

USACHPPM

HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

09 January 2004

The HIO Update provides information regarding global medical and veterinary issues of interest to the United States (US) Army. The update does not attempt to analyze the information regarding potential strategic or tactical impact to the US Army and as such, should not be regarded as a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence products are available at <http://mic.afmic.detrick.army.mil/>. The information in the HIO Update should provide an increased awareness of current and emerging health-related issues.

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Hot Topics

China Identifies 2nd Suspected SARS Case

08 January – Yahoo News reported a waitress hospitalized in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou was declared the country's second suspected SARS case of the season, just as the first patient was pronounced recovered and released. The 20-year-old waitress was hospitalized with a fever on Dec. 31, the official Xinhua News Agency said. It said she was under quarantine in Guangzhou's No. 8 People's Hospital. The announcement that she was officially a suspected case came just minutes after Xinhua reported that China's first SARS patient of the season, a 32-year-old television producer, left a Guangzhou hospital after being declared recovered. The World Health Organization, meanwhile, said it had dispatched a six-person team to Guangzhou to join Chinese health officials in investigating the first case. [View Article](#)

Coffee Cuts Diabetes Risk

06 January – The Atlanta Journal Constitution reported in a Harvard medical study, long-term coffee drinkers cut their risk of developing [Type 2 diabetes](#) by 30 percent to 50 percent compared with those who didn't drink the bitter brew. Results confirm what was first reported last year by scientists in the Netherlands. Among the 19,000 previous studies on coffee worldwide, coffee has been shown to lower the risk of gallstones, colon cancer, cirrhosis of the liver and Parkinson's disease. But doctors usually steer pregnant women, children and heart patients away from coffee. Researchers say they can't fully explain the long-term effect caffeine has on diabetes. It seems to reverse its immediate negative effect -- raising blood sugar levels. The Harvard study appears in this week's Annals of Internal Medicine. [View Article](#)

Cold a Cancer Killer

08 January – The Herald Sun reported Australian scientists have found a surprising potential cure for skin cancer -- the common cold virus. Researchers discovered melanoma cells died after infecting them with the cold bug, called the coxsackievirus. The technique has killed cancers in animals and human cells in the laboratory. Scientists hope to repeat the success soon in humans with melanoma. In the method, the virus is injected into a malignant melanoma, then replicates itself and starts killing the cancer. Researchers expect the melanoma to shrink within weeks and eventually vanish. At the same time, it is expected the virus will circulate through the body, seeking and destroying other melanoma cells. [View Article](#)

Drug Helps Reduce Genital Herpes Spread in Couples

31 December – Reuters reported daily treatment with the anti-virus drug valacyclovir can cut the risk of spreading [genital herpes](#) by half among people who practice safe sex, a study in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine showed. But the likelihood of transmitting the sexually transmitted disease during the eight-month study of nearly 1,500 couples was relatively low, even among those who did not take the drug, the study said. The chance of passing herpes to a partner was just 3.6 percent among 741 couples who only used safe sex practices such as using a condom and avoiding

sex during an outbreak. Giving the other 743 couples valacyclovir, which costs about 20 cents a day, cut the transmission rate to 1.9 percent. [View Article](#)

Parasite's Enzyme Structure Helps Address a Public Health Issue

05 January – EurekAlert reported researchers in the Dartmouth laboratory of Amy Anderson, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, have unveiled the structure of an enzyme called dihydrofolate reductase-thymidylate synthase, also known as DHFR-TS, from a waterborne parasite called *Cryptosporidium hominis*. Knowing the chemical structure of the enzyme will help researchers design highly targeted drugs to combat the parasite, which needs this enzyme to reproduce. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have been watching [Cryptosporidium](#) and tracking its impact on human populations, where it spreads easily and quickly, for more than 20 years. While healthy people stricken with this parasite usually recover on their own, it can be deadly for children, elderly people and those whose immune systems are compromised, like people with HIV/AIDS or patients undergoing chemotherapy. According to the CDC Web site, *Cryptosporidium* is often found in public water supplies in the U.S. and cannot be easily filtered out or killed by traditional treatments like chlorine. Currently, there is no cure, and available medicine only eases the symptoms. The study helps better define the evolution of this protozoan family that includes Plasmodium, which causes malaria, and Toxoplasma, which induces toxoplasmosis, a disease that can lead to central nervous system disorders. Knowing how this one enzyme is assembled will help researchers better understand related parasites, Anderson says. [View Report](#)

