

## **VETS ISSUE ADVICE TO PET OWNERS ON VOLCANIC ASH**

Following the Health Protection Agency's advice to the public on the possible health effects of the Icelandic volcanic ash reaching ground level, the British Veterinary Association (BVA) has issued some simple advice to pet owners in the UK.

The HPA has suggested that people who experience symptoms such as itchy or irritated eyes, runny nose, sore throat or dry cough and those who notice a dusty haze in the air or smell sulphur, rotten eggs, or a strong acidic smell, may wish to limit their activities outdoors or return indoors. The HPA also suggests that people with respiratory problems may notice the effects more than others. The HPA stresses that the concentration of particles which may reach ground level is likely to be low and should not cause serious harm

The BVA advice to pet owners is:

- if you notice any symptoms or smell sulphur, rotten eggs or a strong acidic smell take reasonable action to protect your pets by limiting their time outdoors;
- any pets with respiratory problems should be well protected from the atmosphere;
- cover outdoor aviaries to protect birds; and
- find suitable shelter for any pets that usually live outdoors.

Commenting, Professor Bill Reilly, President of the British Veterinary Association, said:

"At this stage we don't know for certain what the impact of the volcanic ash on human and animal health will be but we know that dusty particles can cause irritation to eyes and the respiratory system so it makes sense for everyone to take sensible precautions for themselves and their pets.

"Pet owners should limit the amount of time that they and their animals spend outside if they detect the ash and consult a vet if they have any concerns about the health of their pets."

The Health Protection Agency is monitoring the situation and providing advice to the public. For more information visit the HPA website: [www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk)

16<sup>th</sup> April 2010