**One Health News Bits**

**3-14-12**

[**Congressman seeks to make python imports illegal**](http://www.theolympian.com/2012/01/16/1950812/rep-dicks-leads-charge-to-ban.html)

**Rep. Norm Dicks, D-Wash., who heads the House Appropriations Committee, has urged President Barack Obama to implement a proposed rule that would ban imports and interstate transport of Burmese pythons and other constrictor snakes. Dicks says the pythons' spread is costing taxpayers too much money and the animals are a public safety threat. Opponents of the proposed ban say the measure is a job-killer. (1/16)**

[**Weather patterns may predict influenza outbreaks**](http://summitcountyvoice.com/2012/01/16/climate-la-nina-linked-with-flu-pandemics/)

**Research from Columbia and Harvard scientists suggests that changes in temperature in the Pacific are responsible for influenza outbreaks. Pacific La Nina pattern changes occurred prior to all four major influenza outbreaks in the U.S., specifically those in 1918, 1957, 1968 and 2009. The temperature changes may have altered bird flight patterns, bringing various species of birds into contact with each other and with other species, such as swine, and giving the virus ample opportunity to mix and form new pandemic strains. (1/16)**

[**Pig study shows antibiotics breed drug-resistant E.coli**](http://news.discovery.com/animals/antibiotics-drug-resistant-bacteria-pigs-farming-120116.html)

**Piglets that were given a low dose of antibiotics in their feed developed drug-resistant E.coli bacteria in their intestinal tracts in only two weeks, according to research conducted by scientists at USDA's Agricultural Research Service National Animal Disease Center. "This is an exciting study because it goes beyond what anyone else has done and looks at the whole ecology of the animal's intestinal tract," said Tufts University microbiologist Stuart Levy. (1/16)**

[**Pets benefit from medicines made for people**](http://www.salemnews.com/lifestyle/x1267395778/Botox-for-pets)

**Between 80% and 90% of the medications used to treat pets were actually developed for humans, notes veterinarian Marty Becker, from antibiotics to fight infection to Viagra, which can help dogs with certain heart conditions, and Botox, used to treat problems in dogs with deep skin folds. (1/17)**

[**Millions of bats are dead from white nose syndrome**](http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/nearly-7-million-bats-may-have-died-from-white-nose-fungus-officials-say/2012/01/17/gIQAyixH6P_story.html)

**Nearly 7 million bats have died in the Northeast over the past five years as a result of the fungal disease white nose syndrome, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced Tuesday. Bat conservationists are concerned about the animals' possible extinction at the hands of the fungus and say that the full impact of an extinction event is unclear, but it would be very damaging to the ecosystem. (1/17)**

**[Researchers develop bark-deployed search robot](http://spectrum.ieee.org/automaton/robotics/industrial-robots/search-and-rescue-dog-deploys-robot-snake-via-bark-control)**

**Carnegie Mellon and Ryerson University researchers teamed up to create a bark-deployed snake robot that detaches from a disaster search dog's vest when the dog encounters a person in rubble and barks. Dogs can detect human scent in disaster sites but the snake robots will be able to search very small, hard-to-reach spots, expanding the search zone and increasing the chances of finding trapped people. (1/17)**

[**Secondhand smoke can hurt a pet’s health, too**](http://www.gilroydispatch.com/lifestyles/columnists/pete_keesling/article_a0161fb8-4166-11e1-bd2d-001a4bcf6878.html)

**Secondhand smoke cannot only be harmful to humans, but pets, too, writes veterinarian Pete Keesling. Cats can develop mouth cancer and lymphoma, and dogs are at a greater risk for nasal tumors. Even birds are susceptible, as they can develop lung cancer. (1/17)**

[**4 snake species are banned by U.S. government**](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/18/us/florida-imports-of-four-snake-species-are-banned.html)

**The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on Tuesday announced a ban on importation and interstate transport of four types of constrictor snakes in an effort to protect ecosystems from the predators, prevent the spread of the invasive species to other hospitable areas and save funds. The ban, which takes effect in 60 days, includes the Burmese python, the yellow anaconda and northern and southern African pythons. (1/18)**

