

USACHPPM
HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

29 August 2003

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

Find Could Boost Malaria Fight

20 August – BBC News reported scientists in the UK say they've discovered how one of the most important types of [malaria](#) drug works. They believe their discovery will make it easier to monitor drug resistance, and to design new treatments for malaria, a disease which kills at least a million people each year. The drugs are called artemisinins, and they're derived from a Chinese herb called quingao or sweet wormwood. The herb has been used against malaria in China for centuries, perhaps millennia. In recent years its extracts have become one of the most important types of malarial drug, as the parasite has evolved resistance to other kinds. Dr Sanjeev Krishna from St George's Hospital in London led the new research. He told the BBC: "This class, the artemisinins, does not seem to have any resistance against it in the parasites. "So it's one of our last few hopes against treating drug-resistant parasites." Dr Krishna's team has now discovered that the artemisinins work by disabling a vital part of the parasite's cells - a tiny natural molecular motor which pumps calcium from one part of the cell to another. This discovery opens up the possibility of designing new drugs that work in a similar way - targeting this pump or others vital to the parasite's existence. [View Article](#)

Obesity, Depression Affect Heart Disease

22 August – Science Blog reported [obesity](#) and [depression](#) may work together to provoke the chronic low-level inflammation associated with [atherosclerosis](#) and increased risk of heart disease, according to a new report in the journal Brain, Behavior and Immunity. Among a large group of German men ages 45 to 74, obese men had significantly higher concentrations of a protein called [CRP](#) compared with non-obese men. CRP serves as a signal of artery inflammation and high levels of the protein may be a good predictor of future heart disease. [View Article](#)

Targeted Isotopes Zap Fungal Infection

20 August – Reuters reported scientists have shown that radioactive isotopes attached to antibodies can seek out and destroy fungal infections in mice. As described in the early edition of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Dadachova's team attached radioisotopes to antibodies directed against a type of fungus, [Cryptococcus neoformans](#). Although these antibodies had no inherent killing ability, when coupled with the radioisotopes they were able to destroy *C. neoformans* in a lab dish. Next, the researchers tested the isotope-antibodies in mice infected with *C. neoformans*. The strategy

successfully delivered the isotopes to the sites of infection, reduced the number of fungal organisms, and significantly improved the animals' survival. [View Article](#)

Telomere Length May Be Associated with Risk of Smoking-related Cancers

22 August – Science Blog reported people with short telomeres, as measured in white blood cells, appear to be at an increased risk for certain [cancers](#), according to a study in the August 20 issue of the Journal of the National Cancer Institute. The study found that, compared with people with longer telomeres, people with shorter telomeres had a higher risk for bladder, head and neck, lung, and renal cell cancers--cancers that are associated with cigarette smoking. [View Article](#)

Urine Test for Cervical Virus Seen as Promising

25 August – Reuters reported nearly all cases of [cervical cancer](#) are caused by infection with specific types of [human papilloma virus \(HPV\)](#). While screening by regular Pap smears is the most reliable way to catch cervical cancer, this isn't available in all parts of the world. Now it seems that testing urine can show quite accurately which types of HPV are present in the cervix, and therefore which women run the risk of developing cancer, according to a report in the Journal of Medical Virology. Researchers compared the detection of HPV in urine and in cervical specimens from 43 women with cervical cancer. HPV was detected and typed in 72 percent of urine samples and 98 percent of cervical swabs, the team reports. [View Article](#)

WHO Bracing for Possible New Outbreak of SARS

21 August – VOA News reported the World Health Organization is bracing for what it says could be a new outbreak of [Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome](#) later this year. An international team of scientists has called on Chinese officials to standardize and improve tests to better track the spread of SARS should it reoccur. They advised the government to improve data collection, research and reporting. [View Article](#)

USEUCOM

Heat Wave Kills More Than 1,300 in Portugal

21 August – Reuters reported a heat wave in Portugal has killed an estimated 1,316 people between late July and mid August, the health ministry said. The heat wave was the hottest and longest recorded in Portugal and was part of a wider spell of extremely hot weather that gripped much of Europe. The figures were from a preliminary report on the deaths, the health ministry said in a statement. The estimate is based on a comparison with the same period last year. [View Article](#)

