

New Cyanotoxin Resources Available for Veterinarians

Harmful algal blooms (HABs) can occur year-round but typically peak in late spring and summer.

This year, several state agencies have formed the Interagency Working Group on HAB-Related Illnesses to assist local responders to HABs, including veterinarians. Their outreach letter (oehha.ca.gov/risk-assessment/document/veterinarian-outreach-letter-interagency-working-group-harmful-algal-bloom) to veterinarians in California describes new resources to assist practitioners in responding

to suspected HAB-related illnesses in animals. The letter describes the limited state funding available for cyanotoxin confirmatory testing in canine cases. Technical information on assessing exposure history, evaluating clinical signs, pursuing diagnosis, and confirmatory testing and patient management is available in a fact sheet (oehha.ca.gov/risk-assessment/fact-sheet/blue-green-algae-veterinarian-reference). State agencies can also investigate potential HABs in waterbodies where reported animal exposures occurred. The confirmation of toxins (or toxin-producing HABs) in the exposure area may support the patient diagnosis and prevent further poisonings through public notices. Additionally, the Interagency Working Group plans to collect data from veterinary clinics and hospitals in order to report HAB-related animal illnesses to the Centers for Disease Control's One Health Harmful Algal Bloom System (cdc.gov/habs/ohhabs.html). ■



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