



LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY



Press Release

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CORONAVIRUS and PETS

Baton Rouge, La. (March 16, 2020) – Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry Commissioner Mike Strain, D.V.M., is urging Louisiana domestic pet owners to not abandon or surrender their pets to animal control agencies if they are able to take care of them.

“We understand these are uncertain times, but pet shelters are being overrun with people giving up their pets,” said Strain. “If you are ill with coronavirus (COVID-19), follow the recommendations of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).”

According to the CDC:

- It is not believed pets can be infected with COVID-19 nor is it believed they can spread the disease. However, pets may “temporarily harbor the virus” on the coat or other areas of the pet’s body.
- If you are diagnosed with COVID-19, allow a family member to care for your pets. If no one is available, maintain a safe distance from your pet and frequently wash your hands before and after contact with your pet.
- If you are hospitalized and family members cannot provide care, check with your local veterinary clinic, boarding facility or with a public animal shelter on availability for care.
- Anyone who cares for a pet that has been in contact with an infected human, bathing the animal with a pet shampoo immediately should remove virus particles from the coat of the pet. Isolation from other animals is also recommended. Wear gloves, a face mask and immediately change your clothes after bathing the pet.

“Remember, in the event of any emergency, it is wise to have a pet plan as you would have a game plan for your family,” added Strain. “If possible, keep extra food and medications on hand. Also, wash your hands before and after handling your pets, their food and supplies.”

For more information, go to www.ldaf.la.gov, www.getagameplan.org, www.avma.org, and www.cdc.gov.

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