Inquiry into Salmonella Outbreak

25 August – BBC News reported health experts are banding together to trace the source of a rare form of [salmonella](#) that has affected dozens of people throughout Britain. In August so far, there have been 31 confirmed cases of *Salmonella bareilly*. There are 14 confirmed and three suspected cases in Scotland, while 17 have been confirmed in England and Wales, plus three suspected cases. Experts believe the fact that cases are appearing throughout Britain means there could be a common source. Health authorities affected are said to be working together to locate the origin of the bug, but at this stage they do not know whether it is food-borne. [View Article](#)

Rinderpest in Mauritania: Confirmation of Serological Findings in Warthogs

24 August – ProMed reported according to the latest results received on 7 Aug 2003 from the OIE Reference Laboratory for rinderpest (Pirbright, United Kingdom), the presence of [rinderpest](#) antibodies was confirmed in 2 of the 32 serum samples collected in warthogs (*Phacochoerus aethiopicus*) within the framework of epidemiological surveillance for rinderpest in wildlife. The dates of sampling were 6 and 10 Jan 2003. The locations of sampling were Guere and N'Khaila. Following confirmation of the results, clinical investigations and sampling were carried out in the bovine population. Subsequent planned measures include clinical and serological surveillance of bovines and wildlife. [View Report](#)

Russia (Chelyabinsk): Human Opisthorchiasis

22 August – ProMed reported in Chelyabinsk, Russia, 197 people have been infected with [Opisthorchis](#), and more than a quarter of them are children. The number of infected people has been increasing since the beginning of 2003; already 47 children have been diagnosed. According to the Information Agency "Ural-Press-Inform," all of them ate fish from the carp family that were infected by *Opisthorchis felineus*, [the Siberian liver fluke]. More and more inhabitants of the Ural region are being diagnosed with opisthorchiasis. Local rivers and lakes in the Ural region are infested with the dangerous parasite. According to Ludmila Pavlova, manager of radioactive and ecologic safety in Chelyabinsk, infected fish do not look any different from non-infected fish. It is easier to prevent Opisthorchis infection than to treat it. It is recommended to eat only fish bought from shops with a system of sanitary and veterinary controls. Opisthorchis worms die if the fish is boiled for 20 minutes or cooked in the oven for 40 minutes. Hot smoking kills flukes but not cold smoking. [View Report](#)

Russia: Toxocariasis, Kemerovo Region

21 August – ProMed reported roundworms of the genus *Toxocara*, which cause [toxocariasis](#), have been discovered in sandboxes in children's playgrounds. Several cases of toxocariasis, which can be transmitted in the feces of dogs and cats, have been diagnosed in the city of Novokuznezk in the Kemerovo region. Parasitologists investigated the sand and dirt near the kindergarten and did not discover anything suspicious. When the physicians from the Sanitary Epidemiology Surveillance Center investigated the backyards of children's homes, they found eggs of *Toxocara*. The symptoms of the disease they produce are non-specific, including fever and malaise. Physicians recommend that adults make sure children wash their hands carefully, and wash fruits and vegetables bought in the market, because they can also carry infection. [View Report](#)

Scotland Prey to New Strain of *E. coli* Killer Bug

25 August – ProMed reported a new strain of the deadly [E. coli \(E. coli 026\)](#) bug that can pass through the standard safety checks undetected has been discovered in Scotland for the first time. A nationwide alert has been issued after 4 people were found to have become infected with the bacteria in the past 3 months. This strain of *E. coli* can cause death through kidney failure and brain damage. It is as dangerous as [E. coli O157](#) and scientists are worried that because it is so hard to detect, it will be able to spread across the country before emergency procedures can be set up. Medical labs throughout Scotland have been warned to look out for the microorganism, and the public are being advised to be extra vigilant about hygiene. [View Report](#)

Spain: Human Brucellosis Cases

21 August – ProMed reported during May and June 2003, there was an epidemic outbreak of [Brucellosis](#) in Motril (Granada), with at least 27 cases linked to the consumption of fresh cheese acquired directly

from the farmers who produced it and sold it in the municipality. Cases of brucellosis as a result of drinking unpasteurized milk (most frequently goat milk), or its fresh byproducts (generally cheese and sometimes cottage cheese) are rare in Granada. During the last decade, 55 percent of the cases registered in Granada were attributed to direct contact with livestock, 21 percent to the intake of infected dairy products, 18 percent to mixed causes, and in 6 percent air-borne transmission was suspected. The data indicates that brucellosis continues to be a public health concern. [View Report](#)