Prevalence of Multidrug-Resistant Bacteria Rising

01 January - Reuters reported the prevalence of [Salmonella bacteria](#) resistant to many antibiotics, including expanded-spectrum cephalosporins, rose fivefold between 1998 and 2001, according to a report in the December 1, 2003 issue of The Journal of Infectious Diseases. Infection with *Salmonella* bacteria resistant to antibiotics increases the rates of illness, hospitalization, and death, the authors explain. In 2000, there was a surge in the rates of the "Newport" strains of *Salmonella*, especially one called the "Newport-MDRampC." These bacterial strains are resistant to many antibiotics, including amoxicillin/clavulanic acid, cephalothin, cefoxitin, and ceftiofur and have a lower response to ceftriaxone. [View Article](#)

Research Raises Hope for New Meningitis Vaccine

06 January – Reuters reported British scientists said they have made a breakthrough in [meningitis](#) research which could lead to the development of a vaccine against all forms of the potentially deadly disease. Experiments at the University of Surrey used genetic engineering to make mice immune to a broad range of strains of the disease, including group B strains for which there are currently no vaccines. Meningitis, an inflammation of the lining of the brain and spinal cord which affects hundreds of thousands of people worldwide, has historically been difficult to treat because it has so many different strains. . [View Article](#)

Scientists Discover Enzyme Degrades Mad Cow Disease Prion

05 January – North Carolina State University announced scientists from the university, in conjunction with scientists from the Netherlands and BioResource International, has shown that, under proper conditions, an enzyme can fully degrade the prion – or protein particle – believed to be responsible for [mad cow disease](#) and other related animal and human diseases. These transmissible prions – believed to be the cause of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), as well as the human and sheep versions, called Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease and scrapie, respectively – are highly resistant to

degradation, says Dr. Jason Shih, professor of biotechnology and poultry science at NC State. But the new research, which tested the effects of a bacterial enzyme keratinase on brain tissues from cows with BSE and sheep with scrapie, showed that, when the tissue was pretreated and in the presence of a detergent, the enzyme fully degraded the prion, rendering it undetectable. The research was published in the Dec. 1 edition of The Journal of Infectious Diseases. [View Article](#)

US Study Warns of Eye Injuries from Paintball Game

05 January – Reuters reported hundreds of U.S. children suffer eye injuries each year from paintballs while playing a simulated war game in which guns fire gelatin capsules filled with paint, a researcher said on Monday. Teen-aged boys playing informal versions of the war game often dispense with protective gear, leaving them vulnerable to disabling eye injuries, said study author David Listman of St. Barnabas Hospital in New York. Based on data from between 1997 and 2000, Listman estimated there were more than 500 eye injuries annually from paintballs to U.S. children aged 15 or younger. [View Article](#)

Focus on Epidemiology

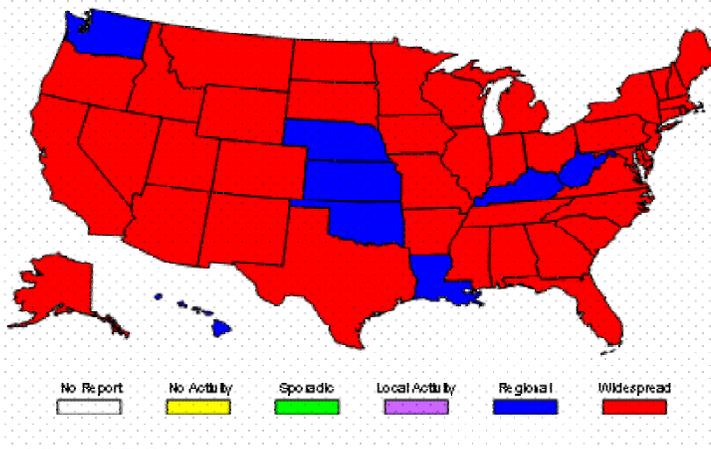
Murine Typhus --- Hawaii, 2002

19 December – The CDC reported [Murine typhus](#), a zoonotic disease caused by Rickettsia typhi, is uncommon in the United States. Hawaii typically reports five or six cases annually; however, 47 cases were reported in 2002. This report summarizes clinical data for three of these cases and describes murine typhus activity in Hawaii during 2002 and control efforts of the Hawaii Department of Health (HDH). The high number of reported cases in 2002 underscores the need for community education to prevent murine typhus and an assessment of environmental factors that might contribute to local disease transmission. [View MMWR Report](#)

