

ARE WE LIVING IN AN AGE OF OUTBREAKS?

- **Global health organisation warns of potential future outbreaks**
- **Experts call for greater collaboration between human and animal health sectors to tackle growing 'zoonotic' diseases**

Brussels, 11 February 2016. The global animal medicines association has warned that further devastating infectious diseases like the Zika virus could be on the horizon if crucial steps aren't taken. The latest research from global disease mapping suggests that populations of disease-carrying insects are on the increase.

Zika is the latest ['vector-borne'](#) disease to be deemed a 'global public health emergency' – the virus is transmitted by daytime-active Aedes mosquitoes. The latest reports on Zika suggest the disease is predicted to affect up to 4 million people by the end of this year.ⁱ

Climate change has been suggested as one potential cause behind this increase in outbreaks, with warmer weather contributing to growing populations of disease-carrying insects and parasites, such as mosquitoes and ticks. Many vector-borne diseases are also zoonotic, such as Lyme disease, tick-borne encephalitis, West Nile virus and Leishmaniasis, posing a threat to both animal and human health.

Carel du Marchie Sarvaas, Executive Director of HealthforAnimals commented on the worrying global trend. "The devastating potential of emerging and existing, infectious diseases is of serious concern for global public health."

He said, "As reported by OIE, 75% of emerging diseases are zoonotic, which affect human and animal health alike,ⁱⁱ so there is urgent need for greater collaboration between the two health sectors. It is likely that many zoonotic and vector-borne diseases will become more widespread in the near future."

Currently there are more than 200 identified zoonotic diseases, such as Ebola, the most deadly 13 of which are responsible for 2.2 million human deaths every year.ⁱⁱⁱ

[In a report recently launched](#) by HealthforAnimals, global health experts outline the key innovations they feel are urgently required in order to effectively combat the growing threat of zoonotic disease. One key insight from the report was a call for greater collaboration between the human and animal health sectors.

Mr du Marchie Sarvaas added: "The conclusions of the report remain optimistic. The previous response to emergency situations testifies to the healthcare sector's capability to overcome barriers to collaboration when the situation demands. In order to best prepare for the future, we need to enable and encourage collaborative efforts between organisations and governments, and most importantly between the animal and human health industries."

"Local authorities, farmers and health workers need to be involved in putting in place strategies to manage interactions between human, animal and environmental health issues."

In 2014 HealthforAnimals released a whitepaper, independently authored by Oxford Analytic and supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation which examined [the growing threat of vector-borne disease in humans and animals](#).

'Zoonotic' and 'Vector-borne' Diseases: The Facts

- 'Zoonotic' refers to a disease which can be passed between humans and animals
- 'Vector-borne' refers to a disease which is transmitted by the bite of an infected arthropod species, such as mosquitoes or ticks
- Some diseases such as Lyme disease are both vector-borne (transmitted by ticks) and Zoonotic (can affect humans and animals)
- The 13 most deadly zoonotic diseases are responsible for 2.2 million human deaths every yearⁱⁱⁱ
- 75 per cent of emerging diseases are zoonoticⁱⁱ

The reports form part of a stream of educational content HealthforAnimals release which can be found on its YouTube channel and on its website. To be the first to hear about upcoming content, follow HealthforAnimals on Twitter @Health4Animals. For more information about zoonotic and vector-borne diseases, or to read the HealthforAnimals report: 'Innovation in Animal Health', visit the HealthforAnimals website at: www.healthforanimals.org

ENDS

Notes for editors

HealthforAnimals

HealthforAnimals (formerly International Federation for Animal Health) is an organisation representing manufacturers of veterinary medicines, vaccines and other animal health products in both developed and developing countries across five continents. The mission of HealthforAnimals is to foster a greater understanding of animal health matters and promote a predictable, science-based regulatory environment that facilitates the supply of innovative and quality animal medicines, vaccines and other animal health products into a competitive market place. These products contribute to a healthy and safe food supply as well as a high standard of health and welfare for animals and people.

For further information on HealthforAnimals visit: <http://healthforanimals.org/>

The HealthforAnimals report 'Innovation in animal health' can be accessed here: <http://healthforanimals.org/innovation-in-animal-health/>

The HealthforAnimals White Paper 'The growing threat of vector-borne disease in humans and animals' can be found here: <http://healthforanimals.org/ifah-white-paper-the-growing-threat-of-vector-borne-disease-in-humans-and-animals/>

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ⁱ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-35427493> (01/02/16)

ⁱⁱ http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/fr/Our_scientific_expertise/docs/pdf/Globalcooperation_oie1.pdf (01/02/16)

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/Output/190314/> (01/02/16)