



# Flooding: Animal Health Concerns

## During: As the Water Rises

- Do your best to prevent pets and livestock from consuming untreated water. Water-borne diseases (such as leptospirosis, E. coli, and Salmonella) can cause diarrhea and vomiting. Humans are susceptible to many of these, too.
- Parasites (like roundworms, hookworms, giardia, fleas) are more prevalent during and after floods.
- Seek veterinary medical attention if an animal shows signs of: vomiting, diarrhea, dermatitis, fever, respiratory stress or physical illness.
- Pets may need booster vaccinations for distemper, parvovirus and hepatitis.
- Contaminated flood waters should be washed off of pets using a grease-cutting detergent (like Dawn) to remove oily residues that may cling to their coats. Animals can suffer the effects of chemical burns, like dermatitis, conjunctivitis or hair loss, from toxic substances floating in the flood waters.
- Livestock that are in standing water for extended periods of time may experience foot/hoof problems. Watch for signs of infection, injury or lameness.
- If pet food or feedstuffs (grain, hay) have been wet, throw it out. It will be susceptible to mold and the toxins they produce. This will be especially true after the flood is over.
- While sheltering in an unfamiliar place, keeping pets kenneled/crated can help them feel more secure. Placing something familiar (like a toy or blanket, or even a worn shirt that carries the owner's scent) in the crate can be comforting. Try to keep the pet's routine as close to normal as possible (feeding and walking schedule, bedtime, etc.).

## Afterward: As the Water Recedes

- Empty-out reservoirs for standing water that can allow mosquitoes to breed. Even very small, shallow pools (like tires, buckets, tin cans) can provide breeding space for mosquitoes.
- Make sure horses are vaccinated against West Nile virus and other mosquito-borne diseases (EEE, WEE).
- Animals may be confused by the changes in their surroundings after all the destruction. The visual landmarks and familiar smells will be different. This may cause some stress/disorientation.
- Before turning animals out into fenced yards/areas, check the integrity of the fencing. Also walk the area and look for any debris that could injure pets/livestock (like rusty metal, broken glass, etc.). Watch out for downed power lines or potentially damaged gas lines that pose hazards.
- Avoid wildlife that were displaced by flooding. Raccoons, skunks and other wild species may pose a danger to people and their animals. If an animal (or person) is bitten by a wild animal, seek medical attention right away.
- Use caution when approaching roaming/unclaimed pets or other animals after a disaster. Stressed animals may be unusually aggressive or afraid.
- If an animal has been without food for several days, introduce food slowly, in small amounts. Gorging may be harmful to some animals, especially pet birds.

Information provided by the  
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