

**USACHPPM**  
**HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE**

07 February 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 ISSUES

### ACIP Advises Three Needle Jabs, Not 15, for First-time Smallpox Shot

31 January - CIDRAP News reported the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) is now recommending only three pricks of the needle instead of 15. The ACIP previously had recommended 15 needle pricks for both first-time vaccines and those being revaccinated. But in a 40-minute telephone conference Jan 29, the ACIP decided to reduce the recommended number of needle pricks for first-time vaccines to three in order to match the recommendation on the vaccine package insert. "The FDA-approved package insert says the appropriate number of sticks per vaccination is two to three. And we are bound basically to adhere to those requirements," one committee member said. [View Article](#)

### BSE Guidelines Issued by the World Health Organization

30 January – ProMed reported the World Health Organization has published a new document to assist governments, consumers associations, and other concerned organizations to protect consumers from the dangers of consuming beef infected with Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE or "mad cow disease"). The document provides governments and others involved in consumer protection with background information on the disease and how to prevent

its spread. The document can be found at <http://www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/bse/BSEthreat.pdf> [View Report](#)

## Doctors Recommend Restrictions on Ephedra

03 January – ABC News reported Ephedra, an herb found in weight-loss and bodybuilding supplements, is unsafe even when taken in recommended doses and should be restricted, according to doctors who studied reports of bad reactions to the herb. Ephedra accounted for 64 percent of all adverse reactions involving herbs, even though it is found in fewer than 1 percent of all herbal products sold. The study, based on data collected by the American Association of Poison Control Centers, is just the latest to question ephedra's safety. The Food and Drug Administration has reports of nearly 100 deaths of people who had taken the herb, a stimulant that can quicken a person's heart rate and cause their blood vessels to constrict. The American Medical Association has also advised people not to use ephedra, which has been banned by the International Olympic Committee, the National Football League and the National Collegiate Athletic Association. Ephedra, is also known by its Chinese name, Ma huang. [View Article](#)

## FDA Urges Drug Applications for Paint Pigment Prussian Blue

31 January – The FDA is encouraging drug application submissions for Prussian Blue as a treatment for thallium or radioactive cesium contamination. Prussian blue, a mineral compound known as ferric hexacyanoferrate(II), has been shown to be safe and effective in treating people exposed to radioactive elements such as cesium-137. After a review of cases in published literature, FDA determined that 500-mg Prussian blue capsules would be safe and effective for the treatment of patients with known or suspected internal contamination with radioactive thallium, non-radioactive thallium, or radioactive cesium. At this time, there are no FDA-approved treatments for internal contamination with thallium or radioactive cesium. [View Article](#)

## Halitosis Could Be Sign of *Helicobacter pylori* Infection

31 January – Reuters reported persistent bad breath could be a warning sign that a patient is infected with a bacterium linked to ulcers and stomach cancer, according to new research from Turkey. Researchers from Baskent University discovered that halitosis was one of the most common symptoms in patients diagnosed with *Helicobacter pylori* infection. In people with the infection, halitosis "may be a valid indication" for therapy to eliminate the bacterium, according to the researchers. More than 60% of the subjects involved had halitosis. After eradication therapy however, many patients reported their bad breath had disappeared. [View Article](#)

## Herbicide Hope for Malaria

31 January – BBC News reported common herbicides might hold the key to effective new drugs to tackle malaria. New ways to combat the disease are badly needed, as the malaria parasite *Plasmodium falciparum* is developing resistance to currently available drugs. Just four months after the major breakthrough of decoding the entire DNA of the malaria parasite, Australian and US scientists say they have identified 500 points in the parasite's DNA that are ripe for attack by drugs. A team from the University of Melbourne and Eliza Hall Institute in the US has found that of the more than 5,000 proteins listed in the malaria genome, 10 percent have a plant-type biochemistry. They say it should be possible to disturb those proteins and stop them from working properly by using things that also kill plants. And because the same plant-type

structures do not exist in humans it should be possible to disable the parasite without causing any harm to the body. A trial of one plant killing compound had already produced an 80% cure rate. [View Article](#)