[**Dog’s microchip helps lost child find her way home**](http://www.aikenstandard.com/story/011012-microchip-helps-dog-and-girl-return-home)

**A little bit of luck, good old-fashioned police work and a dog named Angel helped a little girl find her parents after she wandered away from home Sunday afternoon, police said. Officer Jennifer Bickel noticed that the dog was microchipped and had been registered with the City of Aiken. Then, all of the pieces started to fall into place. (1/20)**

## [Bats increasingly seen as vectors](http://www.avma.org/onlnews/javma/feb12/120215b.asp)

**Gerald T. Keusch, MD, said bats are a "largely unknown, underinvestigated, poorly understood, now-definitive vector for new emerging viruses."He suggested the animals' significance as vectors could make them the "mosquitoes of the 21st century." Peter Daszak, PhD, said few researchers were examining diseases in bats 20 years ago. But the animals have gained attention and attracted study from numerous groups as having a role in outbreaks of diseases caused by Hendra, Nipah, Lyssa, Menangle, and Ebola viruses and the coronavirus responsible for severe acute respiratory syndrome. (2/1)**

[**Pet owner’s hearts may cope better with change: study**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/14/health-pets-heart-idUSL4E8DE06Y20120214)

**Pet owners with chronic diseases appear to have healthier hearts than people living without an animal companion, whether furry, scaly or feathery, according to a Japanese study. In findings published in the American Journal of Cardiology, researchers who studied nearly 200 people found that those with a pet had higher heart rate variability than those who didn't. (2/13)**

[**States are poised to institute pet-abuse registries**](http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/nationnow/2012/01/registry-of-animal-abusers-gains-support-.html)

**Legislation is pending or will soon be introduced in Florida, Maryland, Colorado, Arizona and New York that would establish a pet-abuse registry with such features as listing pet abusers for five years and requiring them to pay an annual fee for upkeep of the registry. Registries exist in two New York counties, which also require shelters and pet stores to cross-reference names of those seeking to buy or adopt pets against the list. (1/19)**

**[Lyme-disease-carrying tickets are on the rise in Ohio](http://www.toledoblade.com/local/2012/01/18/Number-of-deer-ticks-surging-across-Ohio.html)**

**Black-legged ticks now have been collected in 52 counties, including Lucas, Wood, Ottawa, and Williams counties, and are most concentrated in the eastern and southern parts of the state of Ohio. Some have been found to carry the Lyme bacterium, and more testing is under way at Ohio State University's veterinary school, with numbers up from 74 found in Ohio in 2010 when the surge started. (1/20)**

[**Human norovirus is found in dogs**](http://www.foodsafetynews.com/2012/01/pet-dogs-can-carry-human-norovirus-study-shows/)

**Researchers in Finland found human norovirus in the feces of dogs, confirming that the virus, generally species-specific, can be present in dogs. Children in the home are the likely source of the virus for dogs, though more research is needed to see whether the virus just passes through the dog or causes clinical infection, says study co-author Carl-Henrick von Bonsdorff. (1/20)**

[**MRSA strains in livestock could spread to people, research shows**](http://abcnews.go.com/Health/mrsa-livestock-spread-humans/story?id=15753074#.T00RXfFrMTZ)

**An antibiotic-resistant strain of staph bacteria identified in cattle in 2003 likely stemmed from an antibiotic-sensitive version of the same germ that grew resistant in livestock that were overexposed to antibiotics. Now, new research shows the resistant strains of MRSA may be easily spread from livestock to humans. About 20,000 Americans die from MRSA complications each year, more than the number who die from AIDS. (2/21)**

[**South African ostrich industry is still struggling from H5N2 outbreak**](http://edition.cnn.com/2012/02/22/business/ostrich-farming-south-africa/index.html)

**In the last year, some 41,000 ostriches have been culled in South Africa due to an H5N2 avian influenza outbreak, dealing a major blow to the country's ostrich industry, which includes about 20,000 jobs in the city of Oudtshoorn. Though the influenza strain does not threaten human health, experts worry H5N2 could mutate and affect poultry flocks. Financial losses related to the virus are estimated at $13 million per month. (2/22)**

