

EPI Update for Friday, February 17, 2006
Center For Acute Disease Epidemiology
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Influenza update**
- **Control of avian influenza in wild birds in Western Europe**
- **Protect Iowa Health Poster Contest underway**
- **Bats in winter**
- **EPI Update Survey – last chance for your input**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Influenza Update

Seasonal Influenza: Iowa and the United States

Iowa is seeing a slow increase in influenza activity. Rates of absenteeism are rising in schools, child care and long term care facilities. Sentinel providers have reported slight increases in visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) over the past three weeks. Sioux County had two reports of absenteeism greater than 10 percent last week. Several schools across the state have already reported greater than 10 percent absenteeism for this week. For more information on the Iowa Influenza Surveillance Network, or to view our activity map, visit our Web site at www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/iisn.asp.

Pandemic influenza planning efforts

Please utilize the IDPH pandemic influenza Web site for information and educational materials for every audience group. The site address is www.idph.state.ia.us/pandemic. Please also look for a special edition of the *Iowa Health FOCUS Newsletter* to be released next week on Iowa's Pandemic Influenza Planning and Response Summit held on Feb. 3. If you are not already on the mailing list, write to dmccormi@idph.state.ia.us.

Avian influenza

H5N1 appears to be widespread in wild bird populations in countries across Asia, Europe and Africa. Every country is working with the World Health Organization (WHO) and is utilizing their infection control resources. The virus seems to have taken hold in wild bird populations without any other obvious signs of spread, such as large clusters of deaths in poultry. In several instances, H5N1 is being detected sporadically in waterfowl, swans in particular. Below is a list of some of the countries with H5N1 infections in birds and dates confirmed present, taken from EPI-X:

December 2003: SOUTH KOREA (declared disease free in September 2004)

January 2004: LAOS and JAPAN (since declared disease free),

August 2004: MALAYSIA (declared disease free in January 2005)

July 2005: RUSSIA (western Siberia)

August 2005: KAZAKHSTAN, TIBET and MONGOLIA

October 2005: ROMANIA, CROATIA

December 2005: UKRAINE

January 29, 2006: CYPRUS
February 8, 2006: NIGERIA (tests of suspected human cases underway)
February 10, 2006: AZERBAIJAN
February 11, 2006: GREECE, BULGARIA
February 12, 2006: ITALY, SLOVENIA
February 14, 2006: AUSTRIA, GERMANY

Control of avian influenza in Western Europe

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations cited Italy as an example of how governments should move to contain the H5N1 influenza virus once it is detected. H5N1 influenza has been detected in wild birds in Italy, but has not been detected in poultry. Emphasizing that there is nothing that can be effectively done about the illness in wildlife, efforts are to control the way poultry is raised and how it is marketed. Commercial poultry farms in Italy must now adhere to hygiene and sanitation standards set by health authorities, such as confining poultry so as to avoid any potential contact with wild birds.

FAO recommends that only healthy and inspected poultry enter the commercial food chain. The current situation in Italy does not provide consumers with any cause to avoid eating poultry products. The agency stresses that bird flu currently remains an animal disease, and that the battle against the virus can be won if it is eliminated at its source – animals. For more information on control of avian influenza in other countries, consult www.fao.org/ag/againfo/subjects/en/health/diseases-cards/special_avian.html.

Protect Iowa Health Poster Contest underway

Iowa 6-8 graders are encouraged to enter the "Protect Iowa Health" poster contest. The contest theme is "Prepare Because You Care," and students should show how they can be a hero by helping their family/loved ones prepare for emergencies. Entries for the inaugural contest must be postmarked by Friday, Feb. 24. Contest rules are available at www.protectiowahealth.org. The winner will be announced as a part of IDPH's celebration of National Public Health week in early April.

Bats in winter

A number of recent calls to the Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology have been from members of the public surprised to find bats flying through their homes when they thought they should have been hibernating. In fact, one of our own epidemiologists also found one zooming about her own kitchen. Clearly, this is a good time to mention a few winter bat facts.

The big brown bat, one of the common Iowa attic bats, needs to stay sufficiently cold in the winter, and will move about if its hibernating site becomes too warm. During periods of warm winter weather, it isn't uncommon to find them active. As our epidemiologist recalled (while crawling on her hands and knees), being in the room with a flying bat is not a rabies exposure, because rabies is spread via saliva through a bite. She put on leather gloves, put a container over the bat when it landed on a curtain, slid a piece of cardboard between the curtain and container opening, and released it outdoors. Anyone in

a similar situation may choose to consult the EPI Manual and the rabies exposure assessment chart at www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/common/pdf/cade/rabies_exposure_bats.pdf.

Epi Update Survey – last chance for your input

“Epi Update” Survey

From: Patricia Quinlisk, MD, MPH 2-

17-06

To everyone who has already sent back their survey results we thank you very much and appreciate all your feedback.

