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HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

30 May 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

Acetaminophen, Ibuprofen Both Good for High-altitude Headaches

16 May – Science Blog reported in a study conducted near the Mt. Everest Base Camp in Nepal, a Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) resident physician and his colleagues have found that acetaminophen is as effective as ibuprofen in treating [high-altitude headache](#). Because acetaminophen has fewer side effects than medications like ibuprofen, this finding suggests that acetaminophen may be the best choice for those who experience headaches when they travel to altitudes of more than 2,000 meters (about 6,600 feet). The report appears in the Journal of Emergency Medicine. [View Article](#)

Antibiotic 'Could Beat Resistant TB'

26 May – BBC News reported scientists believe they have found an antibiotic that could beat drug-resistant [tuberculosis](#). The antibiotic, [linezolid](#), saved four women and a child in the US who were all seriously ill with drug-resistant TB. Doctors treating the patients, who were aged between ten and 54, tried between eight and 14 drugs on each patient without success before using the linezolid. TB can usually be cured with a six-month course of antibiotics. But patients with drug-resistant strains can need up to two years' of treatment with powerful drugs to cure their TB. [Drug-resistant](#) strains of TB develop when patients do not finish their course of treatment or are given the wrong combination of drugs. It is a particular problem in parts of Eastern Europe. [View Article](#)

Chewing Gum After Meals May Fight Reflux

20 May – Reuters reported researchers say chewing on a piece of gum for about a half-hour after each meal can give some relief from acid reflux among those individuals with gastroesophageal reflux disease ([GERD](#)). Subjects who chewed gum for 30 minutes after a meal had lower acid levels in their esophagus and reported fewer episodes of heartburn and discomfort during the gum session than those subjects that didn't chew gum. None of this means that GERD patients should toss out their medicines in favor of chewing gum, however. The study was small and it's far too early to draw firm conclusions. The study received no funding from gum manufacturers or any other private source, however; the Wrigley gum company did pay for the researcher's travel expenses in attending the Orlando conference. [View Article](#) Another recent study has shown that eating too quickly may also spur an attack of acid reflux. [View Article](#)

Cumulative Number of Reported SARS From: 1 Nov 2002¹ To: 28 May 2003

Country	Cumulative # of case(s) ²	# of deaths	# recovered ³	Date last probable case reported
Australia	6	0	6	27/May/2003
Brazil	2	0	2	24/Apr/2003
Canada	149	26	111	27/May/2003
China	5323	325	3036	28/May/2003
China, Hong ⁴	1730	270	1295	28/May/2003
China, Macao	2	0	0	28/May/2003
China, Taiwan	610	81	112	28/May/2003
Colombia	1	0	1	05/May/2003
Finland	1	0	1	20/May/2003
France	7	0	6	22/May/2003
Germany	9	0	9	28/May/2003
India	3	0	3	14/May/2003
Indonesia	2	0	2	28/May/2003
Italy	9	0	9	28/May/2003
Kuwait	1	0	1	20/Apr/2003
Malaysia	5	2	3	26/May/2003
Mongolia	9	0	9	27/May/2003
New Zealand	1	0	1	28/May/2003
Philippines	12	2	10	28/May/2003
Republic of Ireland	1	0	1	23/May/2003
Republic of Korea	3	0	2	28/May/2003
Romania	1	0	1	22/Apr/2003
Singapore	206	31	165	28/May/2003
South Africa	1	1	0	03/May/2003
Spain	1	0	1	07/May/2003
Sweden	3	0	3	13/May/2003
Switzerland	1	0	1	16/May/2003
Thailand	8	2	6	27/May/2003
United Kingdom	4	0	4	28/May/2003
United States	66	0	32	27/May/2003
Viet Nam	63	5	58	14/May/2003
Total	8240	745	4891	

Cumulative number of cases includes number of deaths. As SARS is a diagnosis of exclusion, the status of a reported case may change over time. This means that previously reported cases may be discarded after further investigation and follow-up.

1. The start of the period of surveillance has been changed to 1 November 2002 to capture cases of atypical pneumonia in China that are now recognized as being cases of SARS.
2. A decrease in the number of cumulative cases and discrepancies in the difference between cumulative number of cases of the last and the current WHO update are attributed to the discarding of cases.
3. Includes cases who are "discharged" or "recovered" as reported by the national public health authorities.
4. One death attributed to Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China occurred in a case medically transferred from Viet Nam.