Switzerland: Mad Cat Disease

24 August – ProMed reported a 2nd case of [feline spongiform encephalopathy \(FSE\)](#), a disease affecting the brain tissue of cats, has been recorded in Switzerland. The veterinary authorities said the likely cause of the infection, which is similar to mad cow disease, was contaminated pet food. A 1st case of FSE was reported in Switzerland 2 years ago. Experts say the disease poses no health risk for people. This is not the only country in which FSE has been diagnosed. Eighty-nine FSE cases have been diagnosed in the UK so far, including 20 since 1996. Five additional cases have been reported outside the UK, namely N. Ireland, Norway, Liechtenstein. In addition, 21 cases of FSE have been reported in exotic felids in zoos. [View Report](#)

USCENTCOM

Kazakhstan: 4-Year-Old Girl Dies of Bubonic Plague

22 August – ProMed reported a 4-year-old girl died of [bubonic plague](#) on Saturday in the south-central Kazakh province of Kzyl-Orda, while another 27 people who had been in contact with her were now under treatment. Officials say that efforts were being made to tackle the issue, with resources from local budgets being allocated in an effort to ensure preventive treatment of those with whom the child had been in contact, adding that steps would also be taken to disinfect the village and kill all its rats, which normally host fleas. Additionally, the local population, mainly cattle breeders and small-scale farmers, would be inoculated against plague, he added. 3 people contracted bubonic plague in the western Kazakh province of Mangistau at the end of July [2003] by way of contact with the meat of an infected camel. Recent outbreaks have shown that plague may reoccur in areas that have long remained free of the disease. [View Report](#)

Malaria Increases in Kyrgyzstan

21 August – ProMed reported according to the Epidemiology Surveillance Department (ESD) of Kyrgyzstan, 156 cases of [malaria](#) have been recorded as of 11 Aug 2003, among which were 106 in Batken oblast, 7 in the City of Bishkek, and 1 in the City of Osh. According to ESD, a number of factors account for the current epidemiologic situation, such as large-scale migration of the population, economic relationships with neighboring Central Asian countries where malaria is endemic (such as Tajikistan), and lack of funding for insecticides against malaria transmitters. Because of the complicated situation regarding malaria, a regional office of WHO has been opened in Osh. The French non-governmental organization "Akted" is distributing health information on malaria prevention among the population of Batken oblast. However, the humanitarian aid received thus far is not sufficient to achieve complete protection from malaria. [View Report](#)

USNORTHCOM

6 Beach Blocks Closed in Cape May after Bacteria Found

21 August - The Philadelphia Inquirer reported six blocks of beaches along the oceanfront at the southernmost tip of the state were closed to swimmers after officials confirmed that there were elevated levels of [fecal coliform bacteria](#) in the water, making it the fifth community at the Jersey Shore to close beaches this week. Water bacteria counts that were eight times the acceptable level were found. [View Article](#)

BC Nursing Home Outbreak Not SARS, WHO Says

25 August – The Toronto Star reported the World Health Organization has concluded that a respiratory disease that swept through a Vancouver-area nursing home this summer is not [SARS](#). Health officials in British Columbia said as much Friday. But today, the WHO endorsed that diagnosis, saying two lines of converging evidence allowed the organization to rule out severe acute respiratory syndrome. The decision was made based on the fact that the patients involved did not manifest symptoms common to SARS, such as characteristic changes in lung X-rays. As well, genetic sequencing of a portion of a virus isolated from some of the 143 residents and staff of Kinsmen Place Lodge who fell ill did not match the SARS coronavirus, but appeared similar to a human coronavirus known as OC43. [View Report](#)

CDC Releases Recommendations for the Timing of Influenza Vaccination for the 2003-2004 Influenza Season

22 August – The CDC reported the CDC determined that vaccine production for the 2003--04 [influenza](#) season is proceeding satisfactorily and that projected production and distribution schedules will allow for sufficient supply of influenza vaccine during October and November. Therefore, influenza vaccination can proceed for all high-risk and healthy persons, individually and through mass campaigns, as soon as vaccine is available. Additional information about influenza and influenza vaccination is available from CDC at [NIP: FLU/home page](#). [View Report](#)