[Influenza](#) Update

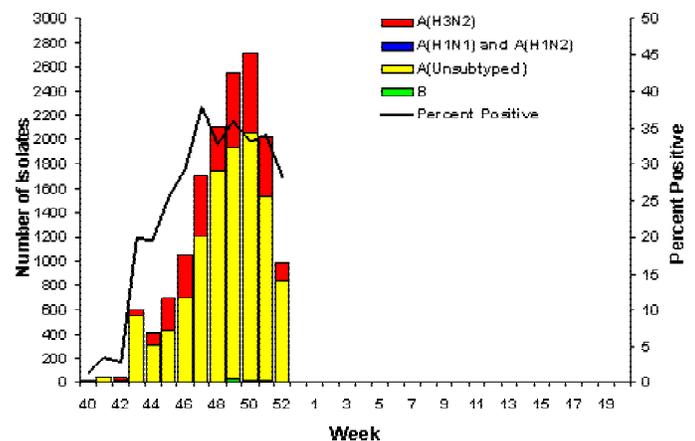
CDC Weekly Influenza Report for Week ending December 27, 2003-Week 52

Weekly Influenza Activity Estimates Reported by State & Territorial Epidemiologists
Week ending December 27, 2003 - Week 52



[View CDC Source](#)

WHO/NREVSS Collaborating Laboratories National Summary, 2003-04



European Influenza Surveillance Scheme (EISS) Report for Week 52

28 December – EISS reported the incidence of influenza-like illness and/or acute respiratory illness is now decreasing in Belgium and France, following the pattern seen in England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Portugal, Scotland and Spain. Some other countries reported declining incidences in week 52/2003 (e.g. Denmark and Romania) but this data needs to be interpreted with caution due to the Christmas/New Year holidays. The predominant virus circulating in Europe is A/Fujian/411/2002 (H3N2)-like.

Country	Geographic Spread	Intensity	Sentinel swabs	Percentage positive	Dominant type
Belgium	Widespread		70	42.9%	Type A, Subtype H3
Czech Republic	Local		25	24.0%	Type A, Subtype H3N2
Denmark	Widespread	High			
England	Sporadic		0	0%	Type A
France	Widespread	Medium	56	26.8%	
Germany			22	22.7%	Type A, Subtype H3N2
Italy	Sporadic	Medium	19	21.1%	Type A, Subtype H3N2
Latvia	Sporadic	Low	0	0%	Type A, Subtype H3N2
Lithuania	Local	Medium	0	0%	None
Netherlands	Widespread	Medium	7	0%	None
Northern Ireland	Sporadic	Low	1	100.0%	Type A, Subtype H3
Norway			0	0%	Type A, Subtype H3N2
Portugal	Sporadic	Low	3	0%	Type A, Subtype H3N2
Romania			119	28.6%	Type A, Subtype H3N2
Scotland	Local	Medium	0	0%	Type A
Slovenia			4	25.0%	Type A
Spain	Local	Medium	19	21.1%	Type A, Subtype H3
Switzerland	Widespread	Medium	33	0%	Type A, Subtype H3N2
Europe			378	28.3%	

[View Source](#)

DoD Global Influenza and Other Respiratory Viral Pathogens Surveillance Weekly Update Week 53 (28 Dec – 3 Jan)

Number of total sites submitting specimens (**newly submitted/cumulative**): **31/ 65**

Number of identified isolates (**newly identified/cumulative**): **70/ 694** (*Influenza A=693; Influenza B=1*)

Note: Due to holidays, this report does not have the full data for Week 53. This report does include data from the latter half of Week 52. Data from the latter half of Week 53 will be included on the Week 54 Update. [View Source](#)