Source: [WHO](#)

Delay Deportation Until TB Therapy Complete: Report

15 May – Reuters reported many illegal immigrants with [tuberculosis](#) are deported from the U.S. before they can finish treatment, according to a report by an advisory council to the U.S. government. People who do not complete treatment for tuberculosis are at risk of relapsing, at which point they may develop a strain of tuberculosis that is resistant to drugs, the report notes. Consequently, the practice of deporting illegal immigrants before they finish treatment puts the world at risk by encouraging the spread of treatment-resistant forms of the disease. The rate of tuberculosis is 12 times higher among detainees than in the overall U.S. population, the report indicates. One of the authors of the report argued that deporting illegal immigrants back to their home country before they can be cured of tuberculosis is "inhumane" because people can die without treatment, and dangerous because people who relapse can spread the disease to others. [View Article](#)

Drought Breeds West Nile Virus

26 May – CBS News reported the late, rainy spring could produce favorable conditions for a bumper crop of mosquitoes, just in time for the return of the [West Nile virus](#) (WNV) season. But droughts are even worse when it comes to the spread of West Nile virus. Harvard researchers Doug Causey and Paul Epstein found that during drought, birds are forced to scrounge for water at the very same drains and catch basins where mosquitoes carrying the WNV breed. That could mean a deadly summer for drought areas out West. [View Article](#)

Eating Bats Linked to Neurological Disease

27 May – Science Blog reported maybe you are what you eat. This would solve the long-time mystery of why so many of Guam's Chamorro people – up to a third per village -- suffered a devastating neurological disease. A new study suggests that they gorged on flying fox bats that in turn had feasted on neurotoxin-laden cycad seeds. Guam's indigenous Chamorro people historically had a high incidence of a neurological disease with similarities to [Lou Gehrig's](#), [Parkinson's](#) and [Alzheimer's](#) diseases. Called ALS-PDC (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis-Parkinsonian dementia complex), the disease's symptoms range from muscle weakness and paralysis to dementia. The rate of ALS-PDC has been as much as 100 times higher in Guam's Chamorro people than in the continental U.S. [View Article](#)

Experience, Not Age, Affects Pilot's Crash Risk

26 May – Reuters reported a new study suggests that a pilot's age makes no difference in crash risk, and the more experience the better when it comes to the ability to avoid accidents. In a study of 3,306 commuter plane and air taxi pilots over ten years, researchers found that pilots in their late 50s were at no greater risk of crashing than those in their 40s, according to the study published in the American Journal of Epidemiology. The researchers found that pilots with 5,000 to 10,000 hours of flight experience had a 57 percent lower risk of crash than their less-experienced counterparts. [View Article](#)

For Preservative-Free Flu Shot, Ask in Advance

26 May – Reuters reported parents who wish to provide their young child with a thimerosal-free [flu vaccine](#) next flu season are being advised to let their pediatrician know now so it can be ordered in advance. Thimerosal has been used for over 60 years to prevent microbial contamination in vaccines, but health officials have begun phasing it out because it contains mercury. While the bulk of [influenza](#) shots given in the U.S. still contain at least some [thimerosal](#), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved preservative-free flu vaccines. Previously, the pharmaceutical company Evans Vaccines was granted approval for a [thimerosal-free](#) flu vaccine for use in children over the age of 3. Last September Aventis Pasteur got approval for its Fluzone preservative-free vaccine, which can be used in children 6 months and older. It became available to children in late November 2002. [View Article](#)

Head Injuries May Hike Risk of Parkinson's Disease

19 May - Reuters reported people who sustain substantial head injuries may face an increased risk of developing [Parkinson's disease](#) years later, new study findings suggest. Overall, those who had experienced head trauma were about four times more likely to develop the neurological disease than those who never had such injuries, results showed. But only the more severe forms of head trauma appeared to raise the odds of developing Parkinson's. People with mild head injuries who did not lose consciousness or experience memory loss lasting at least 30 minutes faced no increased risk, according to findings published in the journal Neurology. However, those who had experienced head

trauma involving a loss of consciousness, skull fracture, prolonged memory loss or more severe complications were 11 times more likely to develop Parkinson's disease than those who had never sustained head trauma. The study involved 196 patients who developed Parkinson's disease from 1976 to 1995. Patients' medical records were compared with those of another 196 people who did not have the disease. [View Article](#)