EEE Virus Update

21 September – ProMed reported a horse in the Seagrove area tested positive for [eastern equine encephalitis \(EEE\) virus](#). There have been 73 confirmed cases in animals in 37 North Carolina counties this year. [View Report](#) The first case since 2000 of eastern equine encephalitis in a horse in New Jersey has been found in a thoroughbred in Mays Landing. The diagnosis comes as the region contends with an explosion in the mosquito population from a wetter-than-usual summer. Agriculture Secretary Charles M. Kuperus said the death highlighted the need for horse owners to make sure their animals have up-to-date vaccinations. [View Report](#)

FDA Unveils 5-Part Strategic Action Plan To "Protect and Advance America's Health"

20 August - In a comprehensive 5-part strategic action plan entitled "Protecting and Advancing America's Health: A Strategic Action Plan for the 21st Century," the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) today outlined how it is taking new steps to protect and advance public health for America. The plan, which sets some new specific actions and performance measures directly related to achieving FDA's public

health mission, establishes a framework for achieving five broad priority goals for FDA. The action plan is not an exhaustive list of the Agency's many ongoing regulatory activities; rather, it highlights some of the specific steps that FDA is taking to address new challenges facing the agency. [View Article](#)

First Relapsing Fever Outbreak in Montana Identified

26 August – Eurekalert reported a 2002 outbreak of tick-borne [relapsing fever](#) in Montana--the first confirmation of relapsing fever in the state--has led to the discovery of a bacterium and species of tick not known previously to exist in Montana. In the September 2003 issue of the journal *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, investigators at Rocky Mountain Laboratories (RML) in Hamilton, Montana, and their collaborators describe this outbreak and the results of laboratory and clinical investigations. The mystery presented itself between July and August 2002, when five of 20 people became ill during or after visiting a cabin on an island in Flathead Lake in western Montana. RML investigators and tick experts worked with physicians in Seattle; Montana State Epidemiologist; the Lake County Health Department; and the curator of the U.S. National Tick Collection to determine the cause of the outbreak. Blood samples from four patients who had returned home to Seattle were sent to RML. There the RML investigators isolated and identified the cause of the illness as *Borrelia hermsii*, a spiral-shaped bacterium or spirochete. Investigators then visited the cabin where the individuals had become infected. In the attic, they discovered the species of tick that is known to transmit this bacterium in other regions of the western United States. [View Report](#) [View EID Article](#)

Florida: 3rd Malaria Case Found in Lake Worth, Palm Beach County

21 August – ProMed reported in Florida, confirmation of a 3rd malaria case came Saturday, and by Monday all of Palm Beach County was under a medical alert for the mosquito-borne diseases. 6 traps west of Lake Worth and Lantana have found the [malaria](#)-carrying *Anopheles* mosquito -- which can travel 7 miles -- to be comparatively rare, officials said. Only a half dozen *Anopheles* mosquitoes have buzzed into the traps, which can snare up to tens of thousands of mosquitoes. When weather conditions allow, a plane dispenses microscopic pesticide droplets of dibrom over western Palm Beach County. 6 trucks periodically pump out permethrin in a 300-foot-wide swath. 4 other trucks hit mosquito breeding areas, where workers pour granules of bacteria [harmless to humans] to kill off mosquito larvae. In the largest use so far of the emergency warning system, the first of almost 500,000 phone calls went out Tuesday evening urging residents to protect themselves against mosquito bites. The county's automatic calling system will continue contacting people during the evening for the next 9 days. [View Report](#)

Hamburger Recalled Over *E. coli* Suspicion

25 August – ProMed reported about 76,000 pounds of fresh and frozen ground beef produced by J&B Meats Corp. of Coal Valley, Illinois, may be contaminated by [E. coli](#) and are being recalled. The products subject to recall bear the date code "5630053" and establishment code "EST. 5712" inside the USDA seal of inspection. The meats were produced 30 May 2003 and shipped to wholesalers nationwide. An *E. coli* illness in Wisconsin triggered an investigation by the state Health Department, and tests of J&B Meats ground beef proved positive for *E. coli*, a potentially deadly contaminant. So far there is no definitive link implicating the meat -- which was voluntarily recalled -- to any illness. [View Report](#) [View USDA Recall](#)

