Rabies Requirements for NH 4-H Animals

Upon the recommendation of the New Hampshire State Veterinarian, all mammals except rabbits and cavies shown or exhibited at New Hampshire 4-H events including fairs, shows, clinics, 4-H club meetings, county activities day or any other event sponsored by 4-H, must have a current inoculation for rabies given at least 30 days prior to the event. In the event of an animal who had a prior current rabies vaccination, the 30-day prior to the event requirement is waived; for example a horse receiving a rabies vaccination May 1 of the prior year can receive a booster vaccination on May 1 of the current year and attend an event immediately. A licensed veterinarian administered rabies vaccination is recommended. Always check with individual fair regulations for their requirements as some may require veterinarian certification.

Immunization against rabies is recommended for all rabbits and cavies shown in NH 4-H shows and other 4-H events, provided the animal is housed in a cage or hutch that prevents any direct contact with wildlife. Any rabbit or cavy housed in a situation that allows exposure to wildlife is required to be immunized against rabies. Some fairs and events may require rabies vaccination for all rabbits and cavies; be sure to check the animal health requirements for any event you plan to attend.

All animals being displayed at fairs, shows and events should be restrained in a manner that would not allow the public to be bitten or exposed to saliva.

Rabies vaccinations cannot be given to 4-H animals under 12 weeks of age AND we require the vaccination be given at least 30 days prior to exhibiting an animal. All 4-H project animals requiring vaccination must be at least 16 weeks of age by show day to be shown, exhibited or brought to any 4-H event. For instance, a lamb born on April 30 could not be vaccinated until July 23 and couldn’t be exhibited or brought to a 4-H event before August 22 (30 days after July 23 vaccination date). Always check the fair book or show/event materials for the deadlines for the specific event.

Other health requirements vary by species and show. Individual shows and fairs may have additional vaccination and health requirements as recommended by the New Hampshire State Veterinarian’s office. Always check the fair book or event materials for additional health requirements.

Visit our website: extension.unh.edu

The University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension is an equal opportunity educator and employer. University of New Hampshire, U.S. Department of Agriculture and N.H. counties cooperating. Revised February 2020