Hormone Use Found to Raise Dementia Risk

28 May – The New York Times reported [hormone therapy](#) doubled the risk of [Alzheimer's disease](#) and other types of dementia in women who began the treatment at age 65 or older, a large study has found. The finding disappointed many researchers and doctors, who had hoped for the opposite result: that hormone therapy would prevent Alzheimer's disease. The latest finding is based on a four-year experiment involving 4,532 women at 39 medical centers. Half took placebos, and half took Prempro, a combination of estrogen and progestin, the most widely prescribed type of hormone therapy. In four years, there were 40 cases of dementia in the hormone group, and 21 in the placebo group. Translated to an annual rate for a larger population, the results mean that for every 10,000 women 65 and older who take hormones, there will be 45 cases of dementia a year, with 23 of them attributable to the hormones. [View Article](#)

Men May Need Second Prostate Test

28 May – Reuters reported men who undergo [prostate specific antigen \(PSA\) testing](#) for [prostate cancer](#) should undergo a second test to confirm the results if the first is positive, according to a report released Tuesday. It seems the test results can vary, and an elevated result on the first test -- a sign of prostate cancer -- may be lower on a second test. Indeed, the study suggests that roughly 40 to 50 percent of men with an elevated PSA level may have a lower result the next time they are tested. This means some men may undergo an unnecessary biopsy, a test in which a needle is inserted into the walnut-shaped prostate to collect cells for further testing. The findings are published in this week's issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association. [View Article](#)

New Breast Cancer Guidelines Issued

15 May – MSNBC News reported women no longer need to worry about doing a monthly self-exam, but should concentrate on getting professional screening under new breast cancer screening guidelines issued Thursday. The new American Cancer Society recommendations also advise women with a high risk of [breast cancer](#) — women, for example, whose mothers or sisters had it — to take a more aggressive approach to screening. The group advises most women to start getting an annual mammogram at age 40, saying it is the best way to detect breast cancer at its earliest stages, when it can be cured. It is the first update to American Cancer Society breast cancer screening guidelines since 1997. [View Article](#)

SARS Update

16 May – Japan Today reported the cause of the Hong Kong [SARS](#) outbreak that caused more than 300 cases of the illness at the Amoy Gardens apartment complex in late March was found. The spread was due to leaky sewage pipes and bathroom ventilation fans that carried contaminated droplets through parts of the Hong Kong apartment complex. [View Report](#) 20 May - WHO has today removed the Philippines from its list of areas with recent local transmission of SARS. The last probable case that was locally acquired was isolated on 30 April, meaning that opportunities for spread of the virus to others were significantly reduced. [View Report](#) 23 May – Reuters reported a top Hong Kong scientist said it was likely the SARS virus jumped to humans from civet cats, which are considered a delicacy by many people in southern China. Studies showed civet cats carried huge amounts of the virus in their

stools and respiratory secretions but remained unaffected. Anyone who ate, reared or slaughtered the animal risked infection if they came in contact with the feces or respiratory secretions of the mammal. [View Article](#) 23 May – Reuters reported The (WHO) withdrew its warning against travel to Hong Kong and the southern Chinese province of Guangdong, saying the SARS outbreaks there were under control. [View Article](#) 26 May – Reuters reported Toronto, Canada is going back on the list of areas where SARS is spreading, just 12 days after it was taken off. This is because it has 8 new probable cases of SARS. [View Article](#) 27 May – Reuters reported researchers at the Robert Koch Institute in Berlin developed a test that detects antibodies to the strain of coronavirus found in patients with SARS. The test uses a lab technique called immunofluorescence to check for the presence of anti-coronavirus antibodies in the blood. The institute is working together with a company to make the test commercially available as soon as possible. [View Article](#)

Study: Smallpox Vaccine Can Boost Malaria Resistance

26 May – CNN News reported a one-two punch of [malaria](#) DNA virus and the virus used to vaccinate against [smallpox](#) spurs the human immune system to mount a powerful defense against malaria, researchers report. This approach might provide a basis for preventive and therapeutic vaccination in people, scientists said. The research team tested the combination on 63 volunteers -- the first human trials of this prime-boost approach -- and found the body's response far surpassed either vaccine on its own. The treatment did not induce complete immunity to malaria, but it provided partial protection. Researchers hope it will perform even better in field tests in Africa, where U.N. agencies say the mosquito borne disease infects 300 million people a year and has become increasingly resistant to drugs. The smallpox vaccine virus used in the tests is a modified form that researchers said is safer than one that has caused problems in recent vaccination programs. [View Article](#)