[**New bat species is discovered in Vietnam**](http://news.discovery.com/animals/new-bat-species-122202.html)

**A new species of**[**bat**](http://www.batcon.org/)**has just been discovered in Vietnam, according to a**[**paper published in the *Journal of Mammalogy***](http://www.asmjournals.org/doi/full/10.1644/11-MAMM-A-073.1)**. One of the bat's most distinctive visual features is an unusual nose that somewhat resembles the head of an owl. The new species was discovered during a survey of bats in Vietnam over a span of three years. (2/22)**

[**N.Y. considers ban on shark fin trade**](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iZp0iylvYFBANDVRGWYfu-tBPKgw?docId=CNG.4a7405f435e18d06d38741269c27a37f.671)

**New York may soon join California, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington in outlawing the possession, trade or sale of shark fins, which are in high demand in Asia where they are used in soup. In finning, as the practice is termed, fishermen remove the fins and leave the sharks to die in the ocean. Proponents say sharks' place in the marine ecosystem is essential and finning is decimating populations. (2/22)**

[**Are you prepared for a disaster?**](https://ebusiness.avma.org/EBusiness50/ProductCatalog/product.aspx?ID=140)

**Does your family's emergency plan include your animals? Planning and preparation are critical when it comes to protecting the health of your family, pets and livestock. "Saving the Whole Family," a booklet produced by the AVMA, includes detailed information on assembling emergency kits and plans for a wide variety of animal species. View and download**[**"Saving the Whole Family."**](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/dvjLBXzCwNCcowmZCidalECicNmjvc)

[**H5N1 fatality rate may be much lower than previously thought**](http://thechart.blogs.cnn.com/2012/02/23/study-h5n1-flu-death-rate-may-be-overblown/)

**The commonly reported 58.6% fatality rate related to infection from highly pathogenic avian influenza strain H5N1 could be much lower, according to new research that examined blood samples from more than 12,000 people across three continents and found infection in 1%-2% of the sample, none of whom died. Current testing for those areas that have high bird-human interaction, where transmission is most likely, has a high false-positive rate and isn't sensitive enough to detect relatively asymptomatic cases of infection, according to researchers. (2/23)**

[**Understanding Venezuelan encephalitis**](http://staugustine.com/living/health/2012-02-22/farm-animal-health-venezuelan-equine-encephalomyelitis#.T00LCvFrMTa)

**Venezuelan equine encephalomyelitis (VEE) is transmitted by mosquitoes and causes mild infections in cattle, swine and dogs, but more serious disease in humans and horses, writes veterinarian Robert F. Kahrs. Sometimes referred to as Venezuelan encephalitis, the virus was first discovered in the 1930s, and various subtypes affect different geographic regions. (2/23)**

[**Veterinary program trains “vapor wake” dogs**](http://www2.wrbl.com/news/2012/feb/24/vapor-wake-dogs-trained-au-ar-3289588/)

**Veterinarian Robert Gillette and his team at Auburn University's College of Veterinary Medicine developed a program that trains dogs to detect bomb-carrying people who are on the move as opposed to stationary explosive devices. The team termed the air displaced as a suspect moves "vapor wake," and the dogs are trained to identify that scent and single out the suspect, an advantage in densely packed areas with high pedestrian traffic such as malls. (2/24)**

[**Bartonella may not harm fetus in preganat women**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/24/us-cat-scratch-disease-idUSTRE81N1UV20120224)

**Recent research suggests that Bartonella henselae may not pose a threat to the fetus of an infected pregnant woman, but more research is needed to confirm these findings since the study size was small -- only eight women. Bartonella henselae, a bacterium transmitted to about seven in every 100,000 people from cat scratches, causes swollen lymph nodes, fever and fatigue, with rare instances of temporary blindness and brain infection. (2/24)**