## Ricin Solution Is On the Way

29 January - The Food Safety Information Office reported Arcadia Biosciences in Phoenix, Arizona, is carving out a niche in the agricultural industry by utilizing biotechnology to develop ricin-free castor bean plants to increase the plant's profitability while minimizing its impact on the environment. Castor beans are the plant source for castor oil, a product that is used in several commercial products including nylon, plastics, paints, cosmetics, and lubricants. Due to the unique nature of the castor bean oil, there are no substitutes, natural or synthetic, that can be used in its place. According to Roy Hodges, president of Arcadia Biosciences, "Ricin is considered a potential weapon of mass destruction and its use by terrorists could have dire and far reaching consequences." Elimination of the toxin will render the castor seed and castor meal harmless, enabling its use as an animal feed and thus increasing the economic value of the crop. The deactivation of the genes responsible for ricin production is accomplished by using a non-transgenic method known as "directed mutation". Increasing the safety and profitability of castor bean plant production could make it possible to produce the crop in the United States and Europe where the demand and use of castor oil is high but for safety and economic reasons it is not currently grown. [View Article](#)

## States Reach 'Right-To-Know' Deal on Toxic Waste

31 January – Reuters reported over 30 European, Central Asian and North American countries have agreed on a pact extending the public's right to know about chemical waste and toxic pollutants in their neighborhoods, the United Nations said. The draft treaty, hammered out over 2 years of negotiations, covers the disposal, storage, recycling and treatment of dangerous materials ranging from minerals to metals, fertilizers and hydrocarbons. "It is a major step even for the developed countries, which will have to introduce significant changes to the information they make available," said Jeremy Wates, of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), which hosted the talks. Under the pact, which ECE countries will formally sign at a ministerial meeting in May in Kiev, states pledged to set up national registers of industrial pollutants released into the water, air and soil. [View Article](#)

## WHO Pushes Food Chain Contingencies

31 January – CBS News reported the World Health Organization urged governments to draw up "farm to fork" contingency plans to protect against the risk of terrorists using the food chain as a potentially devastating weapon. The U.N. health agencies said that most countries have some form of emergency response system for catastrophes like floods or epidemics, but were far less prepared to deal with threats stemming from the use of food as a vehicle for delivering harmful agents. The WHO said that its main concern remains accidental food poisoning, which kills up to 1.5 million people per year, rather than deliberate contamination. A WHO report cited recent mass outbreaks of foodborne disease as an indication of the scale of the potential risk: "If an unintentional outbreak from one food, such as clams, can affect 300,000 individuals, a concerted, deliberate attack could be devastating, especially if a more dangerous chemical, biological or radio-nuclear agent was used," the WHO said. [View Article](#)

# USEUCOM

## Botswana: Cattle Killed to Stop Foot & Mouth Disease

31 January – ProMed reported that 3000 head of cattle had been slaughtered in an attempt to contain the spread of foot and mouth disease in an area along the northern border with Zimbabwe. Marcus Chimbombi, the director of the department of Animal Health and Production, said cattle inspections around the country indicated the outbreak of the disease was confined to the Matsiloje area along the border with Zimbabwe. The outbreak was detected in early January 2003, leading to a ban on the movement of cattle, pigs, sheep, and goats. The government also banned the movement of fresh meat, milk, hides, and bones. The government, which has said the outbreak is under control, has since lifted the ban on the movement and slaughter of livestock but has established procedures to control the movement of the products. The ban on exports to the European Union remains in force until further notice. [View Report](#)

## Foot-and-Mouth Disease Hits Uganda's Jinja Cattle

01 February – ProMed reported Uganda's Jinja district authorities have imposed quarantine measures against the movement of livestock and their products following an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Kakira sub-county. It is not known how many cattle are affected but a statement from a district veterinary officer said that the disease has been detected in Wairake and Mawoitto parishes in Kakira sub-county, which are located some 10 km northeast of Jinja town. Jinja district veterinary officer A.K. Sentamu said in a statement that measures are being taken to control the spread of the disease. [View Report](#)