WHO Vows to Overhaul Health Regulations

28 May – Yahoo reported voicing its alarm at the spread of the [SARS](#) virus, the World Health Organization vowed to overhaul outdated international health regulations to deal more effectively with epidemics and the threat of bioterrorism. A key policy-making committee at the WHO assembly passed the decisions on SARS. They will now be approved by the full conference on Wednesday, but this is a mere formality. WHO Director-General Gro Harlem Brundtland stressed the importance of the revision of the international health regulations, which were last updated in 1981. They are designed to monitor and control the most dangerous infectious diseases by obliging governments to notify all outbreaks to WHO, which can then give guidance on international trade and travel. However, only cholera, plague and yellow fever are currently classed as notifiable diseases even though new and highly contagious threats like Ebola and SARS have emerged in recent years. [View Article](#)

Weekend Exercise Does a Heart Good - German Study

26 May – Reuters reported getting up from the couch and exercising even an hour or two a week can help stave off [heart trouble](#), but strenuous job-related tasks may do more harm than good, a German study said on Monday. But work-related physical activity may lead to a less-healthy cardiovascular system, said study author Dr. Wolfgang Koenig of the University of Ulm Medical Center in Ulm, Germany. Even less than an hour a week of exercise reduced the risk of heart disease by 15 percent compared to those who did not exercise during their leisure time, the study found. Between one and two hours of exercise a week cut the risk by 40 percent and more than two hours of exercise reduced the risk by 61 percent. [View Article](#)

World Doctors Develop Means of Identifying Torture

16 May – Reuters reported representatives of doctors from around the world, meeting outside Geneva this week, have announced plans to develop a universal training manual to help doctors and lawyers identify evidence of torture. The World Medical Association said it was taking on the project with the Copenhagen-based [International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims \(IRCT\)](#). The announcement follows last year's approval by the European Commission of the first set of international guidelines for documenting torture and its consequences, known as the Istanbul Protocol. The protocol became a United Nations official document in 1999. The first draft of the module will be sent to contributors within weeks, after which it will be adapted for five pilot countries. [View Article](#)

USEUCOM

Back Pain Germany's Number One Malady, Survey Finds

26 May – Reuters reported [back pain](#) has become the number one illness in Germany with the number of sick days up sharply since 1998, yet many doctors are not offering patients proper treatment, according to a survey commissioned by DAK, one of Germany's top public health insurers. On any given day, 23 percent of Germans are experiencing back pain. In 2002, the number of sick days caused by back pain was up 17 percent from 1998, DAK said. However, many doctors do not encourage patients with back pain to exercise and lead active lives, the insurer said. Only 48 percent of those surveyed said their doctors had warned them about the negative consequences of bed rest and inactivity. [View Article](#)

HIV Vaccine Trials Set to Start in Botswana, US

15 May – AllAfrica.com reported the [HIV Vaccine](#) Trials Network (HVTN) has launched an international clinical trial that will test a "promising" HIV prevention vaccine candidate for humans. The vaccine, called EP HIV-1090, would be tested on 42 volunteers in the United States and Botswana, HVTN said. "This trial marks a new stage in global HIV research," said HVTN principal investigator Dr Larry Corey. "Africa is carrying the greatest burden of the [AIDS](#) epidemic, and it is therefore crucial that HIV vaccine development include African leadership, participation and support." It said in a statement from Gaborone, Botswana, that previous human trials conducted by HVTN outside the US, had always followed a trial in the US. This time, participants would receive the same inoculations at the same time in the Boston, Massachusetts area, in St Louis, Missouri, and in Gaborone, Botswana. [View Article](#)

Introduction of West Nile Virus into Southwest Siberia by Migrating Birds

16 May – ProMed reported [West Nile virus](#) was found in 3 species of birds collected in the south of Western Siberia in the summer of 2002. Samples were collected in Karasuk and Zdvinsk districts of Novosibirsk region and analyzed by [immunoenzyme assay](#) and [RT-PCR](#). Three of 5 dead rooks (*Corvus frugilegus*) [crow family] were infected with West Nile virus, whereas only 5 percent of teal (*Anas crecca*) and garganey (*Anas querquedula*) [both are species of duck] were positive. Sequencing of the fragment of protein E5 gene from 4 different samples (2 rooks, a teal, and a garganey) showed the maximum level of homology with strain WNV/LEIV-Vlg99-27889 of West Nile virus. This strain was isolated in Volgograd (Southern Russia) in 1999. The high level of homology between these sequences suggests a connection between West Nile viruses circulating in the Caspian Sea region and Western Siberia. This demonstrates that a WNV/LEIV-Vlg99-27889-like variant of West Nile virus could have been introduced into the southern regions of Western Siberia by migrating birds. [View Report](#)

