**One Health News Bits**

**6-13-12**

[**Preparing for the next big disease outbreak is better than reacting**](http://www.stltoday.com/news/opinion/guest-commentary-humans-are-disrupting-the-natural-balance/article_9bec2dd5-609d-5dac-8c54-f836130218e7.html)

Epidemiologist and veterinarian Sharon Deem, director of the St. Louis Zoo's Institute for Conservation Medicine, writes that the world is in the midst of an "infectious disease crisis" and that preventive actions, rather than reactionary plans, are the best way to protect human and animal health. Otherwise, she writes, the impact of diseases could be more far-reaching than we imagine. (4/18)

[**Bats in first caves hit by white nose syndrome may be rebounding**](http://www.foxnews.com/us/2012/04/19/bats-rebound-in-ny-caves-first-hit-by-white-nose/)

Researchers found substantially more bats in several caves that were the first ones struck by white-nose syndrome, giving them a glimmer of hope amid a scourge that has killed millions of bats in North America. Figures released Thursday by the state Department of Environmental Conservation showed notable increases in the number of little brown bats in three out of five upstate New York hibernation caves. (4/19)

[**Gulf fish are still showing signs of oil pollution**](http://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/2-years-later-fish-sick-near-BP-oil-spill-site-3493396.php#photo-2835633)

Open sores. Parasitic infections. Chewed-up-looking fins. Gashes. Mysterious black streaks. Two years after the drilling-rig explosion that touched off the biggest offshore oil spill in U.S. history, scientists are beginning to suspect that fish in the Gulf of Mexico are suffering the effects of the petroleum. (4/20)

[**Chosen dog breed may reflect personality traits**](http://www.livescience.com/19791-dog-breeds-personality.html)

British scientists conducted a study of 1,000 dog owners and identified common personality traits associated with people who tend to pick certain breeds. The findings could end up in the form of a questionnaire people can use to determine the best dog for their personality and space limitations, hopefully thereby reducing the numbers of dogs surrendered to shelters, researchers said. (4/19)

[**Rabid bear attacks 2 men in Virginia**](http://www2.dailyprogress.com/news/2012/apr/19/rabid-bear-attacks-albemarle-shot-dead-victim-ar-1855598/)

An attack by a rabid bear was ended by an Albemarle County farm worker’s point-blank shotgun blast, fired from the roof of a Gator utility vehicle, police said. The bear killed Tuesday is the first-ever recorded case of a rabid bear in Virginia and only the second case on the East Coast that state officials are aware of, said Jaime Sajecki, bear project leader with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. (4/19)

[**Influenza research will not be released, for now**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/17/birdlfu-who-research-idUSL5E8DH44X20120217)

After a meeting last week including influenza researchers and U.S. security authorities, an agreement was reached to continue to keep secret the details of two lab-created highly transmissible and pathogenic H5N1 viruses. Some consider the information vital to creating preventive vaccines in the event of a pandemic, but others want a more in-depth evaluation of the risks before publishing the data. The U.S. National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity had wanted the studies censored before publication. (2/17)

[**Marine animals found with land pathogens raise concerns**](http://www.vancouversun.com/technology/Land%2Bbased%2Bpathogens%2Bdiscovered%2Bmarine%2Bmammals%2Bscientists%2Bfear%2Bfunding%2Bcuts%2Binvestigations/6175767/story.html)

Several pathogens usually found in livestock or companion animals have been increasingly identified in marine mammals, such as E. coli in harbor seals, says Stephen Raverty, a veterinary pathologist with British Columbia's animal health center. The U.S. and Canadian governments have cut funding for marine animal programs, and some fear that may leave humans open to health threats from these pathogens. (2/18)

[**Virus tracker receives prestigious award**](http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2012/02/19/MN1O1N20IF.DTL&type=science)

Virologist Nathan Wolfe was recently given the Roy Chapman Andrews Distinguished Explorer Award, for those who make significant discoveries through scientific exploration. Wolfe founded and leads the Global Viral Forecasting Initiative in an effort to identify diseases emerging from animals that may become the next human pandemic. (2/19)

[**Early exposure to germs may lead to better health in mammals**](http://the-scientist.com/2012/03/22/let-them-eat-dirt/)

Mammals exposed to germs and microbes early in life may develop stronger immune systems and be less likely to develop specific illnesses including asthma and ulcerative colitis, according to researchers at Harvard Medical School. The scientists studied groups of germ-free and normal lab mice and found the germ-free group much more susceptible to the two diseases. (3/22)

[**Scientists believe midges are spreading Schmallenberg virus**](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/agriculture/farming/9164468/Schmallenberg-virus-alert-over-midges-as-weather-warms.html)

Scientists in Belgium have isolated Schmallenberg virus material from the heads of three midge species, supporting the theory that midges are responsible for transmitting the pathogen that causes severe and deadly birth defects in livestock. The virus has spread across Europe and been identified on more than 200 farms in England. Though work on a vaccine is under way, it could take two years to complete. (3/25)