Humana Awarded Military's TRICARE Health Benefit Contract

25 August – The San Antonio Business Journal reported the Department of Defense has selected Humana Inc. to provide health benefits to active duty and retired service members in Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas. Under the terms of the contract, Humana Military Healthcare Services (HMHS) will

administer these benefits under the military's TRICARE program. Humana has been a TRICARE contractor since July 1, 1996, serving the Southeastern United States and later the Mid-Atlantic states in 2001. Humana's TRICARE membership now totals 2.8 million people. The new contract is set up to last one year with four, one-year extensions. Benefits are expected to begin in August 2004, contingent upon any appeals to the Department of Defense by the incumbent contractor. [View Report](#)

Kansas: *Cryptosporidiosis* from Swimming Pool

25 August – ProMed reported 4 public swimming pools were ordered closed Friday after an outbreak of illness caused by [cryptosporidium](#), a parasite spread by human and animal waste. Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department Director Kay Kent said 11 people had been diagnosed with illness caused by the bacteria since early July 2003. The victims had been swimming at the 4 pools. Kent closed the city's Lawrence Aquatic Center and the pool at Alvamar Golf and Country Club. She also requested the closing of pools at Kansas University's Robinson Center and Haskell Indian Nations University. Those are state and federal facilities, respectively, not subject to the health department's jurisdiction. Officials said Lawrence's water supply was not in danger. [View Report](#)

MRSA Infections Among Competitive Sports Participants

22 August – The CDC released a report that summarizes several reported clusters of skin and soft tissue infections associated with [Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus \(MRSA\)](#) among participants in competitive sports and identifies possible risk factors for infection (e.g., physical contact, skin damage, and sharing of equipment or clothing). The findings underscore 1) the potential for MRSA infections among sports participants; 2) the need for health-care providers to be aware that skin and soft tissue infections occurring in these settings might be caused by MRSA; and 3) the importance of implementing prevention measures by players, coaches, parents, and school and team administrators. [View CDC Report](#)

Milk Protein New Tool to Fight Contaminated Meat

23 August – Reuters reported the FDA says it is safe to spray lactoferrin, a milk protein, on to beef carcasses to fight disease-causing bacteria such as [E. coli 0157:H7](#). Scientists with aLF Ventures had found that spraying lactoferrin on raw beef carcasses inhibits the growth of *E. coli*, [salmonella](#) and [campylobacter](#) and prevents them from attaching to meat surfaces. The FDA issued its endorsement in response to a petition filed by aLF Ventures asking the agency to affirm lactoferrin is safe for consumers. The company also submitted scientific data showing that use of lactoferrin is safe for individuals who are allergic to milk, the agency said in a statement. [View Article](#)

Targeting Aggressive Driving

25 August – MSNBC News reported with traffic deaths at their highest level in 12 years, states nationwide are cracking down on all types of aggressive drivers, from illegal street racers to tailgating commuters. Last year alone, 42,815 people died in traffic accidents, the most since 1990, when 44,599 people were killed, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Aggressive driving, drunken driving and racing were all significant contributors to the increase, the agency said. To fight the deadly trend, states have been passing tougher laws, increasing fines and threatening jail time to try to curb aggressive driving. They're also urging more community involvement, particularly tips from other drivers. [View Article](#)

Texas: 2nd Hantavirus Case in Amarillo This Year

20 August – ProMed reported [Hantavirus](#) infection claimed the life of a Randall County resident last week. The disease prompted health officials to alert the public on Fri 15 Aug 2003 to preventive measures. Dr. J. Rush Pierce, Amarillo's health authority, said the hantavirus case was the 2nd one in Amarillo in 2003. The latest victim was a middle-aged person, he said. "2 cases in Amarillo in one year, at this time of the year, and 4 in the region, is more than we usually see," he said. [View Report](#)

US Crime Hits 30-year Low

25 August – BBC News reported crime in the United States fell last year to the lowest level since records started being compiled 30 years ago, the US Justice Department has said. About 23 million violent and property crimes were reported in 2002, compared with some 44 million in 1973, according to the annual survey by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. The decline was seen in every category of crime measured by the department. [View Article](#)