More UK Men Carry Chlamydia than Thought

23 May – Reuters reported about ten percent of British men could be carrying the sexually transmitted infection [chlamydia](#), according to research published that highlights the need for men to be screened for the disease. Dr. Gordon Scott from Edinburgh Royal Infirmary and colleagues tested the urine of 798 male army recruits for *Chlamydia trachomatis* bacteria as part of their routine medical exam. Seventy-eight men -- or 9.8 percent of the total -- tested positive for the infection, although 69 of them had no symptoms. Most of the study participants were younger than 25, some as young as 16, the researchers note. The need to get men involved in screening programs was also highlighted by the finding that nearly 90 percent of infected men had no symptoms -- much higher than the 50 percent suggested in other studies, Scott added. [View Article](#)

No Solution for Mystery Eye Problem

20 May – ProMed reported on an epidemic of [optic neuropathy](#) in Tanzania and some other parts of the world. The disease attacks the optic nerve, destroying it in the most acute cases. The problem is that nobody knows exactly what causes the condition or why it occurs in very specific parts of the world, such as Tanzania. Optic neuropathy was first diagnosed in 1988 in Tanzania, and since then the number of cases has grown dramatically. Most of those cases have been young people in the coastal region. Research published in 1988 suggests that at least 5000 children in Dar es Salaam alone had the condition. At present, doctors can do little to fight what has officially become an epidemic, as they have no definitive answer as to what causes optic neuropathy. There are a number of other theories about the cause of the condition. They include the sun, poisons in food like cyaniding, even mosquitoes. The outlook for patients remains poor as the only treatment doctors can offer is giving vitamin supplements -- a treatment that is not always successful. [View Report 1](#) [View Report 2](#)

Refugee Influx Could Worsen Cholera Epidemic

14 May – IRIN News reported a cholera epidemic, which has affected parts of western Uganda since January, is persisting amid fears that a fresh influx of refugees from neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo could exacerbate the situation. Collins Mwesigye, the World Health Organization (WHO) official in charge of [cholera](#) in Uganda, told IRIN up to 20,000 Congolese refugees, fleeing an upsurge of fighting in the eastern DRC town of Bunia, had crossed into western Uganda. He said this had worsened the already-critical levels of sanitation responsible for the cholera outbreak in the region. The local media this week reported 52 fresh cases and three deaths in the western district of Kasese alone. In the neighboring border district of Bundibugyo, at least 44 people are said to have died. Mwesigye said the epidemic had taken too long to bring under control because of massive displacements resulting from rebel activities in the region. [View Article](#)

Reports of Increases in Mumps Cases in the UK

24 May – ProMed reported the prevalence of [mumps](#) is increasing in the UK, especially in South Wales, Leicestershire and Somerset. The Cardiff and South Wales Valleys areas have seen a huge increase in mumps notifications generally among teenagers and often those who have either had only one mumps-containing vaccine or none. The age group affected may have been in the MR catch-up in 1994. There have been approximately 320 notifications in the last 3 months. Neighboring areas are also seeing an increase in cases, though not as many as Somerset. Leicestershire is also experiencing an outbreak of mumps. There have been 12 cases in one PCT area, mostly in 11-14 year-olds who have had only one MMR. Information is being offered to schools and GPs, and MMR vaccines will be offered to all 11-14 year olds in that area through primary care. In Somerset officials are in the process of investigating 5 cases of mumps, (16-19 yrs of age), 4 of which are associated with a local public school. The fifth is a community case associated with the same small town. Uptake of MMR in this area

was 73.4 percent for the last quarter. The town will shortly be inundated with travelers attending the Glastonbury Festival. [View Report](#)

USCENTCOM

Iraq at Risk of Major Public Health Crisis

20 May Alertnet reported The Iraqi Central Water Authority must be reestablished immediately in order to avoid an outbreak of [cholera](#) and [typhoid](#), humanitarian agency CARE International said. 'Many people do not have access to safe drinking water and human waste is overflowing from the drains in many parts of Baghdad,' said Nick Southern, CARE's emergency water and sanitation specialist in Baghdad. 'Water and sewage systems are crumbling and the very hot season is coming, when temperatures are likely to climb above 40 ° C. This is a recipe for infectious diseases like cholera and typhoid.' Margaret Hassan, CARE Iraq director, said: 'The primary threat to the delivery of safe drinking water in Iraq is the total absence of direct government support and supply functions.' [View Article](#)

