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KNOWING OHIO'S LIVESTOCK TAMPERING LAWS HELPS MAINTAIN RESPONSIBLE FOOD PRODUCTION AT OHIO'S FAIRS

By Dr. Tony Forshey

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Summer marks the beginning of fair season – a time when thousands of 4-H youth all across the state showcase the animal projects they have spent so much time perfecting.

As these hard working kids gear up to show their animals, I want to encourage all exhibitors to be aware of livestock tampering rules so they do not accidentally disqualify their market animal projects.

Some key things to keep in mind as you prepare your animal for the show ring:

- If an animal is sick, the exhibitor should contact the veterinarian.
- Prescription medications must be prescribed by a veterinarian for a valid medical purpose.
- Extra-label use of any medication must be prescribed by a veterinarian and have an extended withdrawal time.
- Over-the-counter drugs must be used according to label directions for a valid medical purpose.
- Showing any livestock which has been administered a drug that exceeds the tolerance level, or a drug for which the withdrawal period has not elapsed, is prohibited.

Other prohibited practices include: exhibiting an animal which has been tranquilized, making a false statement on a drug use notification form, failing to file or update a drug use notification form, negligently causing an unlawful substance to be present in an animal, or failing to sign a chain of custody form.

If you have questions, calling the right person can make all the difference. As the regulatory agency to ensure food safety and prevent livestock tampering, we have seen instances in past years in which livestock exhibitors unknowingly violated Ohio's livestock tampering laws. For example, if an exhibitor has a problem with their animal and they call the breeder rather than their veterinarian, the well-meaning breeder may inadvertently give the animal a medicine that

would disqualify them from competition. If you have a question or medical concern about your animal, you should always call your veterinarian. Consulting with your veterinarian can prevent an accidental disqualification.

Drug residues and other signs of tampering not only pose food safety concerns, they can provide an unfair competitive advantage over other animals. In an effort to keep things safe and to level the playing field for all animal exhibitors, the Ohio Department of Agriculture will continue to strictly enforce livestock tampering rules this fair season.

Animal exhibition is an important part of youth leadership development and preparation for future food and livestock production. Lessons learned in the show ring prepare youth to be the next generation of successful, responsible food animal producers in our state. In addition to providing us with necessities like food, milk, shelter, and even fuel, food and agriculture provides one in seven people with jobs and generates \$105 billion to the economy. As our population continues to grow, livestock exhibitors will become even more important in passing our agricultural traditions to future generations and helping to provide much needed food and agricultural products.

As you make your final preparations to head into the show ring, I urge all of our youth exhibitors to be aware of Ohio's livestock tampering laws and to be diligent in making sure your animal does not fall victim to an accidental or intentional tampering.

For additional information or clarification, contact the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Division of Animal Health at 614-728-6220.

I wish every one of our animal exhibitors a safe, exciting and successful showing season.