West Nile Virus 2003 Human Cases as of August 26

State	Human	Deaths	State	Human Cases*	Deaths
Alabama	14	2	Nebraska	183	4
Arkansas	3		New Jersey	2	
Colorado	635	6	New Mexico	24	1
Connecticut	1		New York	1	
Florida	4		North Carolina	2	
Georgia	3		North Dakota	28	
Illinois	2		Ohio	11	1
Iowa	11		Oklahoma	11	
Kansas	10	1	Pennsylvania	27	
Kentucky	3		South Carolina	1	
Louisiana	30		South Dakota	175	1
Maryland	1		Tennessee	3	
Massachusetts	1		Texas	85	2
Minnesota	13		Virginia	2	
Mississippi	20	1	Wisconsin	1	
Missouri	2		Wyoming	31	
Montana	15		Total	1355	19

*These numbers reflect both mild and severe human disease cases that have been reported to ArboNet by state and local health departments during 2003. ArboNet is the national, electronic surveillance system established by CDC to assist states in tracking [West Nile virus](#) and other mosquito-borne viruses. [View Source](#) Click [Here](#) for Canadian surveillance

USPACOM

China: Schistosomiasis Epidemic

24 August – ProMed reported Zhou Xiaonong, director of the National Institute for the Control of Parasitic Diseases, based in Shanghai, reported that during the first 6 months of 2003, approximately 200,000 people in China acquired [schistosomiasis](#), elevating the number of infected people in the country to one million. This news reactivates the health alerts in a country that has not yet recovered from the crisis caused by the SARS epidemic, which has already caused the death of 350 persons. Schistosomiasis began to spread rapidly in 1998, after the Yangtze river floods, and, according to the data, the epidemic has flared up over the past few months. The river has carried the parasite to a large portion of the territory, and it is estimated that 65 million people are at risk of acquiring the disease. [View Report](#)

Chinese Worker Dies from WWII Gas

22 August – CNN reported a migrant worker became the first person to die from World War II-era [mustard gas](#) that escaped from five old barrels in northern China, sickening dozens, the government said. Li Guizhen died Thursday night at a military hospital in the northern city of Qiqihar, more than two weeks after he and 33 others were exposed to the chemical weapon, the official Xinhua News Agency said. The barrels were abandoned by Japanese troops in China at the end of the war and were recently dug up. [View Article](#)

Dengue Fever Update for USPACOM Countries

25 August – ProMed reported the number of [dengue fever](#) cases in Hong Kong has reached 25 -- 19 more than for the same period of 2002 -- with the discovery of a man suffering the potentially fatal hemorrhagic form of the disease. In India, At least 7 cases of confirmed dengue were reported from Thiruvananthapuram city and suburbs on Sunday. The progressive total of confirmed dengue cases reported in the district between January and August 2003 totals 492, of which 96 cases were reported in August alone. There have been 11 dengue-related deaths in the district so far [in 2003]. In addition, 74 positive cases of dengue have been detected in Dakshina Kannada district, 68 of them were detected in Sullia taluk. The fever had spread from neighboring Kerala, bordering Sullia taluk, where over 100 deaths had been reported due to dengue. [View Report](#)

India Says Coke, Pepsi Meet Domestic Safety Norms

21 August – Reuters reported India said tests of drinks locally made by PepsiCo Inc and Coca Cola Co, ordered after a pesticide scare, found they conformed to domestic safety standards. But Health Minister Sushma Swaraj said tests conducted by two state-run laboratories on 12 samples of drinks made by the two firms showed that some contained pesticide levels higher than those prescribed under European Union (EU) safety norms. Indian environmental group the Center for Science and Environment (CSE) said in a report this month its tests had shown soft drinks made in India by Coca-Cola and PepsiCo contained traces of four pesticides, and breached EU safety norms. Swaraj said the tests found the drinks "were well within the safety limits prescribed for packaged drinking water at present." [View Article](#)

Mass Food Poisoning Hits China

25 August – ProMed reported about 400 Chinese construction workers are being treated in the hospital after falling ill from [food poisoning](#). The mass poisoning is being traced to a construction site canteen. According to workers, the canteen served the same leftovers each day until they were finished. The

workers -- from Yangtze River Construction -- were building a new plant for South Korean electronics giant Samsung in Suzhou city in China's eastern Jiangsu province. The men were all suffering from vomiting, stomach aches, and fever. On Fri 22 Aug 2003, 60 students from Yangzhou University were hospitalized, complaining of vomiting and dizziness, in a suspected food poisoning case. Food poisoning in China normally peaks in the summer months when food is not adequately protected from the heat.

