ANIMAL CARE AND WELL-BEING
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:
GENERAL ANIMAL WELL-BEING

Q. What is animal well-being?
A. Animal well-being, or animal welfare, refers to an animal’s condition or the treatment it receives. When a person protects an animal’s well-being, he or she makes sure to meet both its physical and mental needs. Animal care, animal husbandry and humane treatment are other terms used when people discuss the condition and treatment of animals.

Q. Why is protecting an animal’s well-being important?
A. It’s the right thing to do. Animals that have good welfare are healthier. It also makes good business sense because farmers who take good care of their animals produce a better quality product.

Q. Should I wash my hands after I touch an animal?
A. Absolutely! Many animals carry germs that can be spread to people. Washing your hands is the best way to keep those germs from spreading to keep both animals and people healthy.

Q. Can animals be happy or sad?
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Q. How do you know if an animal is comfortable?
A. Animal caretakers can tell based on what they know about how that species normally acts. Caretakers must meet not only the animal’s physical needs but its mental needs as well. For example, as with most animals, cats want a soft, comfortable space to rest to meet their physical needs. That space must also meet their mental needs. It should be a raised surface so the cat can have a higher point to watch its surroundings or be partially covered to allow for a hiding space. When animals begin to behave in a way that is not normal for their species, animal caretakers make changes to the animals’ surroundings so that their behavior becomes normal.

Q. Do all animals need the same things?
A. Yes and no. All animals require Brambell’s Five Freedoms: 1) freedom from hunger and thirst; 2) freedom from discomfort; 3) freedom from pain, injury or disease; 4) freedom to express natural behaviors and 5) freedom from fear and distress. The way those freedoms are met for each species can differ. For example, although ducks and chickens are both poultry, ducks need a pool of water to express their natural behavior, but chickens don’t (Brambell, 1965).
Q. Do these animals at the fair have good well-being?  
A. Yes, in fact, fairs are a way to show animals with good well-being. However, fairs can be stressful environments for the animals. They are not used to the noises and number of people that come through the barns to learn about them. When you as a fair goer treat them with respect, it helps us with their good well-being and gives us a chance to teach you about them.

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Q. How do you know how to take care of an animal?  
A. 4-H members learn how to take proper care of their animals through 4-H. Bringing an animal to the fair is part of the learning experience. 4-H'ers learn to show animals and present them to the judge, who will ask questions regarding the animals' care.

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