

# COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS INFORMATION SHEET

## Dogs

This information sheet provides advice on your rights and responsibilities when taking your dog on a public right of way and advice of what to do when coming across farm animals

### Is your dog under control?

If you take a dog into the countryside using a public footpath or public bridleway you have a responsibility to keep the dog under control. There is no legal requirement to keep your dog on a lead on a public right of way but unless you are very confident about your dog's obedience we strongly recommend that you do.

### Dogs and livestock

You should be especially aware when a public right of way enters a field in which there are likely to be farm animals. If your dog 'worries' the animals not only could you be prosecuted and fined but you may be ordered to pay compensation and the dog may be put down. 'Worrying livestock' means attacking or chasing any farm animal, including poultry. In a field or enclosure a dog that is not a working dog can be regarded as worrying sheep simply by not being on a lead or otherwise under close control. 'Close control' has not been legally defined but a dog on a short lead will be under close control while an unrestrained dog may not be. A landowner is entitled to shoot a dog that is worrying livestock and you may be liable to pay for damages if your dog injures a person, another animal, or any property.

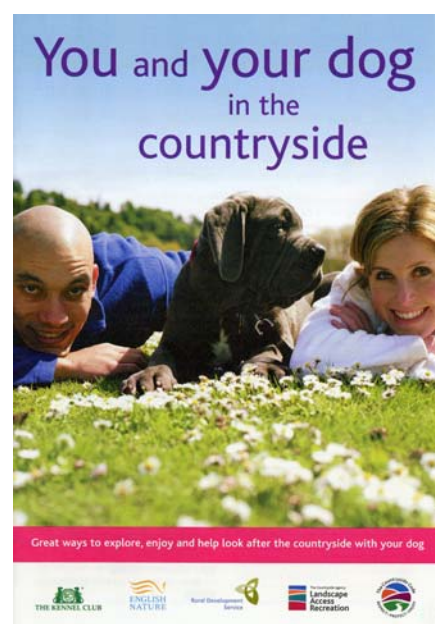


### Dog fouling

There are significant health risks associated with dog fouling. Dog faeces carry harmful infections, the most widely known being Toxocariasis. Toxocara eggs are not infectious until they mature, which usually takes at least 2–3 weeks after they have been deposited by a dog. Dog faeces will only contaminate the soil when it has been left on the ground for this period of time so if owners immediately clean up after their dog the threat of toxocariasis would be virtually eradicated. Also, many public rights of way cross land used to produce food and dog faeces can cause serious infections to livestock.

Make sure your dog is wormed regularly, clean up after your dog, and dispose of any mess responsibly. Ask your vet for advice on worming.

A free leaflet is available from Natural England via their website [www.naturalengland.com](http://www.naturalengland.com)



## Farm Animals

You are likely to encounter farm animals in the countryside and sometimes they may react to your presence, particularly if you have a dog with you. On the whole sheep and lambs will run away but cows and heifers are naturally inquisitive and may follow you across a field, especially if you have a dog with you.

Cows, particularly when accompanied by calves, can be suspicious of dogs and on occasion may react aggressively to them. If this happens, and you feel threatened, you should let go of your dog's lead and move quickly to safety taking the shortest route to a suitable exit. Whether you are walking a dog or not where possible give farm animals a wide berth and avoid walking between cows and their young or among groups of cattle. Horseriders should be prepared for other horses to react to their presence.

Remember to close gates behind you whenever you are walking through fields where livestock is present unless you find gates fixed open.



**For further information please contact**

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