## Yellow Fever in Guinea - WHO Update

04 February – ProMed reported as of 23 January 2003, the Ministry of Public Health of Guinea has reported 43 cases and 24 deaths in Macenta and Kerouane prefectures. A mass vaccination campaign has begun in Macenta and nearby prefectures, targeting a population of around 600,000 people. [View Report](#)

## Hepatitis A infections in Intravenous Drug Users, Finland, 2002

30 January - Eurosurveillance Weekly reported in 2002, 385 microbiologically confirmed cases of hepatitis A were reported in Finland. This was substantially more than during the previous three years, when 48 to 51 annual cases were reported. The incidence among men was almost twice as high as that in women. In Helsinki, interviews of cases indicated that in the beginning of the outbreak nearly all cases were current intravenous drug users (IDUs) or could be linked to IDUs. Later in the outbreak, cases were also reported from the general population. This is the second major hepatitis A outbreak among IDUs in Finland since 1994. This outbreak illustrates the propensity for hepatitis A to spread from IDUs to the general population. [View Article](#)

## Influenza Activity Increasing Gradually But Remains at a Low to Moderate Level in Europe

26 January - The Weekly Electronic Bulletin reported overall influenza activity remains low to moderate in Europe, while the number of networks detecting more than sporadic activity is slowly increasing. The greatest increase in clinical morbidity is seen in younger age groups in most countries. Six networks reported no influenza activity (i.e. the overall level of clinical activity was at baseline levels) in week 04/2003 and eight networks reported sporadic activity. Three networks reported local activity and regional activity was reported in France and Spain. The intensity of clinical morbidity was low in sixteen networks and medium in France, Spain and the Czech Republic. Influenza B was the dominant type in week 04/2003. This was clearest in the western countries (e.g. Spain, Portugal, England, France and Switzerland). Further east, influenza A was more frequent and it was definitely the dominant type in Germany. No dominant type could be identified in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark and Norway. All of the influenza viruses detected/isolated so far this season by EISS have been closely related to the 2002-2003 influenza vaccine strains. [View Article](#)

## Sierra Leone: 7 Die of Strange Disease

03 February – AllAfrica.com reported a strange disease has claimed seven lives including children at Lunsar, Marampa chiefdom in the Port Loko district. Nine others attacked by the disease have been admitted to the Mabessench hospital. The symptoms of the disease are running nose, severe headache, sore throat and violent behavior. The disease was detected on January 19 and was reported to the hospital, but could not immediately detect what the flu-like disease really was. Medical personnel attached to the hospital visited the people in their respective communities and impressed on the people the need to ensure personal hygiene. Most of those attacked by the disease had refused to go to hospital for the disease to be diagnosed by health personnel, alleging that those who died at the health center died later from injection they received in the hospital. Reports say some of the victims also failed to report to the health center due to lack of funds. Meanwhile health personnel are advising people who drink 'poyo' to be careful. [View Article](#)

## USCENTCOM

### Afghanistan on the Brink of a Natural Disaster: UNEP Study

31 January – Daily Star News reported decades of conflict in Afghanistan have left the country on the brink of natural disaster that will spiral out of control unless urgent action is taken, a United Nations study released Wednesday said. Overflowing rubbish dumps, poisonous medical waste facilities, fetid open sewers, fume-belching factories and leaking oil refineries are adding to the devastating affects of deforestation and desertification, the report said. In the first full assessment of the country since the 2001 collapse of the hardline Taliban regime ended 23 years of war, the UN Environment Program (UNEP) study called for international aid to prevent further destruction. [View Article](#)

