

4-H's healthy approach to zoonotic diseases because "People and Pigs get the Flu"

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Every year, people get sick from diseases spread between animals and people, or [zoonotic diseases](#). Along with pets and zoos, local and state fairs are places of high interaction between people and animals. Some instances of outbreaks related to salmonella, E. coli, and flu can be traced back to exposure at fairs.

Fairs provide a spot to gather for youth who exhibit animals. This increases the potential of disease exposure, yet also provides a venue for educating both exhibitors and the public about these diseases and disease prevention strategies.

Federal partnership successes

A three-way partnership was developed between [4-H National Headquarters](#) at NIFA, [Animal Plant Health Inspection Service](#) (APHIS), and the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) to address issues of zoonotic disease, especially in the context of youth exhibitors at local and state fairs. Through this partnership, expertise and resources were contributed to create educational and promotional materials to use with youth, youth serving organizations, and fair associations to prevent, identify and respond to zoonotic issues.

Additional partnerships with Cooperative Extension, State Veterinarians, and State Departments of Public Health were used in the implementation of these new resources.

This collaborative approach has led to the development of the following:

- Strategic promotion of a compendium of resources for minimizing transmission of influenza amongst swine exhibitors at exhibitions.
- Friends Magazine, Be a [Zoonotic Disease Detective](#) edition created by Georgia 4-H in partnership with CDC and funded in part by APHIS, has been adopted by more than a dozen other states.
- A graphic novella, The [Junior Disease Detectives](#), that introduces youth to not only zoonosis but also careers related to epidemiology.

The response to these materials prompted grant funding from the CDC and the Council for State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) via the Influenza Education among Youth in Agriculture Pilot Project to promote One Health collaboration between federal and state public health and animal health authorities and state youth agriculture groups.

This innovative program educates youth about influenza and other zoonotic infections, delivers disease prevention and mitigation messages, and strengthens One Health networks among state human and animal health departments and agricultural communities across rural America. **This program has resulted in collaborative partnerships with 4-H programs in several states.**

- Youth in Animal Agriculture: Excellence in Exhibition – Iowa State Center for Food Security & Public Health
- Online course
- In-person course
- Animal Science Anywhere – Michigan State University Extension
- Lesson plans and materials

An existing partnership with the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) was expanded to address Zika, the mosquito-borne illness, and co-create a toolkit for teens and adults to use for the prevention of and response to the Zika outbreak.

The 4-H Community Health Outreach Toolkit: Responding to Mosquito-Borne Illnesses, released in June 2016, is posted on the 4-H National Headquarters website and has been promoted through multiple webinars, e-newsletters, and on social media.

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For more information, contact your local UGA Extension office at 1-800-ASK-UGA1.

The University of Georgia 4-H program is the largest youth leadership organization in the state.

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