

August 1, 2005

AGRICULTURE SPONSORS E. COLI CONSUMER PROTECTION WORKSHOP

In response to recent outbreaks of E. coli 0157:H7 in Florida and other states, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Florida Department of Health funded a two-day consumer protection workshop developed and conducted by the International Association of Fairs and Expositions (IAFE), a nonprofit trade association serving the agricultural fair industry.

Some 220 participants throughout Florida attended the session, representing 33 fairs and 18 petting zoo exhibitors.

The Florida Federation of Fairs sponsored the training, which was held at the Florida Strawberry Festival site in Plant City on July 30th and 31st. Florida Farm Bureau, IFAS-The Cooperative Extension Service, Florida Ag in the Classroom and other groups supported the effort. The workshop provided basic information about consumer protection programs and was designed to assist fairs and animal exhibitors in developing protocols to enhance consumer safety at petting zoos, fairs and other petting animal exhibition areas.

The IAFE training workshop centered on site-specific protocols for waste management, hand-washing stations, animal and visitor flow patterns, understanding pathogens and managing fair facilities, improving operational procedures, training, crisis response, record-keeping, and developing a critical response plan and a sanitation standard operating procedure, among other topics.