# USNORTHCOM

## Bush Widens Access to Quick AIDS Test

31 January – Reuters reported President Bush cleared the way for providing wide access to new AIDS tests that can deliver results in minutes, and promised a big increase in domestic funding for AIDS prevention. Bush said the Health and Human Services Department had waived restrictions on a new rapid AIDS test, making it available for use in more than 100,000 doctors' offices across the country. The test, which provides results in about 20 minutes, is needed because every year an estimated 8,000 infected people go to clinics for testing but do not return a week later for the results. An estimated one-quarter of the estimated 900,000 HIV-positive people in the United States do not know they are infected with the virus, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Finding out enables them to seek treatment and take steps to avoid spreading the virus. [View Article](#)

## CDC Releases Most Extensive Assessment Ever of Americans' Exposure to Environmental Chemicals

31 January - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported that it has released the second *National Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals*, the largest and most extensive assessment of the U.S. population's exposure to environmental chemicals. The report presents exposure information for 116 environmental chemicals measured in blood and urine specimens. The blood and urine specimens came from a sample of people who represent the U.S. population for the years 1999 and 2000. The report can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/exposurereport>

## Defense Department Signs Agreement With Blood-Supply Center

30 January – Early Bird reported the U.S. Department of Defense has signed a contract designed to ensure access to additional stores of donated blood, in case the military's supply runs short during a war with Iraq. The government signed a contract with America's Blood Centers, a nonprofit network of community blood centers that collects about half of the U.S. blood supply. The group said it will ship emergency blood from its major donation centers if the military supply runs short. The last time the military contracted with outside sources for additional blood was during the Gulf War. Civilian blood banks provided about 20 percent of the blood that was shipped to military medical sites during that conflict, Kukral said. So far, the military has shipped about 17,000 units of blood to areas where they might be needed if the U.S. attacks Iraq, according to Kukral. [View Article](#)

## FDA OKs Psoriasis Drug

31 January – CBS News reported a drug that targets renegade immune cells to control hard-to-treat psoriasis won Food and Drug Administration approval, offering a long-awaited new option to patients covered in the itchy skin disease. Called Amevive, the drug has been eagerly awaited by physicians because it works differently than the many other psoriasis treatments on the market. Amevive has not yet been compared to any other treatments so there's no way to know if it will prove a better option for patients, the FDA cautioned. Amevive, which comes in intravenous and intramuscular injection forms, will begin selling Monday, said maker Biogen Inc.

It will cost \$7,000 to \$10,000 for a 12-week course of treatment; each weekly dose is given in a doctor's office. Amevive, known chemically as alefacept, was designed to target only the harmful T cells, not the rest of the immune system. [View Article](#)

## Imported Measles from the Phillipines - Alert

31 January – ProMed reported a 24-year-old woman from the Philippines arrived at JFK Airport [New York, USA] at approximately 1 PM on 17 Jan 2003 after a 4-hour stopover at Narita Airport in Japan to visit family. She was on a Northwest airlines flight from Manila to Tokyo, and the flight from Tokyo, Japan to JFK was another Northwest airlines non-stop flight. Within hours of arrival, she had a temperature of 104, cough, rhinitis, sore throat, and conjunctivitis. Within 2 days she developed a morbilliform rash. She gave a vague history of having measles at age 3 and never received a measles-mumps-rubella immunization. She was diagnosed serologically as having measles by the New York City Department of Health and has recovered. The local and national public health authorities are involved. Physicians should be aware that any susceptible contacts on the airplane or at the airport may present with measles after an incubation period of 10-14 days, i.e., from 27 - 31 Jan 2003. [View Report](#)

## Infections in Newly Released Inmates are Rising Concern

27 January – The New York Times reported according to a study released at a conference sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, at least 1.3 million inmates released from jail or prison in 1996 were infected with hepatitis C. That was 29 percent of the 4.5 million cases nationwide. Similarly, newly released inmates accounted for 35 percent of the 34,000 Americans with tuberculosis in 1996, the study found. Newly released inmates accounted for 13 to 17 percent of Americans infected with H.I.V. or AIDS, the study estimated. The problem has become so acute that health care officials and prisoner rights groups are calling for widespread testing of prison populations for hepatitis C and faster treatment of prisoners. The problem is not that large numbers of prisoners are contracting hepatitis C while incarcerated, experts say. Most were infected years before. The experts say the high rate of communicable diseases among inmates is a critical issue for two reasons: the danger inmates pose of infecting others when they are released, and the opportunity to treat them that is largely being wasted. [View Article](#)

