

An Easy Guide To Raising

Water-Friendly Pets

For Cats

Dispose of cat waste and litter in biodegradable bags in the trash. Use biodegradable litter, and don't use any litter as a substitute for rock salt in the winter! It contains other additives that are bad for water quality. Clean up after outdoor cats, too, and consider keeping your cats inside. Indoor cats are much less likely to contract the parasite *Toxoplasma gondii*, which is a health risk for pregnant women. This parasite is also the reason that cat litter should not be flushed; if it gets into the water supply it can become dangerous to other animals, and in rare cases, people.

For Dogs

Flushing dog waste down the toilet is the best option, but check with your septic servicer first to make sure the system is large enough to handle an additional waste contributor. The next best is installing a Doggy Dooley © or similar buried disposal system-far away from your well! These systems are only appropriate for relatively dry soils that drain quickly after a rainstorm. Bagging waste in the trash is also acceptable. Whatever you do, don't leave waste on roads or curbs, where it easily pollutes runoff from rainstorms. Finally, remember to remove waste from your backyard to keep your well water safe, and place any dog runs away from both wells and natural lakes and streams.

Backyard Poultry

Poultry waste is best managed through composting! The manure is considered a "green" and should be composted at ratio of approximately 20-40% manure to 60-80% bedding. If used to fertilize produce, 120 days should pass between the beginning of compost and vegetable **harvest** to ensure food safety. This means that finished compost can be applied in the spring or fall, and you should get your soil tested first. Compost is considered "finished" if it is brown to black in color, composted in a pile, and you can see steam when turning it regularly with a shovel. For more information on safe composting, visit: <http://www.nricd.org/CompostingResources.pdf>. Keep your flock fenced in and away from streams on your property!



Picture: Department of Ecology, King's County and the Cities of Seattle and Tacoma

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