Sudan: Yellow Fever Outbreak

23 May – ProMed reported health experts have identified that [Yellow Fever](#) has killed 22 people in southern Sudan. Another 44 people have been infected with the disease in Imatong, about 770 km (480 miles) south of Khartoum, 38 of whom have been discharged from the hospital. Two people were also admitted to hospital in a serious condition with yellow fever in Ikotos, 45 kilometers (28 miles) southeast of Imatong. U.N. agencies working with other aid groups in the region hope to vaccinate 50,000 people in the area within the next few weeks. They also plan to distribute mosquito nets and carry out public awareness campaigns. [View Report](#) Because patients experienced hemorrhagic symptoms, health experts initially worried that the disease was [Ebola](#). Preliminary test results then suggested the condition was malignant [malaria](#). Final lab results indicate Yellow Fever. [View Report 2](#)

Tajikistan: Measles Outbreak

16 May – IRIN reported a [measles](#) outbreak affecting around 1,000 people in the northern Soghd Region this week. The disease is prevalent in Bobojon Ghafurov and Isfara districts, and in Khujand city. Mainly children aged between seven and 10, and also between 16 and 17, have contracted the disease. The outbreak is being attributed to the fact that during Soviet times children had compulsory vaccinations at the age of one and later at six and seven, but such immunizations were impossible between 1992 and 1999 due to a shortage of vaccines. Vaccination of the population has now been deemed necessary in all areas of northern Tajikistan. [View Article](#)

USNORTHCOM

Canada: Mad Cow Case in Alberta

20 May – CNews reported the first homegrown case of [mad cow disease](#) in North America has been found in a cow in Alberta, federal Agriculture Minister Lyle Vanclief said. It's the first case of the fatal disease to be found in cattle born and raised in North America. As part of its ongoing surveillance program for BSE, Alberta agricultural officials tested an eight year-old cow that had been condemned at slaughter and removed it from the food system. There was one case of BSE found in 1993 in a single cow imported from Great Britain to Red Deer, Alta., but the whole herd was destroyed, along with other cattle determined to be at risk. [View Article](#)

Canadian Herd Tests Negative for Mad Cow Disease

26 May – Reuters reported there are no new cases of [mad cow disease](#) in the herd where Canada's lone infected cow spent its last five months, Canadian officials said. Tests were negative for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in the cattle slaughtered from a Wanham, Alberta, farm, said Brian Evans, Canada's chief veterinarian. The cattle were herd mates of the diseased cow that has thrown the \$22 billion (C\$30-billion) Canadian cattle industry into a tailspin since officials confirmed the BSE case on May 20. Exporters estimate they have since lost millions each day because of import bans by the United States and other key markets. However, a total of 17 cattle herds remain under quarantine in three provinces as the Canadian investigation continues into where the single infected cow lived, what it was fed, and what happened to its remains, Evans said. [View Article](#)

Dog Food Recall Linked to Mad Cow Disease

27 May – DrKoop.com reported U.S. consumers are being asked to return dog food that may have come from a Canadian cow that tested positive for [mad cow disease](#). Champion Pet Food of Morinville, Alberta, Canada produced the suspect food in 50-pound bags. Pet Pantry International of Carson City, Nev., which sells the products by phone or e-mail, said customers should search for two products: "Maintenance Diet" with a "use by" date of "17FEB04" and "Beef with Barley" with a date of "05MAR04." Customers who bought dog food since February should check their supplies and, if found, should call the company at 1-800-381-7387. Pet Pantry also is using sales records to contact consumers. [View Article](#) [View FDA Report](#)

E.P.A. Reintroduces Standards to Control Ozone and Smog

16 May – The New York Times reported after six years of intensive wrangling over tighter smog standards, the Environmental Protection Agency reintroduced [proposals for new standards](#). Some environmental groups said that the proposals were too lenient and that they subverted the original provisions of the Clean Air Act of 1990. At the heart of the issue is whether the detailed measures that Congress laid out in 1990 to combat ozone, which causes smog, should carry over to moderately polluted metropolitan regions under the stricter standards. The debate affects 35 regions with 50 million people, including many areas in Kentucky, Michigan, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. Severely polluted regions like New York and Houston are still held to the original rules, which dictate actions like automobile inspections and cleaner boiler fuels. [View Article](#)

