

Harmful Algal Blooms and Livestock

Harmful algal blooms (HABs) can be deadly for pets and livestock.

When in doubt, keep animals out!



Harmful algal blooms (cyanobacteria) are microscopic organisms that can be found naturally in all types of water (fresh, marine, or brackish). Sometimes cyanobacteria rapidly grow out of control, or blooms. These blooms can form in warm, slow-moving waters, like ponds and lakes that are rich in nutrients from sources such as fertilizer runoff or septic tank overflows. HABs can produce harmful toxins (poisons), which can cause serious illness and death in animals. Detailed information including photos of HABs and organisms mistaken for HABs can be found on the NJDEP HAB Website: <https://www.nj.gov/dep/hab/>

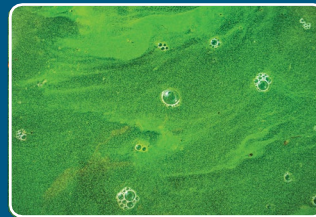
Signs of a harmful algal bloom:



Foam, scum, mats, or paint-like streaks on the water's surface.



Different colors like green, blue, red, or brown.



As the bloom dies off, it may smell like rotting plants.



Cyanobacteria bloom more often in summer and fall, but can bloom anytime.

You cannot tell if a HAB is toxic or not just by looking at it.

Protect your livestock:

- Keep livestock away from the water if you see signs of a HAB.
- Do not let your animals drink, swim in, or eat near discolored or scummy water. Provide an alternative fresh water source, such as a trough filled from a well.
- Results of HAB investigations are posted on the NJDEP HAB Dashboard (QR Code)
- Report suspected HABs to your County Health Department or report to NJDEP online at <https://www.nj.gov/dep/hab/> or call 1-800-WARN-DEP.
- Report suspect livestock deaths to the Department of Agriculture, Division of Animal Health, State Veterinarian at 609-671-6400

Livestock can get very sick and die within hours to days after swallowing toxins made by HABs.



Exposure symptoms:

Call a veterinarian immediately if your animal has swallowed water from an area with a suspected HAB or shows any of these signs:

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| » Loss of energy | » Stumbling and falling | » Convulsions | » Any unexplained sickness that occurs within a day or so after being in contact with HAB. |
| » Loss of appetite | » Foaming at the mouth | » Excessive drooling | |
| » Vomiting | » Diarrhea | » Tremors and seizures | |

Preventative actions:

- ✓ Consider installing exclusionary fencing to keep livestock away from surface water, especially if located in a watershed with known HABs.
- ✓ Consider an alternative water source to protect your livestock.
- ✓ If you would like assistance determining applicability of these and other practices on your farm, contact your local USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service Office ; or NJ Department of Agriculture, Division of Agricultural and Natural Resources at 609-913-6492.