[**Rabid bat bites student in dormitory**](http://www.theindychannel.com/news/30768546/detail.html)

While he slept in his dorm room, an Indiana University student was bitten on the hand by a bat that later tested positive for rabies. The student, his roommate and the pest control worker who removed the bat are being treated with rabies prophylaxis injections. (3/27)

[**Overuse of antibacterial products may promote allergies**](http://arstechnica.com/science/news/2012/03/those-bacteria-in-your-gut-can-protect-against-allergies.ars?clicked=related_right)

New research suggests that antibacterial product overuse may be causing the rise in allergies in people. Antibiotics that change the colon's commensal bacterial population promote allergies by facilitating bone marrow production of basophil precursors, a major cellular mediator of inflammation and allergies, according to research conducted on mice by David Artis and other researchers from the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. (3/27)

[**Pet fecal evaluation is important diagnostic and preventive tool**](http://www.morganhilltimes.com/lifestyles/columnists/pete_keesling/scabies-transfers-from-pet-to-human/article_d05c03e1-265b-5aaa-a703-96078c1f2b15.html)

Veterinarian Pete Keesling emphasizes the importance of regular fecal examinations for pets, noting they can help diagnose illnesses that can be transmitted to people. Dr. Keesling also discusses scabies, pointing out that pets can transmit scabies to people but other sources are possible as well. (3/27)

[**Analysis: Global influenza tracking in animals needs improvement**](http://www.nature.com/news/flu-surveillance-lacking-1.10301)

Global influenza surveillance for birds is not sufficient for detecting outbreaks and monitoring influenza virus strains, according to an analysis by the science journal Nature. Experts concluded that surveillance is too fractured, with the World Health Organization focusing on humans, leaving the FAO and OIE to oversee animal surveillance, in addition to food security and animal health and trade, respectively. (3/28)

[**Study: Antibiotic use in swine production decreases human health risk**](http://www.iowastatedaily.com/news/article_22b89146-7928-11e1-bb12-001a4bcf887a.html)

In a recent study at Iowa State University, veterinarian and associate professor H. Scott Hurd compared two groups of swine carcasses, one raised using antibiotics and one without, and found the group raised without antibiotics had greater incidence of lesions on their skin or interior adhesions, leading to increased human handling in the production process and, subsequently, higher levels of salmonella contamination. (3/29)

[**Rise in rabies in Texas prompts warnings**](http://www.lewisvilleleader.com/articles/2012/03/28/plano_star-courier/news/8267.txt)

The number of positive rabies tests conducted statewide increased dramatically from 2010 to 2011, prompting local health officials to urge residents to be cautious when dealing with wild animals. While some of Texas' 254 counties have not seen an increase, the overall number of positive tests climbed by 32 percent, even while the number of tests conducted fell by nearly 9 percent. (3/28)

[**Government releases new pathogen research regulations**](http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2012/03/us-requires-new-dual-use-biologi.html)

The U.S. government on Thursday unveiled new [research regulations](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/dApoBXzCwNCcymhlCidalECicNmjJg) for 15 pathogens and toxins, including avian influenza H5N1. The regulations stipulate that the NIH and CDC must review all current and proposed federally funded research on these "high-consequence" pathogens and toxins, and if the review reveals potential for harm, a plan to mitigate risk must be developed. (3/29)

[**Intravascular robot development is based on sea lamprey**](http://www.innovationnewsdaily.com/1003-tiny-robot-check-health-body.html)

U.K. and U.S. scientists are constructing a microscopic robot to patrol human bloodstreams for disease and are basing its design on the sea lamprey, a parasitic fish that has a keen awareness of its environment. Though some electronic components will be included in the robot, mammal cells will be used to sense light and smell. Scientists hope to have the robot ready for trials in five years. (3/29)

[**Austrian institute opens to study the human-animal interface**](http://horsetalk.co.nz/2012/03/30/new-institute-to-probe-human-animal-interactions/)

A new institute aimed at studying human-animal interactions has opened in Austria. The institute will be dedicated to investigating human-animal interactions, taking into account the underlying sciences of ethics, comparative medicine and animal cognition and behaviour. The work will be characterized by a broad interdisciplinary approach involving the fields of biology, human medicine, veterinary medicine, philosophy, psychology and law. (3/30)

[**Little-known lethal dog toxin is also dangerous for children**](http://www.yourhoustonnews.com/bay_area/news/clear-lake-dog-owner-learns-of-plant-s-toxicity-the/article_db32c028-79ca-11e1-b971-0019bb2963f4.html)

The Sago palm is toxic to animals and people, causing rapid, life-threatening liver failure and bleeding, according to veterinarian Steven Garner, who has treated hundreds of cases of the poisonings in dogs and says the incidence has risen in recent years. Robert Jones, whose white German shepherd became seriously ill from the Sago palm, is concerned for pets and people because the plant is ubiquitous in his area and sold in gardening stores with no warning labels. (3/29)