

Livestock, poultry safe from coronavirus: Expert

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(HealthDay)—In a bit of good news about the novel coronavirus, one expert says it looks like livestock and poultry don't appear to be at risk from COVID-19.

The coronavirus most likely jumped from an [animal species](#) into humans and mutated into a virus that mostly affects people, said Jim Roth, director of the Center for Food Security and Public Health at Iowa State University.

"If livestock were getting the virus and getting sick we'd most likely know that from what's gone on in other countries," Roth said in a university news release.

"It does seem to be pretty species-specific to people," said Roth, a professor of veterinary microbiology and preventive medicine.

Researchers are examining the possibility that livestock might develop minor infections or carry the coronavirus, but the [virus](#) is still too new for any

firm conclusions at this time, he explained.

The low level of risk to livestock and poultry is good news for U.S. [livestock](#) producers, meat packers and consumers, who could use some stability as uncertainty about the coronavirus restricts many normal daily activities, Roth noted.

However, he added that the coronavirus could disrupt the U.S. food supply by causing workforce shortages for the meat packing industry.

Meat packing, processing and distribution occurs around the clock, and fresh meat has a limited shelf life, so if a significant portion of meat packing employees have to stay home because of the coronavirus, the workforce shortage could slow operations at plants, Roth explained.

All available evidence suggests that [meat](#), milk and eggs remain safe to eat, he said.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on [animals and the coronavirus](#).

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