

More Blue-Green Algae/Cyanobacteria Images



Resources:

Visit the UDAF website
for more information:

<http://ag.utah.gov/conservation-environmental.html?layout=edit&id=632>



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Harmful Algae Blooms:

How Cyanobacteria Impacts Agriculture



Harmful algal blooms (HAB) are the result of rapid increase or accumulation of cyanobacteria on the surface of a water body. Cyanobacteria, sometimes known as blue-green algae, can cause blooms in Utah lakes and ponds when nutrients, sunlight and temperatures are optimal. Some types of blue-green algae can produce toxins which can harm the liver or nervous systems of humans and animals when contacted or ingested. In the past, animals that have consumed polluted water or algae mats have died.



Utah Department of Agriculture and Food

Toxic



How Do I Know if I Have A Toxic Algal Bloom?

You don't know for certain unless you have the water tested. However, look for these differences between toxic cyanobacteria and non-toxic green algae:

- Toxic blue-green algae/cyanobacteria looks like pea soup, an oil slick, or like someone placed dye in the water (see above, and other photos within this brochure).
- Filamentous (non-toxic) green algae often looks like a mass of green hair on the water (see below).

Non-Toxic



How Does a Toxic Bloom Effect Me as an Agricultural Producer?

There are potential health impacts, some of them serious, to people and animals that come in contact with toxins in blue-green algae/cyanobacteria.

Common Exposure:

People:

- Skin contact with scum or water containing cyanobacteria cells or toxins.
- Inhaling tiny droplets of water containing toxins or cells during recreational activities, or during sprinkler irrigation.

Animals:

- Ingesting water with toxins or mats of cyanobacteria cells.

Common Symptoms of Exposure:

Humans:

- Sore throat, congestion, cough, wheezing, eye irritation, rash, blistering, abdominal pain, headache, vomiting, and diarrhea.

Animals:

- Vomiting, lethargy, diarrhea, convulsions, difficulty breathing, and general weakness. There have been livestock deaths from toxic algae exposures and water consumption.

How Do I Respond?

Here are some suggested Dos and Don'ts if you believe you or your animals have been exposed to toxins:

Do:

- Rinse yourself and your pets off immediately with clean water.
- Seek medical treatment right away if you think you, your pet, or your livestock might have been exposed to cyanobacteria toxins.
- Have your water tested if you are suspicious that it may contain cyanobacteria. Contact UDAF for direction for how to get the water tested.

Don't:

- Touch algae or water that contains cyanobacteria.
- Let pets or livestock swim in or drink from areas where the water looks like pea soup, an oil slick, or it looks like someone placed green dye in the water.

What about my crops?

Toxins in blue-green algae/cyanobacteria may also effect crops and potentially those that consume crops irrigated with toxic water. Currently research is being done on this issue. Sprinkler irrigation is a particular concern because of aerosol toxin distribution.