[View Report](#)

Rats May Have Played Role in Hong Kong SARS Outbreak

18 August – CIDRAP News reported the vector in the [SARS \(severe acute respiratory syndrome\)](#) outbreak at the Amoy Gardens housing complex in Hong Kong last spring may have been roof rats, hypothesizes Stephen K. C. Ng of Columbia University School of Public Health in an article published in the Aug 16 issue of The Lancet. How the infection spread from the index case to more than 300 residents of the complex very rapidly has remained a mystery. Ng proposes that a rat could have come in contact with infectious material in the apartment stayed at by the index case. The rat then could have spread the virus to other rats and the rats to humans by means of leaving contaminants in other apartments. The rats also could have spread the virus by coming into contact with clothing hanging on clotheslines outside bathroom windows of the complex that have become "bridges" for the rats as they forage for food. [View Article](#)

Situation Desperate for Residents in Flood-Stricken Regions of China

24 August - The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said the situation for nearly four million people in China remains dire, one month after severe floods hit 26 Chinese provinces. The agency says the floods have affected 150 million people. According to hydrologists, this year's floods are among the worst ever experienced by China. International Red Cross aid workers recently visited some of the hardest hit areas to assess conditions and needs. The Red Cross desk officer for China, Sugai Satoshi, said the team saw hundreds of thousands of people living on dangerous dikes in damp, crowded conditions. "Twenty percent of them are staying inside tents and 80 percent, the remaining, are just under makeshift tarpaulins. And they are not receiving enough food and food distribution to these is really patchy. Great efforts have been made by the provinces and the government and other relief organizations, but there is still a huge un-met need for these people," he said. [View Article](#)

WHO to Help China Prevent Disease

22 August - ABC News Online reported the World Health Organization (WHO) is to train thousands of medical workers in China to prevent infectious diseases from spreading in hospitals. The WHO training scheme will begin in Beijing, where 193 people died in the city's SARS outbreak earlier this year. The program is meant to make health workers better able to prevent infectious diseases from spreading in hospitals. The WHO says it does not know and remains no closer to tracking the original source of the virus, which first appeared in China late last year. [View Article](#)

USSOUTHCOM

Dengue Fever Update for USSOUTHCOM Countries

25 August – ProMed reported 25 more people with dengue-like symptoms were admitted over the weekend to an already overcrowded hospital in southern Trinidad. The hospital, one of the Trinidad and Tobago's largest, has been at full capacity since at least Friday, prompting officials to urge people with

non-urgent cases to seek treatment elsewhere. There have been 757 confirmed cases of [dengue fever](#) in Trinidad this year, which officials said was normal. In Venezuela, the cumulative total for epidemiological week No. 32, is: 11,225 cases of both types of dengue fever 792 cases of DHF (7.3 percent), 1 death. Ratio Dengue/DHF: 13:1. Age group under 15: 49.1 percent of the cases. Age group 15-24: 22.8 percent of the cases. Cumulative Morbidity Rate: 43.9/100,000 inhabitants. Circulating serotypes: 1 and 3. Finally, of 35 confirmed deaths from DHF in Brazil in 2003, 17 have occurred in Ceara state. Regarding classic dengue, type 1, Bahia state leads with 35,356 cases, followed by Espirito Santo state with 30,260, Pernambuco state with 22,694, Ceara state with 20,024 and Sao Paulo state with 19,591. [View Report](#)

Yellow Fever in Venezuela

23 August – ProMed reported on an outbreak of [Yellow Fever \(YF\)](#) in the Zulia state and the Tachira State. In Zulia, During week 31, a 2nd outbreak of YF began, with 5 cases (2 deaths), some of them Colombian nationals. During week 32, 8 new cases were confirmed, with 5 deaths. All were farm laborers, more than 15 years old, in the municipalities of Jesus Maria Semprun, Colon, Machiques, Perija and Maracaibo. There has been mass vaccination in these areas, but this has not reached the large number of laborers from Colombia who cross the frontier daily. An additional 11 suspected cases are being investigated and vaccination has been intensified in areas of difficult access, reviewed in areas already vaccinated, and continued in the municipalities north of the outbreak area. In the Tachira State, during week 31 week 32, 4 new cases and 2 deaths were confirmed in the municipality of Uribante. Epidemiological surveillance & vaccination has been intensified in the area. [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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