



MED • VET • NET NEWS

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June 2008

Med-Vet-Net Communications Unit

In this month's Med-Vet-Net News we announce a new Special Interest Group on Wildlife-related emerging diseases and zoonoses. We invite interested non-Med-Vet-Net members as well as those in Partner Institutes to join up to this group.

Med-Vet-Net's new Project Manager, Professor John Threlfall, gives us his first news report.

We count down the days to the 4th Med-Vet-Net Annual Scientific Meeting to be held in Saint Malo next week.

We announce a 2-week workshop on 'Virtual Communications' – part of the Med-Vet-Net Science Communication Internship.

Wildlife Zoonoses

New Special Interest Group – your chance to collaborate through 'WILDLIST'

Med-Vet-Net is sponsoring a Special Interest Group (SIG) in wildlife-related emerging diseases and zoonoses (WiREDZ).

This will focus on people and groups working on emerging and zoonotic diseases of wildlife in Europe. There will be an emphasis on rabies, tularaemia and hantavirus infections, but all WiREDZ will be considered.

The primary objective is to have a register of people working on WiREDZ throughout Europe, this is the Med-Vet-Net WiREDZ WILDLIST. This will help collaboration, and link those who are working with specific wild species (mammals, birds, vertebrates) and those groups working on specific wildlife diseases

throughout Europe. The Special Interest Group and WILDLIST will have good links to other projects and organizations. (See box for details of registering with WILDLIST or go to <http://www.medvetnet.org/wiredzreg>)

The strategic research plan of Med-Vet-Net has clearly indicated the importance of wildlife in the evolution and transmission of zoonotic diseases. The range of diseases involved is very wide, however, with the realization that wild species are significant reservoirs

for both zoonotic disease and new and emerging diseases, surveillance in wildlife has become increasingly important. Important examples of WiREDZ include *Avian influenza virus*, West Nile, Usutu and other flaviviruses, hanta virus, tularaemia, bovine tuberculosis, salmonellosis, echinococcosis (alveolar hydatidosis), tick-borne rickettsiosis, Lyme disease, brucellosis, and theileriosis. Several of these diseases have changed their epidemiology in recent years.

In the first three years of Med-Vet-Net, an interest in this area was developed through Workpackage 5 and then the Special Interest Group on Bat Lyssaviruses. In JPA4 (4th Joint Programme of Activities) this area is being developed by extension of the Bat Lyssavirus Special Interest Group to other wildlife species and other diseases. This Group seeks to cover any WiREDZ of relevance to the European context, but the overall aim is to look for changes in disease epidemiology, and changes in zoonotic potential.



Investigating and managing zoonoses in wildlife. Tuberculin testing for TB, and attaching a transponder (the cigarette-like object) to a wild boar in Central Spain. Photo courtesy of Dr Christian Gortazar, IREC, Spain.

SIG Workplan

This special interest group started in the 4th Joint Programme of Activities (JPA4) for Med-Vet-Net. Its tasks and outputs are to:

1. Identify those agencies and groups undertaking scanning and targeted WiREDZ surveillance in the EU. There is a particular emphasis on Eastern EU countries, because this information is particularly not known. Several of the Med-Vet-Net partners are members of the European Wildlife Disease Association (EWDA), and an informal network of contacts has already been established through this association which will be exploited.
2. Establish links with these groups, initially using an on-line survey of Med-Vet-Net partners and then other bodies (potential collaborators). Additional links will be established using two questionnaires (a short basic questionnaire, and then a longer more detailed questionnaire) designed to be web-based and to have automatic data collation.
3. Use these questionnaires to determine the level of surveillance in the EU undertaken across the following categories:
 - the zoonotic diseases/pathogens monitored;
 - the species of wildlife monitored;
 - where scanning surveillance is undertaken, and how new and emerging disease are investigated, assessed and reported;
4. Investigate the possibility of producing a short Bulletin with open (web) access, bulletin WiREDZ news items, emphasizing communication links and asking for interested groups in the EU to contact the SIG.
5. Develop a simple approach to scanning WiREDZ surveillance, which could be applied throughout the EU.
6. Maintain the network of virologists and bat experts by organization of a meeting, and maintain and develop the previously established Lyssavirus database as a model of wildlife zoonoses surveillance.