Other Information

05 January – EurekAlert reported an influenza virus vaccine delivered as a nasal spray, appears to be effective in protecting healthy children against certain strains of influenza. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently approved an influenza virus vaccine (cold-adapted trivalent influenza virus vaccine, or CAIV-T) administered in the form of a nasal spray for use in healthy children and adults aged 5 through 49 years. Previous studies have shown that the nasal spray was successful in preventing influenza A (H3N2) and B infections in children 15 months old to about 6 years old, and was effective in preventing certain strains of the influenza virus from infecting adults. However, the ability of CAIV-T to prevent natural influenza A (H1N1) infection is unknown. Manjusha J. Gaglani, M.B.B.S., from the Scott & White Memorial Hospital and Clinic, Temple, Tex., and colleagues assessed the effectiveness of CAIV-T in healthy children during the 2000-2001 influenza A (H1N1) epidemic. The researchers found, "Significant direct effectiveness of CAIV-T for prevention of [acute respiratory illness] in all age groups and in all children vaccinated in 2000 was observed during the entire influenza A and B epidemic. Direct effectiveness in all children and children aged 1.5 to 4 and 5 to 9 years during the six weeks when influenza A (H1N1) viruses predominated documented effectiveness of CAIV-T against natural influenza A (H1N1) infection for the first time," write the authors. [View Report](#)

USEUCOM

Ebola Hemorrhagic Fever in the Republic of the Congo - update 6

06 January – WHO reported as of 24 December, 2003, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of the Congo reported a total of 35 cases including 29 deaths of [Ebola hemorrhagic fever \(EHF\)](#) in Mbomo (31 cases, 25 deaths) and Mbandza (4 cases, 4 deaths) villages located in Mbomo district, Cuvette Ouest Department. The last death was reported on 3 December and no further cases have been reported since then. Laboratory testing carried out by the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD) and the Centre International de Recherches Médicales de Franceville (CIRMF), Gabon has confirmed the diagnosis of Ebola in clinical samples from 16 patients. Laboratory testing was carried out in the field in collaboration with the Institute of Microbiology of Munich, Germany, the Laboratory Centre for Disease Control (LCDC) of Winnipeg, Canada and CIRMF. [View Report](#)

France: Legionellosis Update

05 January – ProMed reported a 7th death and a new case were announced Sat, 3 Jan 2004, in the area of Lens. The total number of patients is now 55. The Noroxo factory, already closed for decontamination during December 2003, will undergo a new cleaning. After cleaning the Noroxo plant from 3-20 Dec 2003, analyses carried out on 22 and 29 Dec 2003 were negative for [Legionella](#). However, results of 3 provisional analyses on patients of the 2nd wave of legionellosis, starting in mid-December 2003, relate them to the factory. The assumption of a 2nd source of contamination remains, because if the petrochemical factory were also the origin of the 2nd wave, the incubation period of the bacterium would have to be exceptionally long. [View Report](#)

Russia (Moscow): Brucellosis, Human, Livestock

02 January - ProMed reported all 200 animals in a group of sheep and goats intended as food for Moscow Zoo predators were euthanized because of a [brucellosis](#) outbreak. The Moscow Prosecutor's Office has begun proceedings based on violations of veterinary regulations. The first signs of disease started in Torfyanoye in July 2003, where sheep and goats are reared to supply the Zoo. At that time, several people who were taking care of the livestock started to complain of malaise and symptoms of flu or cold. It did not occur to local physicians that the reason for the patients' symptoms could be a serious disease like brucellosis. The alarm was sounded when brucellosis was detected during regular inspections of the animals. It then became clear that staff had contracted infection from the animals. Moreover, 2 people who work at the Zoo also got infected. About 6 people were admitted to the infectious disease hospital. Although brucellosis was discovered in only a few animals, all 200 head of livestock were destroyed. 2 donkeys and dogs that lived with the animals were also killed. Disinfections were carried out in Torfyanoye, and due to these timely measures, the danger was eliminated. Fortunately, no Zoo animals were infected. [View Report](#)