We are sending this survey out again as a reminder to all those who have yet to respond. Please follow the instructions below and send it back to us no later than the morning of Tuesday February 21st. (Do not send back more than one response.) Thank you again for your participation!

The Iowa Department of Public Health is conducting this brief survey to assess the impact that this newsletter has on YOU. Your feedback is critical for us to improve upon the content and ensure that the newsletter meets your needs. The survey results will be available in March '06. Your email address and any identifying responses will be kept confidential.

This should take only 2-3 minutes. THANK YOU!

1) IF you receive the EPI Update from IA Dept of Public Health, then click on the

email *reply* function, then enter your answers. Go to step #2.

(OR: If you receive this email from a different list server, then create a new email,

CUT & PASTE the survey, enter your answers and send the email back to: PBovet@idph.state.ia.us

2) Type an X to the left of the best fitting answers.

3) Click on the email *send* function to email your answers back to us.

1. Which **ONE** of the following categories best describes you:

_____ A) Healthcare professional (physician, nurse, veterinarian, public health worker, etc.)

_____ B) Healthcare student (medicine, veterinary, nursing, public health, etc.)

_____ C) Teacher (grade school, high school, university, vocational, etc.)

_____ D) Government worker (public official, lobbyist, secretary, etc.)

_____ E) Journalist (any media representative)

_____ F) Other type of professional: _____

_____ G) General Public

2. Select your primary location:

_____ A) County in Iowa, specify: _____

_____ B) State surrounding Iowa:

_____ Minnesota

_____ Wisconsin

_____ Illinois

_____ Missouri

_____ South Dakota

_____ Nebraska

_____ Kansas

_____ D) Other states in the USA –specify state: _____

_____ E) Other country: _____

3. How has reading the EPI Update impacted you? (Select **ALL THAT APPLY**.)

EPI Update:

_____ A) has never changed any part of my professional or personal activities

_____ B) has given me something interesting to read each Friday

_____ C) has changed personal activities (cooking, hand washing, swimming, etc.)

Give examples: _____

_____ D) is a valuable tool in professional activities (giving vaccinations, finding information, helping make recommendations, etc.)

Give examples: _____

_____ E) Other – please explain _____

4. In the EPI update, you need information on: (Select **ALL THAT APPLY**.)

_____ A) Specific agents causing Infectious Diseases (ID) (Influenza, rabies, hepatitis, etc.)

_____ B) Vaccinations

_____ C) Rare diseases (Human Botfly, Mad Cow Disease, etc.)

_____ D) Local or state ID issues (outbreaks, diseases happening in Iowa, etc.)

_____ E) Bordering states ID issues

_____ F) International or national ID issues

_____ G) Pharmaceuticals (antibiotics, anti-virals, immunoglobulin, etc.)

_____ H) Iowa legislation on ID issues

_____ I) Behavioral issues that relate to ID (smoking, food, stress, cancer, obesity, etc.)

_____ J) Upcoming events, conferences or training on ID and public health

_____ K) Health Alerts from the CDC (no longer recommending some anti-virals for the flu)

_____ L) Other –please specify: _____

COMMENTS: _____

5. You are currently satisfied with the information on: (Select **ALL THAT APPLY**.)

_____ A) Specific agents causing Infectious Diseases (ID) (Influenza, rabies, hepatitis, etc.)

_____ B) Vaccinations

_____ C) Rare diseases (Human Botfly, Mad Cow Disease, etc.)

- D) Local or state ID issues (outbreaks, diseases happening in Iowa, etc.)
 - E) Bordering states ID issues
 - F) International or national ID issues
 - G) Pharmaceuticals (antibiotics, anti-virals, immunoglobulin, etc.)
 - H) Iowa legislation on ID issues
 - I) Behavioral issues that relate to ID (smoking, food, stress, cancer, obesity, etc.)
 - J) Upcoming events, conferences or training on ID and public health
 - K) Health Alerts from the CDC (no longer recommending some anti-virals for the flu)
 - L) Other –please specify: _____
- COMMENTS: _____

6. Information in following areas should be improved upon: (Select **ALL THAT APPLY**.)

- A) Specific agents causing Infectious Diseases (ID) (Influenza, rabies, hepatitis, etc.)
 - B) Vaccinations
 - C) Rare diseases (Human Botfly, Mad Cow Disease, etc.)
 - D) Local or state ID issues (outbreaks, diseases happening in Iowa, etc.)
 - E) Bordering states ID issues
 - F) International or national ID issues
 - G) Pharmaceuticals (antibiotics, anti-virals, immunoglobulin, etc.)
 - H) Iowa legislation on ID issues
 - I) Behavioral issues that relate to ID (smoking, food, stress, cancer, obesity, etc.)
 - J) Upcoming events, conferences or training on ID and public health
 - K) Health Alerts from the CDC (no longer recommending some anti-virals for the flu)
 - L) Other –please specify: _____
- COMMENTS: _____

