See a doctor:

Leptospirosis can start with high fever and flu-like symptoms. See a doctor if you develop a high fever as early diagnosis and treatment can help prevent serious illness. Tell your doctor that your work may bring you into contact with cattle, pigs or rats.

Symptoms can include:

- high fever
- headaches
- chills and sweating
- severe muscle pain (particularly calves and thighs)
- bloodshot eyes
- vomiting

People with leptospirosis often have to spend time in hospital. In rare cases, leptospirosis may be fatal. Pregnant women and people with certain medical conditions or who have a weakened immune system may be at increased risk.

For more information, talk to your GP or contact your local Public Health Unit https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/contact-us/contact/public-health-units

Image credits
1. Rat Russia, Moscow - Sergey Yellseev, 2 Tim Abbott - Banana
3. Rug & Rock - Rafting down the Ahansal river, 4 USDA - Migrant farm worker
7. Scott Nelson - Rats feeding injury to plants and crops in Hawaii

Lepto can put you in hospital and off work for weeks
Are you at risk?

Leptospirosis is spread through infected animal urine. Cattle, pigs and rodents are the most common source of the bacteria. People usually become infected when contaminated water or soil gets into sores or cuts on their skin or into their mouth, nose or eyes.

"I thought you’d have to be unlucky or have a decent cut to get lepto." 34-year-old Tully banana worker – hospitalised for one month with leptospirosis.

How to avoid lepto:

COVER

Cover up with boots and gloves if in contact with soil, mud, dirty water, rodents, or sites where rodents have been. Wear safety eyewear if your eyes could be splashed. Cover cuts and sores with waterproof dressings. Tape may help to keep dressings on and keep water out.

WASH

Wash hands with soap and water before eating and smoking, after contact with soil, mud, dirty water or plants, after removing personal protective equipment and after handling or working around animals.

Shower after being on the farm or going to the bush.

CLEAN UP

Clean up rubbish, long grass, food scraps and junk to keep rodents away. Keep work areas clean, dry and well-drained as the leptospirosis bacteria survive in wet conditions.