USCENTCOM

Afghanistan: Pneumonia and Flu Kill 30 in Ghowr

05 January – IRIN News reported the United Nations in Kabul said severe [influenza](#) and [pneumonia](#) had killed 30 people due to extreme cold in the western provinces of Ghowr in late December. "This is not an outbreak of whooping cough, as has been reported, but a severe type of influenza and pneumonia," Manoel de Almieda e Silva, a spokesperson of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said. Cases have been confirmed in Bandari Boor, about 30 km south of Shahrak district. UNICEF told IRIN, however, that the situation was now under control now and the UN agency had sent medicines through a local aid organization. [View Article](#)

USNORTHCOM

California: Surfers Ignore Nasty Bacteria Advisory

05 January – The San Mateo County Times reported San Mateo County has issued an advisory, warning people to stay away from bay and ocean beaches due to high levels of total and fecal coliforms -- bacteria that live in the intestinal tracts of humans and animals -- found in water samples. The County has not seen levels this high since the El Nino storms of 1988. So far, he said, there have been no reported illnesses from the event. People who swim in waters with high levels of fecal coliform bacteria are subject to fever, nausea, or stomach cramps brought on as pathogens enter the body through the mouth, nose, ears, and cuts in the skin. Despite this list of disagreeable conditions, some people are still willing to brave the waves. Mike Kimsey, a long time coastal surfer and past chair of the San Mateo chapter of Surfrider, said while the bacterial levels point to a clear problem with upstream pollutants, surfers have been ignoring the advisories for years. [View Report](#)

Canada: Chronic Wasting Disease in Saskatchewan

01 January – ProMed reported 4 new cases of chronic wasting disease in the province have Saskatchewan Environment pondering what to do next. The provincial environment department confirmed that 4 mule deer shot near Swift Current during the first half of November tested positive for the disease. That brings the total to 11 cases [since fall 2003] and 23 since testing began. [View Report](#)

Dangers Cited in Alleged Scheme

05 January – ProMed reported 3 former executives from Maine Biological Laboratories in Winslow face federal charges, including conspiracy and mail fraud, for allegedly smuggling the virus that causes [avian influenza](#) into the country from Saudi Arabia. A Saudi customer wanted the lab to use the virus to secretly manufacture a vaccine so that Saudi authorities would not find out about an outbreak of the potentially devastating disease in one of its flocks, authorities allege. In addition to the smuggling allegations, the executives are accused of altering expiration dates on vaccine labels and mislabeling batches of vaccine for overseas customers to help them avoid import costs. In some cases, batches were mislabeled because the customers did not have the proper licenses and permits. In other cases, customers asked that multiple batches of vaccine be labeled as a single batch. Agricultural experts say this highlights illegal practices that could have caused disaster for the poultry industry. And the practices may be more widespread than anyone knows, because they are not easily uncovered by authorities. More worrisome, agricultural experts say, are charges that the laboratory sometimes sent a different vaccine to a customer than the one that was ordered -- without changing the label -- "to increase sales and profits." Customers had no idea they were not getting the product they paid for, according to the indictment. Substituting even a similar vaccine for the one actually purchased could have terrible repercussions on poultry farms because immunity to disease is so specific. The alleged smuggling by the Maine laboratory occurred before 11 Sep 2001, and security has tightened since then. But it's probably still comparatively easy to smuggle something like an animal virus into the country because it isn't made of metal or connected with explosives. [View Report](#)

FDA Warns Campbell's on Soup Preparations

06 January – Reuters reported U.S. regulators have warned a division of Campbell Soup Co. that its refrigerated clam chowder soup was prepared in unsanitary conditions that could pose a risk to consumers, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said on Tuesday. The warning letter was sent to the Campbell unit on Dec. 22, but posted on Tuesday on the FDA's Web site. It requires Campbell's StockPot unit to implement new safety and testing standards to ensure that the refrigerated, ready-to-use clam chowder soup is safe. The FDA said a September inspection of the StockPot plant in Woodinville, Washington, turned up "serious deviations" from seafood safety regulations. The FDA cited inadequate temperature and cooling time to prevent the dangerous botulinum toxin. The company sent a response letter to the FDA on Oct. 8, and the agency in its December letter recommended ways to implement corrective actions. [View Report](#) View FDA Letter

Methadone Overdose Deaths on Rise in Md.

