

E.COLI 0157 GUIDANCE

RECREATIONAL & COMMERCIAL USE OF ANIMAL PASTURE USE OF PUBLIC AREAS AS SHOWGROUNDS

Prior to the “show” and “outdoor event” season Aberdeenshire Council is concerned to advise organisers planning recreational use of animal pastures and of public areas as showgrounds of the risks from the organism *E.Coli* 0157 and makes recommendations to reduce the risk of contamination and transmission of the organism.

Contamination

- ◆ A quarter of cattle herds in Scotland and many sheep and goats carry and excrete *E.Coli* 0157
- ◆ Animals do not become ill but can spread the organism to people by direct contact and indirectly via droppings and manure on land
- ◆ Animals show no symptoms and there is no way of knowing when they are infected
- ◆ Animal droppings are the greatest worry where there are concentrations of animals in an area and in wet conditions. It is impossible to avoid getting animal droppings on footwear which can easily be spread into buildings, tents and vehicles. Fences, gates, stiles, seating and play areas can also become contaminated through footwear. These droppings may contain *E. Coli* 0157.
- ◆ To be a risk *E.Coli* 0157 has to be swallowed from contact with hands contaminated food or contaminated water. Even tiny amounts of *E.Coli* 0157 can be a severe risk.
- ◆ When conditions are wet, contamination can spread more easily onto hands, footwear etc increasing the possibility that the organism can pass into the mouth or contaminate food and water.
- ◆ The organism is known to survive in soil and animal droppings for weeks, but levels of contamination decline over time.

Recommendations

Animal Pastures Used for Recreational and/or Commercial Purposes

- ◆ Remove animals from field for 3 weeks prior to use
- ◆ Keep animals off field during use
- ◆ Remove all obvious animal droppings at the beginning of the 3 week period
- ◆ Close cut the grass, keep it short and remove the clippings prior to recreational use
- ◆ Dispose of animal droppings and grass clippings hygienically
- ◆ During recreational use always wash hands before eating, drinking and smoking using soap, clean towels and preferably hot and cold running water
- ◆ Sample any private water supply before recreational use
- ◆ Ensure that water from burns and streams is treated before drinking
- ◆ Ensure adequate supervision of children, particularly Under 5's

Public areas used for Agricultural Shows and Events

- ◆ Animals/livestock which enter and exit a show ring should be penned as close as is practicable to the show ring so that the distance travelled is kept to a minimum
- ◆ Areas where both animals enter and exit the ring and the public walk should be kept clear of animal droppings as far as is reasonably practicable
- ◆ Hand washing facilities should be provided at all penned areas for the duration of the show or event

After the Show/Event

- ◆ All obvious animal droppings should be removed and disposed of hygienically
- ◆ Grassed areas on which animals have been in contact should be close cut immediately after the event and the clippings disposed of hygienically
- ◆ These areas should then be fenced off for a period, sufficient to allow the decay of residual *E.Coli* 0157 contamination, of not less than 3 weeks following the event
- ◆ Warning signs should be erected at the fenced off areas informing the public of the risks and instructing them not to enter these areas

Show and Event organisers within Aberdeenshire who require to apply for a Public Entertainment Licence or Market Operators Licence will be subject to the above recommendations attached as licence conditions dependant on the category of land being used.

Additional advice may be obtained by contacting any Environmental Health Office.