

# Rabbit Health and Biosecurity

## Tattooing

By following these best practices for sanitation and disease control, you can greatly reduce the risk of rabbits contracting any type of infection or disease during the tattooing process.

- Educate your families on what to expect from the tattooing process, and what to watch for beforehand that may be a sign of illness.
- Do not tattoo rabbits that show symptoms of illness, especially diarrhea or respiratory distress. Send these animals home immediately and disinfect any common surfaces they may have contaminated.
- Disinfect tattoo pliers and digits with isopropyl alcohol between each family.
- Use a table covered with carpet or **secured** carpet squares to provide secure footing for the rabbit, and minimize risk of injuries. Since carpet is nearly impossible to disinfect, families should be allowed to bring their own carpet squares if desired.
- A second person should hold the rabbit securely on the table during the tattooing process. Do not wrap rabbits in towels or blankets while tattooing.

## Nutrition & Stress

Minimizing stress in rabbits is an important key to keeping them healthy.

- Feed rabbits a balanced, pelleted feed as their primary source of nutrition.
- Any changes in diet should be gradual and NOT done during times of high stress (fair, just prior to or after tattooing, etc.).
  - Maintain the same feeding and watering routine at your county fair that you use at home.
  - Bring your feed from home and do not participate in common shared feed areas.
- Keep in mind that water from different sources may smell and taste different. Encourage families to bring water from home for use at the county fair, etc.



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- Plan ahead for transporting your rabbits to pre-fair tattooing and the fair
  - Make sure rabbits will not get overheated.
  - If you are using a carrier with a solid bottom plan to include an absorbent material for the bottom (towel, shavings, etc.) to absorb urine. You can also use a piece of wire that is elevated to keep the rabbit from sitting on the solid bottom.
  - Make sure the rabbit can be contained within the carrier/tote and there are no open areas for protruding appendages (i.e. legs) to stick out and get broken.
- Sometimes you have to stand in line once you arrive at tattooing or fair check-in, so prepare accordingly to minimize the stress on your rabbit by planning ahead.