07 January – ABC News reported methadone overdose deaths have shot up dramatically in Maryland over the past six years, the state medical examiner's office said. In Maryland, 29 people have died from methadone intoxication through November 2003, according to figures from the state Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. That's compared to three deaths in 1998. While the deaths represent 4

percent of the 662 deaths caused by illegal and abused prescription drugs during the period, officials said they are concerned by the emerging trend. [View Article](#)

New York Data Reveals Worrying HIV Trend in Women

31 December – Reuters reported women now account for more than a third of new [HIV](#) diagnoses in New York City, according to a study released on Wednesday that appears to confirm a slight gender-based shift in the U.S. AIDS epidemic. Since first being diagnosed in 1981, AIDS has killed nearly half a million Americans, most of them believed to be homosexuals and intravenous drug users. But in recent years an increasing number of people outside these high-risk groups have been testing positive for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Data collected by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showed that 35 percent of the 6,662 new HIV cases reported in the nation's most populous city in 2001 occurred in women. In comparison, 28 percent of AIDS sufferers diagnosed with HIV in the city before 2001 were female, according to the study, which was the first analysis of annual HIV diagnosis data collected as a result of a 2000 state law requiring health-care workers to report the names of newly diagnosed HIV or AIDS patients. [View Article](#)

USDA BSE Update

The USDA continually posts updates on the detection of [mad cow disease](#) (BSE) in a dairy cow. Visit their website <http://www.usda.gov/news/releases/2003/12/0448.htm> to view the most recent update.

USPACOM

China to Slaughter Animals in SARS Case

05 January – ABC News reported faced with the return of SARS, China ordered wild animals slaughtered by the thousands in the disease's suspected region of origin, a striking response that elicited calls for caution from international doctors concerned about safety and destroying medical evidence. The decision to kill up to 10,000 civet cats and related specialty-food creatures in the wildlife markets of the southern province of Guangdong animals suspected of being [SARS](#) carriers came as the first case of SARS in China this season was confirmed after more than two weeks of intricate tests. Zhong Nanshan, director of the Guangzhou Institute of Respiratory Diseases, said species related to civets also will be killed, including raccoon dogs, ferret badgers, hog badgers and Eurasian badgers. [View Report](#)

China and WHO Confirm SARS Case in Guangdong Province

05 January – ProMed reported results from laboratory tests have led the Ministry of Health of China and the World Health Organization (WHO) to upgrade the suspected [SARS](#) case in southern China to a laboratory-confirmed case. The latest results were obtained from virus neutralization antibody tests carried out by 2 laboratories in Hong Kong SAR, China, that are part of the WHO international laboratory reference network, as well as by a laboratory under the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention in Beijing. The virus neutralization tests from all 3 laboratories indicate that the male patient, a 32-year-old television producer in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, has recently been exposed to a SARS coronavirus (CoV). [View Report](#)

India Administers Vaccine to Millions of Children to Stem Polio

04 January – Yahoo News reported India, which accounts for most of the world's new cases of [polio](#), vaccinated millions of children in one of the world's largest public health drives, officials said. President Abdul Kalam symbolically launched the campaign by administering drops to six children, before thousands of paramedics branched out across the country of more than one billion people. In the southern state of Tamil Nadu alone, health workers administered drops to an estimated seven million children at nearly 15,000 stations, officials said. India plans to conduct five such vaccination drives this year to meet its aim to achieve polio-free status by 2007. Health Minister Sushma Swaraj, however, said her government hoped to bring the deadline closer. According to the World Health Organization, India and Nigeria were the only countries to register significant increases in 2002 in the number of cases of polio, which has been eradicated in most of the world. At least 1,556 new cases were confirmed in India in 2002, which represented 85 percent of all new cases worldwide, the UN health body said. [View Report](#)

New Zealand: Gardeners Warned of Legionnaires' disease

02 January – ProMed reported gardeners are being urged to take care when using potting mix this summer after an increase in cases of [Legionnaires' disease](#). Medical officer of health Margot McLean said there had been 13 cases of legionellosis in the wider Wellington region in 2003, compared with 9 in 2002. 5 of those cases were in the past 2 months [November-December 2003]. Four of the recent cases of the disease, which could cause anything from mild flu-like symptoms to severe pneumonia, were likely to have been caused by *L. longbeachae*, a specific strain of the disease usually found in potting soil. Dr McLean warned gardeners to take the following precautions to minimize the risk from potting mix and compost: Open the bag away from your face; Make sure when gardening inside that areas such as potting sheds and glasshouses are well ventilated; Moisten the contents of potting mix in the bag before using it to avoid creating dust; Wash hands thoroughly after handling potting mix or soil, even if gloves have been worn. People should see their doctor if they develop a fever, muscle aches, headache, cough, or diarrhea. [View Report](#)

