

HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS

One of the most common causes of harmful algal blooms or HABs are photosynthetic bacteria called cyanobacteria.



More information about [cyanobacteria](#). To see which chemical products are approved for use in New Mexico ponds, contact the [New Mexico Department of Agriculture](#)



FACTS



The blooms typically last a few days but can last for several weeks. They can look like foam, mats, or scum that are often a greenish color.

A bloom does not always mean there are harmful levels of toxins.

Toxins are only released when the algal cells are broken.

Not all species of cyanobacteria produce toxins.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES



Nutrient run-off from agriculture is one of the biggest factors of an algal bloom.

Use fertilizers mindfully; apply the right amounts, at the right times, in the right areas.

Use buffer strips between the water and disturbed ground like crops.

Maintain year-round ground cover by using cover crops and perennial plants.

WHAT TO DO

PONDS



Copper sulfate kills algal blooms but should be applied before large blooms have built up.

Pump water from the pond about 2–3 yards below the surface to a water trough for drinking.

If copper sulfate is applied, don't let cattle drink from treated areas for at least 5 days after last bloom.

WHAT TO DO

PETS



Don't let your pets swim in or drink water that is discolored or has the appearance of algal mats/blooms.

If your pets show symptoms of toxin exposure, contact your vet immediately.

If your pets swim in water with an algal bloom, rinse them immediately.

WHAT TO DO

LIVESTOCK



Add a trace amount of copper to your water troughs to help prevent algae growth.

Clean out troughs regularly, periodically using household bleach.

Keep your water troughs out of direct sunlight.

