

## **Zoonotic Disease Risk Assessment – Integrating Agriculture, Disaster preparedness and Public Health**

**Presenter:** John Herbold, University of Texas Health Science Center

**Co-Presenter:** Jonathan Abrahams, Asian Disaster preparedness Center, Bangkok, Thailand

**Session:** Oral

**Date/Time:** Tuesday, April 24; 11-12PM

The goal of the overall project was to develop a regional plan of action for managing the risk of zoonoses, including major zoonotic disease-related public health emergencies based on a regional and multi-country risk assessment strategy. The objectives of the presentation are to:

- Present a newly developed survey Tool and Methodology for Zoonotic Disease Risk and Capacity Assessment at the Country and Regional Interface.
- Demonstrate integration of public health and animal health surveillance activities.
- Demonstrate application of the “disaster paradigm” to public sector preparedness and response for public health and veterinary medical epidemic events.

We identified the key components of a self-assessment survey tool, focusing on risk reduction to enable a country-level agency or group to ask itself questions about risk and capacity (i.e., What are we doing right now?; What can we do to reduce the risk of disease in people today?; and How can we build capacity for the future?). Key strategies include improving communication between animal health and public health sectors, as well as recognizing the contributions of other sectors which might be involved in disease recognition, response, control and, ultimately, prevention. The results of a pilot evaluation integrating one nation's Ministry of health, Ministry of Agriculture, and Office of Disaster Preparedness will be presented.

### **Biographies:**

Jonathan Abrahams is based in Thailand at the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) where he leads the Public Health in Emergencies team ([www.adpc.net](http://www.adpc.net)). ADPC, in collaboration with partners such as WHO-WPRO and WHO-SEARO, provides capacity building programmes in health emergency management for the Asia Pacific region. Before moving to ADPC Jonathan was working with WHO Department of Epidemic and Pandemic Preparedness and Response on risk management-based guidance for assessing and strengthening national capacity for managing health risks of deliberate use of biological and chemical agents, and radioactive material. Previously, he worked with AusAID on coordinating Australian Government's response to international disasters, and disaster risk reduction and emergency management programmes. He has also worked in the Australian Government's disaster management agency, Emergency Management Australia, where his role was to bring together people with varied expertise to develop emergency management strategies and technical guidelines in disaster mitigation, disaster medicine, land use planning, disaster loss assessment, business continuity management and volunteer emergency services. Jonathan helped to establish the Australian National Centre for War-related Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and associated psychosocial programmes for veterans and their families. He has been a contributing author to a number of publications, including the OECD's Emerging Systemic Risks.

John R. Herbold is Associate Director of the CDC funded Center for Biosecurity and Public Health Preparedness at the University of Texas Health Sciences Center @ Houston and Associate Professor of Epidemiology at the San Antonio regional campus of the University of Texas School of Public Health. He teaches graduate courses in epidemiology, disaster preparedness, and environmental health, specifically diseases of nature transmissible to man. Additionally, he is an exercise evaluator for the National Emergency Response & Rescue Training Center and active in the state of Texas Medical Reserve Corps. He has developed active liaisons with local health districts and state health services that provide research and practice experiences for graduate students. These ongoing relationships facilitated rapid development of a Public Health Preparedness Center and training opportunities for the local and regional public health workforce. Part of the Center's research focus has been on the integration of disaster preparedness, zoonotic disease surveillance, and public health sector response to natural and unnatural disasters.

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