

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
2026 CONNECTICUT FAIR AND SHOW REQUIREMENTS
Revised 6/3/2026

UPDATE

Effective immediately, lactating dairy cattle moving interstate from States with Unaffected State Status under the National Milk Testing Strategy are no longer required to be tested for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 prior to movement. USDA APHIS Requirements and Recommendations for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 Virus in Livestock for State Animal Health Officials, Accredited Veterinarians and Producers

FEDERAL ORDER

Effective April 29, 2024, all lactating dairy cattle must receive a negative test for Influenza A virus at an approved National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) laboratory for interstate movement.¹ Currently, the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (CVMDL) at UCONN is the only approved NAHLN laboratory in New England.² Milk samples must be collected and submitted by the same Category II accredited veterinarian who is completing the health certificate and must be collected no more than seven (7) days prior to interstate movement.¹ Lactating dairy cattle from herds which have tested positive for Influenza A are not eligible for movement for thirty (30) days from the most recent collection of any sample that tests positive from any individual animal in the herd. After the 30-day period, animals must be tested again for movement. No dairy cattle exhibiting clinical signs of HPAI will be allowed to move into Connecticut.¹

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL ANIMALS

1. All animal competitors may be blood tested for banned substances.
2. Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI) (aka Health Certificate), signed by an accredited veterinarian, and other required testing will be valid for the entire 2026 show season. If traveling to multiple New England States for exhibition, see the Memorandum – 2026 New England Fairs and Shows for additional requirements.³
3. All animals and poultry entered at fairs and shows must be in good health and in proper physical condition and will be examined at the exhibition by the barn superintendent. Evidence of poor condition or infectious or contagious disease, or failure to produce the necessary documents for health certification, vaccination, or testing will result in ejection. The Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DoAg) Livestock Inspector's decision is final.
4. CVI issued within 60 days of first show (or in accordance with the NE fair agreement), and proof of vaccination where applicable, are the responsibility of exhibitors, competitors, and special attractions (petting zoos, etc.). A physical copy of the CVI must be provided to fair superintendents (printed eCVI or owner's copy of paper CVI).
5. Each barn superintendent will collect and hold CVIs from each exhibitor, competitor, and special attractions. Animals not in compliance with state regulations for shows and fairs will not be allowed. A complete list (exhibitor name, address, animal's official USDA ID — ear tag, tattoo, or microchip; breed, age, and total head count) will be made available to the State Livestock Inspector and forwarded to the DoAg Bureau of Regulatory Services by the fair superintendent. All animals and poultry present on the grounds shall be identified on this list. Any animal that is rejected should be noted as such with a brief statement of reason. Rejected animals or poultry should be removed from the grounds as soon as possible. Any concerns about the health of any animal or bird should be reported to the State Livestock Inspector or the Fair Veterinarian immediately.
6. All exhibited animals and poultry should be isolated from Home Farm animals and poultry after the show. DoAg recommends a 3–4-week isolation period to help reduce the risk of disease exposure and transmission contracted while at the fair or show. Call your local veterinarian if your animals or poultry display symptoms of illness.

REQUIREMENTS FOR IN-STATE CONNECTICUT ANIMALS

Rabies (In-State)

All cattle, horses, sheep, and dogs must have a rabies vaccination given by a licensed veterinarian. The vaccination certificate must be signed by the veterinarian who administered the vaccine and include the animal's identification and description, the name of the vaccine's manufacturer, serial number, and the date the vaccination was given and when it expires. If it is the animal's first rabies vaccination, it must be given at least 30 DAYS prior to their first show date to be considered current.⁸

ALL SPECIES

Animals must originate from herds or flocks that meet the testing and health requirements of the State of Connecticut. State livestock inspectors may request proof of compliance. No herd or flock under quarantine shall move or be exhibited. All animals must have permanent official USDA identification (ear tag, tattoo, or microchip; horses must retain Coggins / EIA documentation as applicable).⁴

CATTLE (including OXEN)

All cattle must have an approved official USDA identification and be accompanied by a CVI issued within 60 days of first show (or per NE fair agreement) by an accredited veterinarian stating that the animal is in good health and not showing signs of infectious, contagious, and/or communicable diseases.⁴

