Animal Safety Alert

CYANOBACTERIA BLOOMS
When in doubt, it’s best to keep out!

What is a cyanobacteria bloom?
Cyanobacteria, sometimes called blue-green algae, are microscopic organisms found naturally in all types of water.
• Cyanobacteria grow quickly, or bloom, when the water is warm, stagnant, and full of nutrients.
• Cyanobacteria blooms usually occur during the summer and fall. However, they can occur anytime during the year.
• When a bloom occurs, scum might float on the water’s surface.
• Blooms come in different colors, from green or blue to red or brown.
• As the bloom dies off, you may smell an odor like rotting plants.

What is a toxic bloom?
Sometimes, cyanobacteria produce toxins.
• The toxins can be present in the cyanobacteria cells or in the water.
• Swallowing water with cyanobacteria that are producing toxins can cause serious illness.

Health and Safety Tips for Pets and Livestock
• Do not let your pets or livestock graze near, drink, or swim in water where you see cyanobacteria blooms, foam, or scum on the surface.
• If your animal gets in water with a bloom, immediately wash it off with clean water. Do not let the animal lick cyanobacteria off of its fur.
• Call a veterinarian if your animal shows any of these symptoms of cyanobacteria poisoning: loss of energy, loss of appetite, vomiting, stumbling and falling, foaming at the mouth, diarrhea, convulsions, excessive drooling, tremors and seizures, or any unexplained sickness that occurs within a day or so after being in contact with water.

You can help protect your pets and livestock from cyanobacteria blooms by taking the following actions:
• Visit http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/hab/hab/ to learn more about cyanobacteria.
• Know what a bloom looks like and avoid contact.
• Keep pets and livestock away from the water if you see signs of cyanobacteria.
• Call your veterinarian if your animals are sick.
• Call your state or local health department to report pets or livestock made sick by cyanobacteria.

To report a cyanobacteria bloom or a related health event:
• Call your local or state health department

You cannot tell if a bloom is toxic just by looking at it!