

Emerging Issues in Water and Infectious Disease Series



Animal Waste, Water Quality and Human Health

Animal Waste, Water Quality and Human Health
Edited by Al Dufour, Jamie Bartram, Robert Bos and Victor Gannon

The excreta (faeces and urine) of mammals and birds are widespread across planet Earth and frequently contaminate water that is used for bathing and recreation, that is treated and distributed for human consumption, and that is used to irrigate crops.

The risk that such contamination represents to human health is inadequately understood. It is widely assumed that faeces of animals represents a lesser risk to human health than human faeces of because of the 'species barrier' and especially the species-specificity of most viruses. This book points to a rational and systematic way of assessing the risks and to cost-effective approaches to manage them. The information presented is expected to have important consequences for prioritisation of preventive and remedial interventions.



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Summary Statement¹

The hazards to human health represented by zoonotic pathogens in animal excreta remain poorly understood and inadequately addressed in the literature. These hazards present special challenges for authorities charged with maintaining the quality of surface waters used for recreation and as sources of drinking-water. Current water quality standards in most countries focus on control of human faecal contamination and do not reflect risk posed by faecal contamination from animal sources. Few studies have attempted to examine the relationship between swimming-associated health impacts and the quality of water contaminated by animals or birds, and that the evidence base is lacking to determine whether or not this type of exposure may result in excess illness. Furthermore, we do not

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