Experimental Lotion Repairs Sun Damage, May Prevent Skin Cancer

23 May— ABC News reported researchers say now one in five Americans will eventually develop [skin cancer](#). Sunscreen can prevent it, but most Americans don't use it regularly. So researchers appear to have another solution. They've developed a kind of "morning after" lotion, to be used after sunburn. It's designed to repair the sun's damage and reduce the risk of cancer. The lotion contains a natural protein called T4 endonuclease V which has been demonstrated in the laboratory to increase the repairs of human cells. [View Article](#)

FDA Says Counterfeit Lipitor Recalled by Distributor

26 May – Reuters reported the U.S. Food and Drug Administration warned consumers and health professionals on Friday to check for three counterfeit lots of the [cholesterol](#)-lowering drug Lipitor that are being recalled by a Kansas City-based distributor. The counterfeit Lipitor posed a potentially significant health hazard and was being voluntarily recalled by Albers Medical Distributors Inc. Consumers should not take any tablets from packages with labels saying "Repackaged by: MED-PRO,

Inc. Lexington, Neb.," with lot numbers 20722V, 04132V and 16942V, the FDA said. All the lots contain 90-tablet bottles. An FDA spokeswoman said the agency was still trying to determine how many bottles were in each lot. Also unclear was just where in the United States the counterfeit Lipitor had been sent. Albers referred inquiries to Doug Albers who was said to be unavailable until Tuesday. [View Article](#)
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Ft. Detrick Unearths Hazardous Surprises

27 May – The Washington Post reported two years of digging at the U.S. Army's Fort Detrick in Frederick, MD has unearthed more than 2,000 tons of hazardous waste -- including vials of live [bacteria](#) and nonvirulent [anthrax](#) that the military did not know was buried there. Discovery of the pathogens at the former biological weapons research center turned what the Army thought would be industrial waste removal into the biggest cleanup in its history. So far, cleanup crews have discovered more than 100 glass vials, many containing live bacteria, and in a few, a nonvirulent strain of anthrax. The \$25 million excavation is due to end this year. [View Article](#)

Illinois Bans Ephedra

26 May – CNN News reported Gov. Rod Blagojevich signed the nation's first statewide ban on [ephedra](#) Sunday, flanked by the parents of a 16-year-old football player who died of a heart attack after using the diet supplement. He and other lawmakers urged other states and the federal government to adopt similar bans. Ephedra, blamed for nearly 120 deaths, drew national attention after officials investigating the February heat stroke death of Baltimore Orioles pitching prospect Steve Bechler linked it to a diet pill containing ephedrine, ephedra's active ingredient. The herbal supplement is sometimes marketed as an athletic performance enhancer. [View Article](#)

Montana: 3rd Hantavirus Case and 2nd Death This Month

22 May – ProMed reported a second person in Montana has died from [hantavirus](#) infection in the last 2 weeks, health officials said on Tue 20 May 2003. It is the third reported hantavirus case in the state since Thu 8 May 2003 and the first ever in Lewis and Clark County, where the state capital is located. Spokeswomen for the city-county health department in Helena said officials were investigating how a 29-year-old man contracted the disease, a 26-year-old Cascade County woman died of hantavirus infection on 8 May 2003, and a Dillon man in his 60s tested positive for the virus on Fri 16 May 2003. Saturday's death is the 20th case of the disease in Montana and the 5th death in the state since hantavirus first appeared in 1993. [View Report 1](#) [View Report 2](#)

Postal Anthrax Testing to Expand

26 May – The Washington Post reported the U.S. Postal Service plans next week to greatly expand the testing of a new security system to detect [bioterror agents](#), the direct result of the [anthrax](#) attacks of October 2001, when two employees lost their lives at the Brentwood postal facility in Northeast Washington. The system, which runs a continuing analysis on the mail, has been tested successfully for about nine months in Baltimore, said Thomas G. Day, the Postal Service's vice president of engineering. On June 1, the test will be expanded to 14 postal sites across the country, including those in Dulles and Capitol Heights. After a 30-day trial, postal officials will determine whether the system is good enough to deploy nationally. The system performs 10,000 tests a night, so if there is a positive match for anthrax DNA, the network computer will provide immediate on-site notification, alerting local and national officials. An emergency response plan would then be activated. [View Article](#)