HORSES / PONIES

All horses must have a negative test for Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) within 12 months of the show date and be accompanied by the Coggins certificate AND a CVI issued within 60 days of the first show date (or per NE fair agreement). EIA testing may be AGID or ELISA. The equine standard of care strongly recommends vaccination against EEE, WNV, Influenza, and Rhinotracheitis within 6 months of the first show date. All pulling horse/pony competitors must have a microchip. **SHEEP**

All sheep must have an approved official USDA identification and be accompanied by a CVI issued within 60 days of the first show date (or per NE fair agreement) by an accredited veterinarian stating that the sheep are in good health and not showing signs of infectious, contagious, and/or communicable diseases and are not from Scrapie exposed- flocks.⁵

GOATS

All goats must have an approved official USDA identification, and a CVI issued within 60 days of first show date (or per NE fair agreement) by an accredited veterinarian stating that the animals are in good health and not showing signs of infectious, contagious, and/or communicable diseases and are not from Scrapie exposed- herds.⁵

SWINE

All swine must have an approved official USDA identification, and a CVI issued within 60 days of first show date (or per NE fair agreement) by an accredited veterinarian. All swine must also originate from Connecticut herds that are tested for Brucellosis and Pseudo-rabies on a yearly 3 basis per statutory requirement. If the swine is purchased from a tested herd, a bill of sale from the Connecticut producer must be presented to the State Veterinarian's office before a Connecticut Exhibition Test card will be issued to the new owner.

POULTRY

Poultry originating within the state must come from healthy flocks with no evidence of infectious, contagious, and/or communicable diseases. All birds must be inspected, identified, and accompanied by written proof (Connecticut Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory Report) verifying the individual birds listed were blood tested negative- for Salmonella pullorum within 365 days of the show date or proof that the bird originated from a USDA NPIP flock.^{2,6} Avian Influenza testing of the flock and / or individual birds is required. All cages, crates, or vehicles used for housing or transporting poultry must be cleaned and disinfected before and after each show. Doves and pigeons are exempt from testing requirements but must be identified by CT Department of Agriculture within 365 days of the show date.

Waterfowl are not allowed to be shown or displayed for the 2026 Fair & Show Season.

LLAMAS & ALPACAS

Llamas and alpacas that originate within the state must have a CVI issued within 60 days of the first show date (or per NE fair agreement) by an accredited veterinarian listing the permanent identification (ear tag, tattoo, or microchip) and stating the animal is in good health and free of obvious signs of infectious disease.

RABBITS

All rabbits must have a CVI issued within 60 days of the first show date (or per NE fair agreement) by an accredited veterinarian stating that the animal is in good health and not showing signs of infectious, contagious, and/or communicable diseases including Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHD). Rabbits must have a permanent identification number in the left ear (tattoo or may be micro-chipped behind the left ear). The identification number must match the animal's number on the CVI. Rabbits are exempt from needing a rabies vaccination. Official ARBA Show Rules, Section 26.⁷

DOGS

All dogs must have a CVI issued within 60 days of the first show date (or per NE fair agreement) which states the animal is in good health and free of obvious signs of infectious, contagious, and/or communicable diseases. All dogs over 3 months of age shall be properly vaccinated for rabies (mandatory) and DAHLP+B (Distemper, Adenovirus, Hepatitis, Leptospirosis, Parvovirus, Bordetella) (highly recommended). Proof of vaccination and a valid CT Dog License is required. Dogs must wear a collar and a 2026 Dog License tag. The licensing tag serves as the official identification of the dog.

REQUIREMENTS FOR OUT-OF-STATE ANIMALS

Rabies (Out of- -State)

All cattle, horses, sheep, and dogs must have a rabies vaccination given by a licensed veterinarian. The vaccination certificate must be signed by the veterinarian who administered the vaccine and include the animal's identification and description, the name of the vaccine's manufacturer, serial number, and the date the vaccination was given and when it expires. If it is the animal's first rabies vaccination, it must be given at least 30 DAYS prior to their first show date.⁸

ALL SPECIES

Animals shall originate from herds or flocks that meet the animal import testing and health requirements of the State of Connecticut and must be accompanied by a CVI within 60 days of the first show (or per NE fair agreement). No animals from a herd or flock under quarantine order shall enter the State. All animals must have permanent official USDA identification (ear tag, tattoo, microchip, or Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) certificate). Poultry identification can include leg and/or wing bands.⁴

- Exhibition permits: All livestock species and birds must have an exhibition permit number on the health certificates. Call 860-713-2504 or 860-713-2508 for a permit number. All out-of-state animals and birds offered for sale must meet Connecticut Animal Importation Regulations.

