

Editorial

1st International One Health Congress

This supplemental edition of *EcoHealth* contains abstracts of the presentations and posters that will be given at the 1st International Congress on One Health being held in Melbourne, 14–16 February 2011.

The concept of One Health is not new but has been discussed for a number of years, and various meetings have been held on the subject. To date, however, all these have either been by invitation, had a very directed agenda, or have focused on specific elements of the One Health Concept. This 1st International Congress is open to all; wishes to address both the science and the policy issues; and includes not just infectious diseases as a discipline, but also the much broader issues of trade, food security and safety, and the impacts on the environment.

The One Health approach and the need to strengthen the cross-sectoral cooperation between the human and animal health community has been strongly endorsed by a number of national and international human and animal health organizations and at a series of international meetings over the past three to five years. In 2008, the three major international organizations charged with animal health and human health—FAO, OIE and WHO—collaborated with UNICEF, the UN System for Influenza Coordinator, and the World Bank to develop a joint strategic framework in response to the evolving risk of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases. The document communicating this framework, ‘Contributing to One World, One Health—A Strategic Framework for Reducing Risks of Infectious Diseases at the Animal-Human-Ecosystems Interface,’ was officially released at the 6th International Ministerial Conference on Avian and Pandemic Influenza at Sharm-el-Sheikh in October 2008.

A number of meetings have been held subsequently, the most recent international developments being (a) the Chatham House meeting report ‘Shifting from Emergency Response to Prevention of Pandemic Disease Threats at Source’; (b) the document ‘The FAO-OIE-WHO Collaboration: Sharing responsibilities and coordinating global activities to address health risks at the animal-human-ecosystems interfaces’, which was endorsed by the Directors-General of the three organizations, and (c) the Hanoi Declaration at the International Ministerial Conference: “Animal and Pandemic Influenza: the Way Forward” in Hanoi, all of which occurred in April 2010. Two important international technical meetings have also been held, one hosted by the Canadian Government in Winnipeg in 2009, and the second in May 2010 by the US Centers for Disease Prevention and Control, both with the support of WHO, OIE and FAO, but importantly, in our view, these two meetings were by invitation only.

The purpose of the Melbourne meeting is to open the One Health debate to the wider international scientific and policy making community, particularly to the Asia Pacific countries where many of the risks emanate; to provide a forum for discussing these risks with respect to global health, trade, and food security; and to explore possible ways to better prepare and plan in order to prevent or mitigate future pandemic threats.

We are determined to achieve real outcomes from this meeting in terms of mapping forward One Health activities on a global basis and having Australia start to play a major role in achieving this. To this aim, we have organized a series of panel sessions during the meeting to debate the issues at hand and the way forward. We have

invited a number of prominent scientists and policy makers onto these panels to ensure their success. We have organized a number of keynote speakers to present in plenary session and specifically on the Tuesday evening of the meeting, to provide context and raise issues for debate both by the panels and from the audience in general.

We trust that you will see from these abstracts and posters, and from the program itself, that we have organized a fascinating and dynamic three days of Congress. As an Organizing Committee, we have been overwhelmed with the positive response to the meeting, the quality and number of abstracts and posters, and the positive approach from all asked to participate on panels and present keynote lectures. We can only hope the outcomes will fulfill this promise.



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