Soldiers Get Help on Return

16 May – The News Observer reported the Army is establishing its first uniform program to help soldiers readjust after overseas assignments and combat duty, a spokeswoman said. The program, called Deployment Cycle of Support, establishes a checklist for Army leaders all the way down to squad level to identify soldiers likely to have adjustment problems and to steer them to the right places to get help. The system is similar to measures that Fort Bragg began in November as waves of troops returned from Afghanistan. It also incorporates practices used elsewhere, said Martha Rudd, an Army spokeswoman. Returning soldiers will stay with their units for about two weeks after a deployment for stress-management classes and marital workshops before they get leave. [View Article](#)

USGS West Nile Virus Surveillance Update, as of Wed 21 May 2003

22 May – ProMed reported information for the 2003 [West Nile virus](#) (WNV) reporting season has been submitted and verified to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) up to Wed 21 May 2003. The following information is a synopsis of the results of WNV surveillance listed according to state. [Birds](#) - 11 states are conducting surveillance, with 7 states reporting positive test results as follows: Alabama (3), Florida (1), Georgia (3), Kentucky (0), Louisiana (6), Michigan (1), Mississippi (3), New York (0), Oregon (0), Pennsylvania (1), Washington (0). [Mosquitoes](#) - One state (Pennsylvania) is conducting surveillance; no positive result reported. [Sentinel Flocks](#) - 2 states are conducting surveillance, both reporting positive test results as follows: Florida (23), North Carolina (1). [Veterinary](#) - One state (Minnesota) is conducting surveillance and reports a single positive result, presumed to be an equine. [Human](#) - There are no reports of surveillance activity or positive test results from any state. [View Report](#)

Utah: Deer that Died Near Moab Had Wasting Disease

23 May – ProMed reported a mule deer doe that died in a farm field near Moab in April 2003 has tested positive for chronic wasting disease (CWD). Incurable, contagious, and always fatal to deer, CWD is from a group of poorly understood but deadly diseases including [BSE and Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease](#). CWD does not cause many deer and elk deaths, though, and has never proven transmissible to humans. The Moab deer is Utah's second to test positive; the disease was found in a buck shot near Vernal in the fall. [View Report](#)

USPACOM

Australia: First Dengue Fever Case in Townsville, Queensland

21 May - Magnetic Times reported Queensland Health is urging all Townsville and Magnetic Island residents to take responsibility for reducing mosquito numbers after the first locally acquired case of [dengue fever](#), for the year, was reported in Townsville yesterday. Dengue fever has gripped the far northern city of Cairns in recent months, where the disease has affected up to 400 people. However Townsville and Magnetic Island have remained dengue fever free since May 2002. Residents have been urged to take responsibility for reducing mosquito numbers by cleaning up breeding sites. [View Article](#)

Increase in Dengue Fever Cases in PACOM countries.

20 May – ProMed reported [dengue fever](#) admissions in the Cordillera, Philippines increased by as much as 500 percent during the first quarter of this year, prompting health officials to appeal to

residents to do their part in preventing the disease. There were 23 dengue admissions in the 10 sentinel hospitals in the region compared with only 3 admissions during the same period in 2002. To prevent further increase in dengue admissions, Segundo said that the DOH is implementing programs to minimize the number of cases of dengue in the region. [View Report](#) As of Sat 3 May 2003, the media in the southern province of Savannakhet in Laos has reported a large increase in cases of dengue fever. In addition, Cambodian health officials are on the alert for a dengue fever outbreak following the unusually high number of cases reported during the dry season. A total of 1,644 cases have been reported in Cambodia during the first 4 months of 2003. Generally, the highest-risk time for dengue transmission is during or just after the rainy season. [View Report](#) 26 May – The Straits Times reported the hot weather and a cyclical change in the dominant strain of dengue in Singapore could explain why doctors are seeing a doubling in the number of cases this year. With 50 to 100 cases being reported a week in Singapore, figures for the first half of this year are twice as high as the same period last year. [View Report](#)

Vietnam: 7 Children Die from Suspected Japanese Encephalitis

25 May – ProMed reported 7 children have died from suspected [Japanese encephalitis](#) in northern Vietnam since early April 2003. The children, all under the age of 5 years, died within 48 hours of being brought to the Central Pediatric Hospital in Hanoi from other hospitals in northern provinces, according to a doctor there. Currently there are 115 other children from around 10 northern provinces in that hospital with similar symptoms. [View Report](#)

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Nothing significant to 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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