CATTLE / OXEN

All cattle must have an approved official USDA identification and be accompanied by a CVI issued within 60 days of their first show (or per NE fair agreement) by an accredited veterinarian stating that the animal is in good health and not showing signs of infectious, contagious, and/or communicable diseases.⁴

All cattle must have a negative TB test within 12 months of the show date. Cattle under 6 months of age may go on the dam's TB test chart if the dam was tested for TB within the past 12 months and a copy of the results is provided. All Brucellosis vaccinated female cattle over 18 months of age and all bulls and non-vaccinated female cattle 6 months of age and older must have a negative Brucellosis test within 12 months of the show date. Steers and spayed heifers are exempt from Brucellosis testing.⁴

Lactating Dairy Cattle (Out of -State)

All lactating dairy cattle are required to receive a negative test for Influenza A virus at an approved NAHLN laboratory for interstate movement. Milk samples must be collected and submitted by the same Category II accredited veterinarian who is completing the health certificate and must be collected no more than seven (7) days prior to interstate movement. Lactating dairy cattle from herds which have tested positive for Influenza A are not eligible for movement for thirty (30) days from the most recent collection of any sample that tests positive from any individual animal in the herd. After the 30-day period, animals must be tested again for movement. No dairy cattle exhibiting clinical signs of HPAI will be allowed to move into Connecticut.¹

HORSES / PONIES

All horses must have a negative test for Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) within 12 months of their show date (AGID or ELISA). The animal must be accompanied by a paper Coggins certificate AND a CVI issued within 60 days of the first show date (or per NE fair agreement). The standard of veterinary care strongly recommends vaccination against EEE, WNV, Influenza, and 5 Rhinotracheitis within 6 months of the first show date. All pulling horse/pony competitors must have a microchip.

SHEEP

All sheep must have approved official USDA identification and be accompanied with a CVI issued within 60 days of the first show date (or per NE fair agreement) by an accredited veterinarian stating that the sheep are in good health and not showing signs of infectious, contagious, and/or communicable diseases and are not from Scrapie exposed- flocks.⁵

GOATS

All goats must have approved official USDA identification and be accompanied by a CVI issued within 60 days of their first show date (or per NE fair agreement) by an accredited veterinarian stating that the goats are in good health and not showing signs of infectious, contagious, and / or communicable diseases and are not from Scrapie exposed- flocks.⁵ All goats must originate from Brucellosis and TB free- herds. Goats 3 months old and over must test negative to TB and Brucellosis within 12 months of the show date. Kids under 3 months of age may go on the dam's test chart if the dam was tested within the past 12 months and a copy of the results is provided. Wethers are exempt from Brucellosis testing.

SWINE

All swine must have an approved official USDA identification, and a CVI issued within 60 days prior to the first show (or per NE fair agreement) by an accredited veterinarian. Swine that are 3 months of age and older must be negative to Brucellosis and Pseudorabies tests. Barrows are exempt from Brucellosis testing but must have a negative Pseudorabies test. Piglets under 3 months of age may go on the sow's testing chart if the sow was tested and originated from a Brucellosis-free and Pseudorabies--free herd and must be on the CVI.

POULTRY

All poultry must be identified and test negative for Salmonella pullorum within 12 months of the show date and be accompanied by this certificate. All poultry must comply with the Department of Agriculture Avian Influenza (AI) requirements, originating from AI Free flocks or be tested for AI within 30 days of entry and have a certificate. No poultry from any areas of any state having Avian Influenza may enter Connecticut. All cages, crates, and vehicles used for housing and transporting poultry must be cleaned and disinfected before and after each show. Doves and pigeons are exempt from testing requirements but must be identified by leg bands or wing tags. Waterfowl are not allowed to be shown or displayed for the 2026 Fair & Show Season.

LLAMAS & ALPACAS

All llamas and alpacas must have a negative Axillary TB test within 12 months and a negative Brucellosis test within 12 months of entry, and a CVI issued within 60 days of the first show (or per NE fair agreement) by an accredited veterinarian, listing the permanent identification (ear tag, tattoo, or microchip) and test results.

