

COVID-19 advice in relation to pets and livestock

Updated 26 March 2020

Please note that this information is current as of 26 March 2020, but may be updated in line with Public Health advice as the COVID-19 situation evolves.

Animal husbandry is essential

Proper animal husbandry is essential, even with the Bailiwick's current emergency situation. In light of this, essential businesses that provide for animals remain open. This includes veterinary clinics, livery stables, pet food/animal feed/agriculture suppliers, farriers, etc.

However, in line with current guidance on social distancing, these businesses are adapting the way in which they work to prioritise what is most important and maintain human as well as animal health.

Advice from the States Veterinary Officer

Guidance in relation to pets

Pets cannot transmit the disease

The good news is, multiple medical and veterinary health agencies, including the World Organisation for Animal Health and the British Veterinary Association, have confirmed that there is no evidence that companion animals can spread the disease. There is no evidence of systemic human-to-pet or pet-to-human transmission of COVID-19. This means that pets cannot "catch" COVID-19 and become ill, or get it into their system, or act as a carrier.

As always, it is standard veterinary advice to wash your hands after stroking, touching or feeding your pet, or cleaning up after your pet.

Advice on dog walking

Social distancing for you and your pet

Walking your dog is advised as a good way for healthy people as well as pets to get fresh air and exercise within the current, daily 2-hour exercise timeframe. At this stage however, you should only walk your dog alone or with members of your household – no interacting with people from other households and observe 2-metre social distancing if you encounter others on your walk.

It is also advised that you do not let your dog interact with other dogs who are not in your household at present. This will help you to maintain social distance from other households as well.

If you are required to self-isolate or are subject to a quarantine order you must not leave the house to walk your dog or attend to other animals. You may exercise them in your own private garden. If you have any animals located elsewhere, please make arrangements for someone else to care for them while you cannot.

As always, it is standard veterinary advice to wash your hands after stroking, touching or feeding your dog, or cleaning up after your dog.

If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, are awaiting results or are in self-isolation and have a pet

- If your pet requires care, wash your hands before and after any interaction with them.
- Keep cats indoors if possible.
- If your dog needs walking, it is advised to do so within your own garden.
- If your pet shows clinical signs, please call the practice for advice. Make sure you tell them you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, are awaiting results or are in self-isolation
- If your pet requires emergency treatment, call the practice for further advice. Do not take your pet to the surgery unless the vet instructs you to. You may need to arrange for someone else to transport your pet for treatment.

Advice on preparing for pet care in case you are hospitalised

It is a good idea to have a Pet Care Plan in place and accessible, in the event that you cannot care for your animal for a period of time. You should have a plan for who might be able to care for your animal in the event of emergency, and written details as to the care, feeding and medical history of your animal, as well as your vet's contact details. This will help ensure that your animal receives appropriate care.

Advice for professional dog walkers

Multiple health agencies including the World Organisation for Animal Health and the British Veterinary Association have confirmed that there is no evidence that companion animals can spread the disease. There is no evidence of systemic human-to-pet or pet-to-human transmission of COVID-19. This means that pets cannot “catch” COVID-19 and become ill, or get it into their system, or act as a carrier.

At this stage however, you should only walk dogs alone or with members of your household – no interacting with people from other households, and observe 2-metre social distancing if you encounter others on your walk.

It is also advised that you do not let dogs in your care interact with other dogs at present. This will help you to maintain social distance from other households as well.

As always, it is standard advice to wash your hands after stroking, touching or feeding a dog, or cleaning up after them. However, it is especially important for professional dog walkers to observe strict hygiene protocols, given that they have so many animals in their care.

It is also advised that the vehicles of professional dog walkers should be cleaned and disinfected at the end of every day.

Advice in relation to livestock

Guidance for horse owners

Providing food and care for horses and other animals is essential, even if they are kept at a location that is distant from your own home. Please observe social distancing guidelines when traveling to and from fields or barns.

Riding your horse can be a great way to exercise within the 2-hours per day recommendation, as long as you are not interacting with those outside of your own household and you maintain 2-metre social distancing from others you encounter. However, it is especially important to consider your safety as a rider so as not to divert medical services from essential duties.

Livery yards and riding stables must consider how to adapt their businesses to meet animal care needs while adhering to the emergency guidance and maintaining social distancing.

If your horse needs the vet or farrier, it is possible that the vet or farrier will bring along a clinic staff member to hold your horse during procedures in order to maintain social distance.

Guidance for farmers and smallholders

Proper animal husbandry is essential, even in the current emergency situation. Providing food and care for all of the animals in your charge must continue, even if your animals are kept at a location that is distant from your own home. Please observe social distancing guidelines when traveling to and from fields or barns.

Essential businesses that provide for animals remain open. This includes veterinary clinics, livery stables, pet food/animal feed/agriculture suppliers, farriers, etc. However, in line with current guidance on social distancing, these businesses are adapting the way in which they work to prioritise what is most important and maintain human as well as animal health.

If your animal needs the vet, it is possible that the vet will bring along a clinic staff member to hold your animal during procedures in order to maintain social distance.

The abattoir is operating to a normal schedule at present.

How is the Bailiwick adapting to ensure animal health at this time?

Proper animal husbandry is essential, even in the current emergency situation. In light of this, essential businesses that provide for animals remain open. This includes veterinary clinics, livery stables, pet food/animal feed/agriculture suppliers, farriers, etc.

However, in line with current guidance on social distancing, these businesses are adapting the way in which they work to prioritise what is most important and maintain human as well as animal health.

Veterinary clinics

In light of social distancing advice, local veterinary practices are adapting their procedures to safeguard the health of their staff and human clients as well as the animals in their care. For instance, rather than walking into the clinic with your animal, you might be asked to wait in the car until a staff member can come and collect your pet for treatment, and return your pet to you in the car. Non-essential procedures might be deferred for the time being. Please contact your vet directly to seek advice on new procedures.

Farriers

While farriers may still operate, non-essential treatments might be deferred for the time being.

Animal welfare organisations

Local animal welfare and animal rescue organisations are putting in place procedures to prioritise their work and safeguard their staff, volunteers and clients in light of social distancing advice. Please check with these organisations directly for further details.

Importing animals

It is not advised to import animals at this time generally as travel is being lessened, but you will need to check with your ferry or airline carrier for latest guidance.

Boarding kennels, catteries and groomers

These facilities may be instituting new procedures at present, so it is best to check with them directly. It is also important to have an Animal Care Plan in place and accessible in the event that your animal needs to be looked after by someone else if you are unable to care for them due to illness or hospitalisation. You should have a plan for who might be able to care for your animal in the event of emergency, and written details as to the care, feeding and medical history of your animal, as well as your vet's contact details.

Animal food and agricultural supplies

Bailiwick suppliers of pet food, livestock feed and animal supplies are adapting their procedures to ensure social distance. For instance, it may be possible to pay for a product in advance over the phone, and collect it outside the shop at a designated time or have it delivered. Please contact your local supplier for further information.

Animal-related events

Events that involve public gatherings are not possible at this time. Please contact your local organisations for further information.