Working Safely With Farm Animals

This information is provided to assist you in understanding the potential occupational hazards when working with farm animals and the need in some instances to take precautions to minimize the potential for animal-to-human zoonotic disease.

Possible risks when working with farm animals
The size of farm animals poses additional concerns for researchers, due to the physical hazards of weight and strength of the animal. Hooved mammals may resist handling and may require multiple workers to administer medication or other functions.

With regard to pathogens, sheep are known to shed a rickettsia, *Coxiella burnetii* which is the causative agent for Q-Fever. Ruminants and pigs may harbor their own range of bacterial pathogens and parasites, such as *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter* and *Cryptosporidium*. Skin conditions, such as Erysipelas and Orf may result after contact with pigs and sheep and goats, respectively. In addition, these animals may carry biting insect vectors who can act as a potential carrier of disease.

Bites or scratches involving these species or injuries from objects contaminated with body fluids from farm animals require immediate first aid and medical attention.

Recommended personnel protective equipment (PPE)
Gloves and a laboratory coat (or other dedicated protective clothing such as a scrub suit) must be worn when working with farm animals. Do not eat, drink, or apply cosmetics while working in an animal use area, and always wash your hands after working with farm animals. Remember that unfixed tissues, blood, serum, urine, and other materials derived from farm animals may also pose a risk. Bedding, hay, dust, and hair may also exacerbate allergies.

Cleaning and sanitation recommendations
Please contact LAMS Husbandry staff at (513) 558-5171.

Contact Environmental Health & Safety at (513) 556-4968 for any concerns or questions you have about working with farm animals or any vertebrate animal and occupational risks. Help with training personnel in specific work practices to minimize risk can be obtained by contacting the LAMS Husbandry Staff at (513) 558-5171.