## Jails See Outbreak of Skin Infections

31 January – ProMed reported a painful skin infection not treatable with most common antibiotics is spreading through the Los Angeles County jail system, affecting more than 1000 inmates in the last year and causing at least 57 hospitalizations. Federal health officials believe that the outbreak of drug-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, commonly called staph, is the largest of its kind in any of the nation's correctional systems. For months, the Los Angeles infections were misdiagnosed as spider bites and jail officials brought in exterminators. Now sure of the staph cluster, jail doctors are using more powerful drugs to treat all skin lesions and stepping up hygiene measures. Similar outbreaks of the same strain have been found elsewhere in the Los Angeles area since the summer -- among gay men, members of a sports team, and newborns in a hospital's nursery. Some inmates are entering the jails with infections picked up in the community and are spreading the staph behind bars, doctors said. [View Report](#)



## Mexico: 2 Cases of Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever

04 February – ProMed reported a 45-year-old woman has died of dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF) in the township of Jiutepec, close to the state capital, Cuernavaca. Another case remains in hospital. The Secretary of Health of Morelos, Antonio Campos Rendon, has proclaimed an alert. [View Report](#)

## Poll: U.S. Women Get Less Intense Exercise Than Men

31 January – Reuters reported the latest Gallup poll shows more women are developing a couch potato lifestyle and getting less high-intensity exercise than men. The poll reveals that men are more likely to hit the gym for vigorous workouts than women are these days. Vigorous exercise was defined as any physical activity that significantly raised heart rate or increased breathing for more than 20 minutes. Only 30% of women ages 18 to 49 said they met that level of activity at least three times a week, whereas 35% of men reported meeting that goal. For those older than 50, 24% of men achieved that level of exercise, compared with just 19% of women. For all Americans combined, the rates of vigorous exercise dropped 10% over the past year. [View Article](#)

## Many Ignore Risks of Painkillers

30 January – MSNBC News reported forty-four percent of Americans who took an over-the-counter painkiller in the past year admitted to taking more than the recommended dose, and many were not very concerned about possible side effects, according to a poll released Thursday. The National Consumers League said the poll of more than 4,200 U.S. adults showed consumers need to be better educated about risks of stomach bleeding and other complications that nonprescription painkillers can cause in some cases. The poll showed that only 16 percent of people who take over-the-counter medications read everything on the label the first time they take a product. Twelve percent said they do not read anything at all. The vast majority of the millions who take the drugs do not suffer any complications, but a 1999 report in the New England Journal of Medicine estimated that 16,500 people die annually in the United States from taking aspirin and other painkillers known as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs. [View Article](#)

## Newcastle Disease Suspected in Poultry in Arizona, USA

02 February – ProMed reported federal authorities are testing chickens from a western Arizona Indian reservation to determine whether they were infected with a deadly and highly infectious bird virus. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) sent a veterinarian to the Colorado River Indian Tribes' reservation this week after a farmer near Poston reported that about 30 of his chickens had died suddenly. The rest of the flock, about another 20 birds, was immediately euthanized, and the tribal government quarantined all domestic birds on the reservation, which is on the Arizona-California state line. The quarantine is just a precaution. A US Department of Agriculture (USDA) lab is testing the birds to determine whether they had contracted Exotic Newcastle Disease, which has led to the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of chickens in Southern California. The tribe said the test results would be released as soon as they're available. There are no commercial poultry operations on the reservation. [View Report](#)

## New Jersey Issues New Seafood Warning

03 February – CNN News reported for the third time in the last year, New Jersey has warned some of the seafood from its waters is contaminated with dangerous chemicals. A recent government advisory to consumers said elevated levels of PCBs in bluefish and striped bass mean they should be eaten only once a year -- and not at all by pregnant women and small children. PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls, once widely used as insulating material, are believed to cause cancer. "We hope this information will allow families to make informed choices about the levels of fish consumption in their diet," Bradley Campbell, commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection, said. [View Article](#)