[**78 sickened in campylobacteriosis outbreak traced to raw milk**](http://articles.philly.com/2012-02-24/news/31095877_1_raw-milk-unpasteurized-milk-health-risks)

**Since January, 78 people from multiple states have contracted campylobacteriosis from ingesting unpasteurized milk produced at the Family Cow Dairy in Chambersburg, Pa. The dairy has resumed production after being given the go-ahead by the Pennsylvania Department of Health. The CDC recently released a study that showed states that allow raw milk sales have 150 times the amount of disease outbreaks as those states that ban them. (2/24)**

[**Unvaccinated pet exposes owners and other pets to rabies**](http://www.gainesville.com/article/20120224/ARTICLES/120229695?p=1&tc=pg)

**A family's pet dog, whose last rabies vaccine was reportedly seven years ago, contracted rabies from a raccoon and exposed the family as well as two other pet dogs before being euthanized and confirmed to have rabies. The family is undergoing rabies prophylaxis, and the two other dogs will be euthanized. Local officials are urging anyone who had contact with the dog to seek medical advice immediately and are reminding owners to vaccinate pets for rabies. (2/24)**

[**Dogs have a storied history in U.S. conflicts**](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203960804577241680087216346.html?mod=dist_smartbrief)

**In this excerpt from her book "Soldier Dogs," Maria Goodavage recounts the history of U.S. military dogs. Dogs were first recruited into the military after the attack on Pearl Harbor, and now the government pays up to $4,500 per trained military pup. The dogs have had several roles in the military over the years, but currently many are in the field with troops. It's estimated that each explosive-sniffing dog serving in Afghanistan has saved between 150 and 1,800 human lives. (2/25)**

[**Cat unlikely to have contributed to owner’s brain tumor**](http://bostonherald.com/entertainment/lifestyle/view/20220226cat_likely_not_to_blame_for_owners_cancer)

**In an effort to assuage a cat owner's concerns over a suggested connection between gliomas in people and toxoplasmosis in cats, veterinarian John de Jong points out there is no evidence directly linking the two conditions. Dr. de Jong writes that the cause of gliomas is unknown, although there are several theories, and not all cats are infected with toxoplasmosis. There are also other ways people can contract toxoplasmosis, such as from undercooked meat and contaminated soil. (2/26)**

[**Schmallenberg virus has spread across farms in Britain**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-17169452)

**The Schmallenberg infection has been** [**diagnosed five times in cattle and 69 times in sheep**](http://www.defra.gov.uk/ahvla/2012/02/24/schmallenberg-virus-further-updates-on-gb-testing-results-2/)**, Defra officials said. But the National Farmers' Union warned cases of the virus, which first emerged in the Netherlands and Germany last year, were being "under-reported". Humans are thought to be unaffected by the virus, which is thought to be spread by midges, mosquitoes and ticks. (2/27)**

[**Genetic evidence of influenza found in bats**](http://www.foxnews.com/health/2012/02/28/bird-flu-pig-flu-now-bat-flu-human-risk-unclear/)

**CDC researchers have isolated genetic material from a new influenza virus found in bats in Guatemala, marking the first documented time influenza has been observed in the species. Scientists are conducting tests to determine how easily the virus can spread among bats and whether it can be transmitted to people. (2/28)**

[**Animals instinctively avoid tick-infested areas**](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/02/120227094337.htm)

**The ecology of fear theory purports that prey animals are active participants in the hunt, purposefully reducing the chances of being harmed through behavior changes, and scientists recently applied that theory to ticks and their prey. The study found that animals avoided entire areas where tick numbers were highest, regardless of where food enticements were placed, suggesting that animals on some level are aware of the disease threats posed by ticks. (2/28)**

[**Algae on plants may be causing bald eagle deaths**](http://www.physorg.com/news/2012-02-aquatic-ecologist-silent-killer-bald.html)

**Across the country, bald eagles have been dying from avian vacuolar myelinopathy, a neurological disorder characterized by motor function problems. Researcher Susan Wilde thinks cyanobacteria, the blue-green algae found on many aquatic plants, is responsible for the deaths and is testing that theory. (2/28)**