RABBITS

All rabbits must have a CVI issued within 60 days of their first show (or per NE fair agreement) by an accredited veterinarian stating that the animal is in good health and not showing signs of infectious, contagious, and / or communicable diseases including RHD. Rabbits must have a permanent identification number in the left ear (tattoo or may be chipped behind left ear). The 6 identification number must match the animal's number on the CVI. Rabbits are exempt from needing a rabies vaccination. Official ARBA Show Rules, Section 26.⁷

DOGS

All dogs must have a CVI issued within 60 days of the first show (or per NE fair agreement) by an accredited veterinarian stating the animal is in good health and free of obvious signs of infectious, contagious, and/or communicable diseases. All dogs over 3 months of age shall be properly vaccinated for rabies (mandatory) and DAHLP+B (highly recommended). Proof of vaccination and a valid STATE Dog License is required. Dogs must wear a collar and a current Dog License tag. The licensing tag serves as the official identification of the dog.

IMPORTANT NOTICE - RABIES IN PUBLIC SETTINGS

All animals for which there is a licensed rabies vaccine (cattle, horses, sheep, dogs, cats, and ferrets exposed to the public) shall be vaccinated against rabies. Animals not having an approved rabies vaccination shall be displayed in a manner such that the public would not be in contact or exposed to saliva from those animals or have clearly visible posted signs or tape stating:

"CONNECTICUT RABIES ADVISORY NOTICE - DO NOT FEED OR TOUCH ANIMALS."⁸

On August 4, 2009, the Department of Agriculture adopted regulations for the "Control of Rabies in Public Settings" which will be enforced at all Connecticut fairs and public exhibitions. The complete text of the regulations, RCSA §§ 22-359-1 through 22-359-5, follows this notice.⁸ Provisions (apply to in-state and out-of-state animals): Animals with a licensed rabies vaccine

1. Horses, cattle, sheep, dogs, and cats must be currently vaccinated against rabies by a licensed veterinarian unless they are under the minimum age to be vaccinated (ferrets included if displayed).

2. These animals must have a rabies vaccination certificate signed by the licensed veterinarian administering the vaccine that includes: animal identification and description, owner name and address, vaccine manufacturer, serial number, date administered, and expiration date.

3. If it is the animal's first vaccination, it must be given at least 30 days prior to the first show date to be considered current.⁸

Animals not having an approved rabies vaccination

1. Includes animals for which there is not a licensed rabies vaccine and animals for which there is a licensed rabies vaccine but are under the age to be vaccinated (most rabies vaccines are labeled to be administered at ≥3 months).

2. Animals must be separated from the public by sufficient means to avoid direct contact with people and other animals (e.g., double fence, plexiglass) or conspicuous signs or tape must be posted near the animal enclosure stating:

"CONNECTICUT RABIES ADVISORY NOTICE - DO NOT FEED OR TOUCH ANIMALS".⁸

Rabies advisory tape with the notice wording is available for purchase from the Department of Agriculture.

Please contact DoAg at 860-713-2504 for questions on requirements, rabies regulations, or to obtain rabies advisory notice tape.

USE OF ANIMALS - CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES REQUIREMENT

Exhibitors, vendors, and fair operators must comply with Connecticut General Statutes § 53-250, which prohibits certain uses of animals at fairs and public exhibitions.¹⁰

Under this law:

1. No animal (including fish, reptiles, or birds) may be used to solicit alms, donations, payments, subscriptions, or contributions.
2. No animal may be used as a prize or award in any game, contest, or device.
3. Wild animals may not be exhibited in connection with any business for the purpose of attracting trade on any street, highway, public park, fair, exhibition, amusement venue, or place of entertainment.
4. No person may own, keep, or have custody of any animal for any of these prohibited purposes.

Statutory exemptions include:

1. Exhibitions of animals by:
 - Accredited educational institutions,
 - Zoological gardens, or
 - Theatrical exhibitions or circuses.
2. The use of animals in a cow-chip- raffle.

Violations of § 53-250 constitute a Class D misdemeanor.

Reference Page:

<https://portal.ct.gov/doag/-/media/doag/state-vet/2026/2026-connecticut-fair-and-show-requirements.pdf?rev=80ec437590d046b9a0f142f79eaf6e49&hash=9AF5F32E44A2DF730D44E5C3CC37F852>