## Pink-eye Outbreak

30 January – MSNBC News reported a strain of the sometimes deadly *Pneumococcus* bacteria has been linked for the first time to an outbreak of conjunctivitis among young children in the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Thursday. A study published in the CDC's weekly morbidity and mortality report concluded that a type of *Streptococcus pneumoniae* was responsible for a flurry of conjunctivitis infections last autumn at an elementary school in Maine. Outbreaks of the pneumococcal form of conjunctivitis had been identified previously, but never in young children. A CDC epidemiologist said it was possible the strain was a common, but previously unrecognized, cause of conjunctivitis in children. [View Article](#)

## Syphilis Cases in New York City Rise by 55%, Health Officials Say

31 January – The New York Times reported the number of syphilis cases in New York City rose by 55 percent last year from 2001, with the increase primarily among gay and bisexual men, health department officials said yesterday. It was the second consecutive year that the number of syphilis cases in the city rose sharply. Health officials said the increases were a troubling sign that some segments of the population were ignoring warnings to practice safe sex. Dr. Thomas R. Frieden, the city's health commissioner, said preliminary figures from a recent survey showed 436 new cases of the disease in 2002, compared with 282 cases in 2001. That year's figure was about a 140 percent increase from 2000, when 117 syphilis cases were reported. Dr. Frieden said the number of new cases, while small, underscores the alarming rate at which syphilis is resurfacing on the streets of New York. Recent studies have shown steady increases in syphilis cases in cities like Los Angeles, Miami and Houston, he said. "This is a very troubling multi-city outbreak that is almost exclusive among men who have sex with men," he said. [View Article](#)

## Red Cross Puts Some Blood Supplies on Hold

03 February – The New York Times reported the Red Cross quarantined 70 percent of their blood supply in the Nashville region after a mysterious contaminant was found. The discovery came two days after 110 units containing the same substance were found in Atlanta. The Nashville quarantine affects hospitals in parts of Kentucky and Illinois as well as Tennessee. The tainted blood was discovered by the Tennessee Valley region of the Red Cross following reports of white particles in donated blood. There have been no reports of harmful effects on patients. The Food and Drug Administration and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention were testing the particles, which were not considered dangerous or infectious. The quarantine has left the region dangerously low on red blood cells and plasma, the Red Cross said. Some

Southern hospitals canceled surgeries, and the Red Cross shipped blood from other regions to increase the supply. [View Article](#). In a related article, CNN News reported the company whose containers are the suspected origin of white particles found in donated blood said its preliminary tests indicate the specks are "blood-derived in nature, likely a very small fibrin clot containing white blood cells and platelets." [View Article](#)

## Two U.S. Soldiers Have Smallpox Vaccine Reactions

31 January – CNN News reported two soldiers out of "tens of thousands" who have received the smallpox vaccination have displayed "noteworthy" reactions, according to a Department of Defense statement Friday. One was hospitalized and the other being monitored by medical authorities, and both are said to be doing well, according to the statement. In December, President Bush ordered about 500,000 selected military personnel to receive the smallpox inoculation. In its safety summary on the smallpox vaccination program, the Department of Defense said vaccinations of selected U.S. military forces began in early January. [View Article](#)

## USPACOM

### China Survey Finds 1 in 6 Haven't Heard of AIDS

30 January – AIDScience journal published a study where the AIDS virus continues to spread throughout China, yet survey findings show that most of the population does not know what causes the disease or how to prevent it. About 17% had never even heard of it. "I was surprised and discouraged because there was such a consistent lack of knowledge on all our measures," said study author Dr. Deborah Holtzman, a scientist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia. The Chinese government estimates that 850,000 of China's nearly 1.3 billion people are currently infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS--though some experts believe the number of infections could be much higher, Holtzman said. It's predicted that as many as 10 million people could be infected by 2010. "If people don't know how to prevent it, that just makes the problem so much worse," she said. [View Article](#)