7. The EPI Update should contain **MORE** information on which diseases: (Select **ALL THAT APPLY**.)

- A) Influenza (human, avian, swine, etc.)
- B) Rabies
- C) Hepatitis (type A, B, C)
- D) Food-borne illnesses (Salmonella, *E. coli*, Giardia, etc.)
- E) West Nile virus
- F) Pertussis (whooping cough)
- G) Meningitis
- H) Rare diseases (Human Botfly, leprosy, histoplasmosis, tuberculosis, etc.)
- I) Other disease(s) _____

8. The EPI Update should contain **LESS** information on which diseases: (Select **ALL THAT APPLY**.)

- A) Influenza (human, avian, swine, etc.)
- B) Rabies
- C) Hepatitis (type A, B, C)
- D) Food-borne illnesses (Salmonella, *E. coli*, Giardia, etc.)

- E) West Nile virus
- F) Pertussis (whooping cough)
- G) Meningitis
- H) Rare diseases (Human Botfly, leprosy, histoplasmosis, tuberculosis, etc.)
- I) Other disease(s) _____

9. Select what best describes the technical reading level in the EPI Update:

- A) Overly technical
- B) Appropriately technical
- C) Not technical enough

COMMENTS: _____

10. Select what best describes the overall amount of information in the EPI Update:

- A) too much information –needs to be more concise
- B) an appropriate amount of information
- C) too little relevant information –needs more depth

COMMENTS: _____

11. Select from where you receive the EPI Update:

- A) directly from the Iowa Department of Public Health
- B) through a professional organization/society list server
- C) from a list server or forwarding through my work place
- D) from another individual forwarding it (family, friend, etc.)
- E) Other: _____

12. On what weekday is it most useful to receive the EPI Update?

- A) Monday
- B) Tuesday
- C) Wednesday
- D) Thursday
- E) Friday

13. The epidemiology learning item with 5 questions in a newsletter and the answers in the next newsletter (“EPI 5”) is:

- A) a great learning tool and I wish such questions were in every update
- B) a nice refresher and I wish such questions were included about once per month
- C) nice to have about once per year
- D) not helpful and should not be included

COMMENTS: _____

14. Regarding humorous and/or epidemiologically interesting stories (e.g. Epidemiology of Christmas Fever, or story about a live raccoon in back of a someone’s car), such stories:

- A) should be included MORE
- B) are included enough
- C) should NOT be included

COMMENTS: _____

15. The historical perspective articles (e.g. the Avian Flu epidemic at Grinnell College in Iowa during the 1950s):

_____ A) are very important and should be included regularly

_____ B) are somewhat important, and should be included only when relevant to current events

_____ C) should not be included

COMMENTS: _____

16. The announcements, conferences and training events are:

_____ A) important because I attended events found within or often used the information

_____ B) interesting to read about, but I have seldom used the information

_____ C) not to be included

COMMENTS: _____

17. The Internet links included for further information are:

_____ A) very useful –I clicked on some each week and was satisfied

_____ B) somewhat useful –I clicked on several of them and was satisfied

_____ C) not useful –I clicked on several of them and was NOT satisfied

_____ D) I have never used any of the reference links

_____ E) Other: _____

COMMENTS: _____

18. In this section, please provide any additional suggestions or comments to help us make the EPI Update as helpful as possible. _____

THANK YOU! for your participation in this questionnaire. If you have questions, comments or would like to see the results of this survey, please contact our MPH intern Philip Bovet at: PBovet@idph.state.ia.us, IDPH phone number: 1-800-362-2736 or 515-242-5935. If you would like to visit our EPI Update archive page, then click on the following link: www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/epi_update.asp.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

The course “Foreign Animal Disease Response” will be offered on March 6th from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM by the AgTerror Preparedness Center, Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids, IA. This course is free to the public. Approved by the Department of Homeland Security in December 2005, this course trains emergency responders to respond to a foreign animal disease outbreak. For registration and information, see the AgTerror Preparedness Center Web site at www.agterror.org/training_courses_details.asp?Course_Id=126, or call 1-800-464-6874.

The conference “Terrorist Threats to our Food Supply: Food Protection and Defense-- Science, Ethics & Law” will be presented Friday, April 21, 2006 at Cowles Auditorium, Humphrey Center, at the University of Minnesota. Topics include:

- *From Food Safety to Food Protection and Defense*
- *Role of Regulation: Information, Incentives & Penalties*
- *Industry Concerns: Cost, Liability & Competition*
- *Consumer Perspectives on Food Protection and Defense*
- *Public Health Response to Threats*
- *Modeling the Public Health System Response to a Terrorist Event*
- *Moving Forward in Food Protection and Defense*

For more information about registration, continuing education credits, agenda and speakers, visit the conference Web site at

www.lifesci.consortium.umn.edu/conferences/foodsafety.php

Have a healthy and happy week

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology

Iowa Department of Public Health

800-362-2736