double layer of mesh to keep the little fingers out of the cage.
3. Offer a way for visitors to feed the rabbits, such as through a tube. Insist that they only use pellets that you provide (and that they buy).

Although not designed for animal interaction, this display could potentially cause trouble.

What you don’t see: This area is “fenced” off with about a 16-inch or so fence. It’s located near the parking lot, far from any staff supervision. There’s a hole in the upper cage, probably from visitors forcing carrots through the holes. That hole easily accommodates car-

BMPs will be featured in Texas!

Best management practices (BMPs) for a variety of topics are slated for the 2006 NAFDMA conference in Austin, Texas. One session is titled “BMPs for Petting Farms.” Another session is titled “Food Safety at Farm Markets: Good Agricultural Practices in Action.” Don’t miss them! See the Calendar on the back page for more details.

We hope you’ve enjoyed this special edition of *Market Connection*. We welcome your feedback!

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 28, California

Collaborating on a Food and Farm Bill, Clarion Hotel, Sacramento, Calif.

Contact: Claudia Reid, 916- 447-1711 or e-mail claudia@calfoodandfarming.org.

July 6, Minnesota

Minnesota Apple Growers Association Summer Tour, University of Minnesota Horticultural Research Center and Landscape Arboretum, Chanhassen, Minn.

Call 507-895-2388 or e-mail rpyates@acegroup.cc.

July 18, Iowa

Summer Field Day, Ditmars Orchard & Welch's Gardens, Council Bluffs, Iowa. Contact: Debi Smith,

515-465-5992, ifvga@att.net or visit www.iafruitvegetablegrowers.org.

Aug. 11-14, Massachusetts

NOFA Summer Conference, Hampshire College, Amherst, Mass.

Visit www.nofamass.org, e-mail nofa@nofamass.org or call 978/355-2853.

Jan. 13-14, 2006, Texas

North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference and Trade Show, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Austin, Texas. In addition to educational sessions, outstanding speakers and a diverse trade show, the conference offers a three-day pre-conference bus tour, a

day of workshops, and a post-conference bus tour. The entire convention runs from Jan. 9 to Jan. 16.

For information, visit www.nafdma.com, e-mail info@nafdma.com, or call 413-529-0386. Registration begins Oct. 1.

Early registration discount ends Dec. 6.



**Texas early
registration begins
in four months!**

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