### Chinese Company Distributes Anti-AIDS 'Cocktail'

28 January – SF Gate.com reported a Chinese company began distributing generic drugs that mix into a potent anti-AIDS "cocktail," the first time a low-cost version of the treatment has been available in China. Trucks carrying hundreds of thousands of doses of the two drugs, dd1 and d4t, arrived in the central province of Henan, where the Chinese-made mixture first will be available, said a spokesman for drug maker Desano Shanghai. The spokesman, Zhang Junjie, said central health authorities in Beijing paid for the drugs. The so-called cocktail treatments, which involve groups of drugs given in succession, have helped AIDS patients in the West. Desano's generic version costs \$435-\$560 per year, Zhang said. Imported name-brand drugs cost about 20 times more. Desano received permission from Beijing in September to produce the generic versions. Bristol-Myers Squibb Co holds the patent in China for dd1. The New York-based pharmaceutical giant has said Desano's powder version of dd1 does not violate its patent, which applies to the drug's tablet form. [View Article](#)

## Hong Kong SAR: Precautionary Slaughter of H5-type Virus Infected Birds

04 February – ProMed reported Hong Kong authorities have slaughtered 8300 chickens from one farm after some of its birds died of avian influenza, which in 1997 caused the death of 6 people. The Ministry of Agriculture reported today that the decision had been made after 40 chickens were found dead in a farm in the New Territories, on the border with mainland China. Health authorities said that further tests are required in order to determine whether the birds were infected by the variant of H5 that may affect humans. Over the past months, several cases of avian influenza have been registered in Hong Kong. In order to prevent an outbreak of the disease, more than 10,000 birds that were being sold in several markets were slaughtered.

[View Report](#)

## Indonesia: Dengue Fever Deaths in Brebes Regency, Central Java

04 February – ProMed reported at least 6 people have died in the past 3 months from an outbreak of dengue fever in Brebes Regency, Central Java. The head of the local health office, Krishnajaya, said here over the weekend that the victims were residents of Sengon village, Tanjung district. Four other people are being treated for dengue fever at the hospital in Brebes. Krishnajaya said his office had distributed medicine, fogging equipment, and sprayers to fight against the spread of the epidemic. He said that locals had been asked to empty containers of standing water, where the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito can usually be found. [View Report](#)

## Japan: Milk Feed Linked to 6th Case of Mad Cow Disease

02 February – ProMed reported the agriculture department of the Hokkaido Prefectural Government confirmed that the 6th cow infected with mad cow disease was fed a milk substitute similar to the one given to all 5 cows previously found suffering from the disease. The Holstein was raised on 9 types of feed, including Miru Food A Super. The milk substitute was produced at a factory in Takasaki, Gunma Prefecture, which manufactured the feed given to the first 5 cows found with the brain-wasting disease also known as bovine spongiform encephalopathy. The ministry confirmed that a 7th cow, also raised in Hokkaido, has been infected with mad cow disease. Hokkaido public health department officials suspect the cow consumed the same type of feed. The first 5 cows had been fed either Miru Food A or a similar brand, called Pure Milk, that has nearly identical ingredients. The Gunma factory also makes pure milk. The feed was found to have included animal fat made in the Netherlands, which has also experienced an outbreak of mad cow disease. A causal relationship between the feed and the infections has not been determined. [View Report](#)

## Malaysia: Outbreaks of Dengue Fever in Johor and Perak spur Control Measures

30 January – ProMed reported the Johor Government has declared an all-out-war against the menace of dengue fever, which had already caused 2 deaths in the first 18 days of the year. State Local Government Committee chairman Datuk Jimmy Low Boon Hong said other than the 2 deaths, Johor also recorded 628 dengue cases up to 18 Jan 2002. There were 20 reported deaths caused by dengue fever in Johor throughout last year [2002]. Johor recorded a total of 2249 dengue cases last year, which was an increase from the 1600 cases in 2001. Low said all relevant agencies would be involved in the war against dengue, which covers all 9 districts in the State. In addition, in Ipoh [Perak State], State Health Committee Chairman Datuk Ho Cheng

