



ANIMAL FACTS 2007

ANTIFREEZE BITTERING ACT

The Issue:

Hundreds of children and thousands of animals (including companion animals and endangered species) are accidentally poisoned each year from ingesting antifreeze. In fact, the Washington State Veterinary Medical School estimates that 10,000 dogs and cats are poisoned by antifreeze ingestion each year. Another veterinary survey suggests the number could be as high as 90,000. Its sweet taste attracts them, but less than a teaspoonful can be fatal. Several federal laws classify it as a hazardous substance. Children and animals come into contact with it through containers that are not tightly sealed or are discarded carelessly, leaks on driveways and in garages, and spills along the road. Dogs have been known to chew through the containers to get at the antifreeze.

A national survey reported that 2 out of 3 veterinarians see at least one ethylene glycol poisoning a year. A survey of 21 Nevada veterinary clinics revealed 78 cases of ethylene glycol poisonings, with 67 fatalities, while 13 California veterinary clinics reported 136 cases of antifreeze poisoning in 2001, with 107 deaths.

The Solution:

The Antifreeze Bittering Act would require that engine coolant/antifreeze that is more than 10 percent ethylene glycol must also contain denatonium benzoate, the world's bitterest known substance, to render it unpalatable. This legislation will help save countless animal lives and reduce the number of childhood emergencies.

The Consumer Specialty Products Association, which represents the antifreeze industry, and Honeywell, the leading manufacturer of antifreeze, are working with DDAL to pass the Antifreeze Bittering Act. The American Academy of Pediatrics, American Veterinary Medical Association and the Pet Food Institute have endorsed this legislation. Furthermore, the U.S. Conference of Mayors passed a resolution in 2004 urging Congress to "help cities protect children and animals" by passing the Antifreeze Bittering Act. The American Association of Poison Control Centers, the American Medical Association, the National Safety Council and the American Journal of Public Health all recommend adding an aversive agent to antifreeze.

What You Can Do:

Contact your U.S. senators and representative and ask them to co-sponsor the Antifreeze Bittering Act when it is reintroduced.



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