

Abstract

Attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge of Utah agritourism operations

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Agritourism operations use agricultural themes to attract consumers and are associated with over \$560 million in the U.S. Animals are commonly used as part of agritourism, and zoonotic disease outbreaks occur despite developed best practices for preventing human exposure to disease at agritourism events. Much of the U.S. lacks regulation for agritourism. Following an increase in reported human cases of *Escherichia coli* diarrhea associated with exposure to animals at Utah agritourism operations, attitudes, behaviors, and current knowledge of Utah agritourism operations were assessed. A 37-question electronic survey was created and distributed for 64 days; publicized by social media, agricultural extension list serves, and several media announcements. Of 38 usable survey responses, 82% (n=31) had animals on their operations. Direct contact with animals is a known risk factor for disease; 74% (n=23) allowed petting of all animals while 63% (n=20) allowed feeding of some animals. No verbal instructions were provided by 28% (n=7), while 55% (n=17) provided no written disease prevention instructions. The minority (48%, n=15) did not allow eating in animal areas. Of participants who answered (n=27), 67% (n=18) reported having both hand washing and sanitizer available, 11% (n=3) had washing but no sanitizer, 7% (n=2) had sanitizer but no hand washing, and 15% (n=4) provided neither hand washing nor hand sanitizer. Only 6% (n=2) of respondents were familiar with the Compendium of Measures to Prevent Disease Associated with Animals in Public Setting (published by the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association). The majority (61%, n=19) were interested in receiving information regarding zoonotic disease prevention. Therefore a cooperative Extension and Public Health education and outreach program targeting Utah agritourism operations is in development.

Occupational health and safety Protection of the public in relation to communicable diseases including prevention or control Public health or related research