Taiwan Says Ducks Smuggled from China Had Bird Flu

01 January – ProMed reported Taiwan reported its first case of highly contagious [bird flu](#) on Wednesday, but said 6 ducks smuggled from mainland China that had tested positive had been destroyed. The cabinet's Council of Agriculture said it was closely monitoring the situation to prevent avian influenza -- which in rare cases can be deadly to humans -- from spreading in Taiwan. The ducks, smuggled from China and found on the water near Taiwan's front-line island of Quemoy earlier in December 2003, were infected with the H5N1 virus that hit Hong Kong in 1997, it said. Smuggling of people and goods across the narrow Taiwan Strait is rampant. [View Report](#)

Vietnam: Disease Kills Chickens

06 January – ProMed reported a mysterious disease has killed more than 40,000 chickens in southern Vietnam, and local officials have been ordered to kill all sick animals and quarantine affected areas, an official said today. The deaths occurred in two districts in Tien Giang province, about 75 kilometers southwest of Ho Chi Minh City, with the disease threatening to spread to other provinces. Samples of the diseased poultry have been sent overseas for testing, he said, adding that veterinary experts are scheduled to meet to determine what's causing the deaths. Meanwhile, today's Thanh Nien (Young People) newspaper reported 100,000 chickens died from the mystery illness in Tien Giang province. The report said more than 300,000 were slaughtered in Long An province. [View Report](#)

W. Australia: Ross River Virus Cases Reach Alarming Proportions

30 December – ProMed reported mosquito-borne [Ross River virus](#) cases in the southwest have increased from 2 reported cases in 2002 to 208 between 1 Jul and 29 Dec in 2003. Department of Health Senior Scientific Officer Sue Harrington said 67 cases had been reported from Geographe Bay this season. She said between 10 and 20 cases of the virus were being reported in the southwest every day. The increase was typical of Ross River virus infection, which occurs in cycles dependent on environmental conditions such as tides and rainfall. She advised that people should not be complacent and take precautions because the risk is very high. [View Report](#) [View Report 2](#)

USSOUTHCOM

Chile: Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome Cases from Rural Area around Los Angeles

05 January – ProMed reported a hospital in southern Chile confirmed 3 new cases of [Hantavirus](#) infection, which is transmitted by rodents. The new infections, detected at Los Angeles hospital, some 513 kilometers (320 miles) south of the capital, involve males between the ages of 25 and 29. A 4th person at the same hospital, meanwhile, has also shown symptoms of the disease. Two other cases of Hantavirus infection were confirmed on Wed 31 Dec 2003 in Santiago by the Health Ministry. Most of those afflicted with the illness are from Quilleco, Mulchen, Tucapel, and Antuco, all rural communities near the city of Los Angeles. The disease is mainly transmitted in Chile by the long-tailed pygmy rice rat *Oligoryzomys longicaudatus*, which is found in most of the country. [View Report](#)

Columbia: State of Emergency Declared in Valledupar Region

06 January – ProMed reported the Minister of Social Protection, Diego Palacio Betancourt, has declared a state of emergency in the region of Valledupar, due to the finding of monkeys dead from [yellow fever](#), and has sent 120,000 doses of vaccine to the area to add to the 40,000 doses already there. Yellow fever was detected in monkeys in the Los Besotes Ecological Park, located north of the capital of the Department. Meanwhile, the mayor of Valledupar, Ciro Pupo Castro, pointed out that there are presently no human cases of yellow fever and therefore no cause for alarm. A decree has been issued that property owners clean and fumigate their premises to eliminate breeding of the vector mosquito. [View Report](#)

Please contact the below-listed POC for suggested improvements and/or comments regarding this report. This report is also available on the USACHPPM website at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/Hiupdate/>.

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