Wang said that in the Kinta district alone, 65 cases of dengue fever and three deaths had been reported in the first 15 days of the year. All districts had been asked to set up special committees to fight the dengue menace in their high-risk areas. [View Report](#)

## Nerve Gas Agent Found in Kanagawa Construction Site

04 February – Japan Today reported scientists have detected a fourth type of nerve gas agent at a construction site in Samukawa, Kanagawa Prefecture where a nerve gas factory of the Japanese Imperial Navy once stood. The panel identified the gas as an agent called "Red No. 1" by the Japanese military. Remnants of mustard, lewisite and teargases were also found buried on the site in September last year. According to nerve gas experts, the "Red No. 1" gas would cause sneezing and vomiting if inhaled. It interferes with oxygen supply in blood stream and cause symptoms including headache, which sometimes lead to permanent disability. The soil will be treated on site so that it will not disperse outside the area.

## New Caledonia: Twenty Confirmed Cases of Dengue Fever

30 January – ProMed reported health authorities in New Caledonia [the French overseas territory of Nouvelle-Caledonie in the Pacific Ocean] have stepped up a campaign against dengue fever after 9 new cases raised the total of confirmed cases to 20. The outbreak, in the capital Noumea and surrounding areas, has prompted insecticide spraying at dawn and dusk. Teams of inspectors are visiting and encouraging residents to clean up waterlogged and bushy areas that encourage mosquito breeding. [View Report](#)

## Wallis and Futuna Islands: Dengue Fever Outbreak Reported

30 January – ProMed reported Australian radio reported an outbreak of dengue fever affecting the French overseas territory of Wallis and Futuna Islands (Territoire des Iles Wallis et Futuna), which lie to the northeast of Fiji. An awareness campaign was launched in October 2002 to warn people of the dangers of the disease. There is a risk of dengue fever particularly during the rainy season. [View Report](#)

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## Brazil: Dengue Fever Confirmed in Many States in 2003

30 January – ProMed reported Dengue Fever had been confirmed in a number of States in Brazil. As of 22 Jan 2003, 53 cases of dengue were reported in Acre State. In Ceara State, there have been 200 confirmed cases of dengue in 2003. Four of the cases were of Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever (HDF). There have been 828 cases of dengue fever in Espirito Santo state, including 11 cases of suspected DHF. As of 25 January, there have been 389 cases of dengue recorded in Goias State. This is less than one-third of the cases registered over the same period of 2002, but the 104 cases of DHF included are 17 times more than the 6 recorded last year. Since the beginning of 2003, 5 cases of DHF have been registered in the Mato Grosso State. As of 29 Jan 2003, Sao Paulo State has recorded 223 cases of dengue. [View Report](#)

## Chile: Second and Third Cases of Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome in 2003

01 February – ProMed reported a second case of Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome in 2003 was confirmed by the microbiology laboratory of the Southern University of Valdivia, and a third was confirmed by the health service of Talcahuano. A 40-year-old female resident of Valdivia was in stable condition on oxygen at the regional hospital of the city. The other patient was a male aged 27 who is from Tome but was passing through the locality of Rafael, in Biobio region. He is also out of danger. The respective sanitary authorities are stepping up preventive activities in the areas affected. [View Report](#)

## Screwworm Alert in Panama

04 February – ProMed reported the cattle industry in Panama has been placed under red alert after it was discovered that some of the flies used to stop the reproduction of the much-feared screwworm had not been sterilized in a plant in Chiapas, Mexico that produces the species. Panama received information that one third of the flies sent to the country had not been adequately sterilized because of a failure in the system. For this reason, it is impossible to exclude the possibility of human or cattle infection in the eastern region of the country, near the border with Colombia. Specific measures in accordance with the procedural guidelines for the management of epidemics and outbreaks are being implemented. [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/Hioupdate/>.

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