Dolores Gavier-Widen
SVA, Sweden
and
Paul Duff
Veterinary Laboratories Agency
Penrith, UK
WiREDZ Special Interest Group
Leaders

WILDLIST registration

If you are working on diseases of any wild species in Europe, even if this is only part of your job, we kindly ask you to log just 6 simple pieces of data on to the web-based WILDLIST:

1. Your name
2. Your Email address
3. Your institute
4. Your institute's Email address
5. The wild species you work with, e.g. bats, rodents, deer, ungulates, foxes, rabbits etc.
6. The wildlife diseases you work with, e.g. rabies, salmonella, brucella, vector-borne diseases, West Nile fever, Flaviviruses.

In time, this website will be developed but our principal priority is to connect workers throughout Europe with others that are working in the field of wildlife disease.

Your Email address will be secure, because it will not be displayed on the web: any enquiries will be made through a web form and only genuine messages forwarded to you.

It would be great if you could pass this on to your colleagues who also work with wildlife diseases. This instructions are also available in most European languages. If you have any queries please contact Mr Paul Duff, Veterinary Laboratories Agency: email: info@medvetnet.org

<http://www.medvetnet.org/wiredzreg>



Mr Paul Duff, WiREDZ Special Interest Group Co-Leader

Project Management News

This is my first newsletter as Project Manager for Med-Vet-Net!

Firstly, can I say what a great honour it is to be appointed to the post. Following on from Diane Newell is a daunting task. Diane has been incredibly helpful during the 'handover' period and I am immensely grateful not only for all the hard work she has put in to ensure that MVN is a healthy and flourishing Network of Excellence (NoE), with a reputation for significant scientific achievements both within and outwith the EU, but also for the snippets of advice she has provided, (and continues to provide) during conversations and informal meetings – thanks Diane, much appreciated!! I would also point out that Diane is not lost to the Network, as she is Workpackage Leader for an ambitious new Work Package (WP34) on the control and prevention of *Campylobacter* in poultry, to start in September 2008.

It is a real pleasure to be involved with Med-Vet-Net as Project Manager, working on an almost daily basis with the Administration Bureau and Co-ordination Unit at AFFSA, the Communications Unit, the Co-

ordinating Forum, individual Workpackage Leaders, and our EC Representative, Jean-Charles Cavitte. Mention should also be made of Trudy Wassenaar, who has been appointed 50% of her time as Assistant Project Manager, with particular responsibility for the 4th Annual Scientific Meeting on Zoonoses Research in Europe. In collaboration with the Scientific Committee and the Local Organizers Trudy is pulling out all the stops to ensure the success of the conference in St Malo, France next week.

Med-Vet-Net is a flourishing network and I am continually amazed by the breadth and depth of the projects, and the keenness of participants at all levels to be involved in and contribute to the Workpackages. I am also very impressed by the training activities, both in terms of short-term missions, direct training of groups in both laboratory and epidemiological activities, and by the Science Communication internships. I recently attended a meeting of other NoEs within the UK, and I think that Med-Vet-Net came out trumps in terms of training and communication activities as well as, of course, scientific achievements.

As we are now moving towards the final phases of the project – completion date 31 August 2009 – I must remind everyone of the importance of keeping up to date with the milestones to ensure that the Workpackages are completed on time, with full financial accountability and with maximum spending of resources allocated by the EC. André Jestin



and his team in the Coordination Unit are putting in a lot of effort towards ensuring sustainability of the Network post 31 August 2009, and I think it is vitally important that we can demonstrate maximum efficiency both in scientific output and budgetary management. Kalpna Lakhani, my Med-Vet-Net Personal Assistant at the Health Protection Agency and I will be readily available to answer queries and provide advice in our areas of expertise, so please feel free to contact us should the need arise.

I am looking forward immensely to the Med-Vet-Net Annual Scientific Meeting in Saint Malo next week. Not only is Saint Malo a great place to visit – a small walled town with city walls and a very convivial atmosphere, with many extracurricular activities in the vicinity for those who wish to stay on after the conference, but also an excellent scientific programme, demonstrating the whole range of Med-Vet-Net activities. We are ensured of a substantive turn out, and I will look forward to meeting as many of you as possible who are attending the conference.

Once again, please let me assure you of my total commitment to Med-Vet-Net. It is now vital that we work together to ensure sustainability of the Network in the future, take forward current activities and grasp opportunities to expand into new areas with new collaborations and new partners.

Thank you in anticipation for your collaboration and co-operation in ensuring the continued success of Med-Vet-Net!

John Threlfall
Med-Vet-Net Project Manager



Med-Vet-Net Conference Update



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ST MALO '08



The 4th Med-Vet-Net Annual Scientific Meeting starts next Tuesday, from 11 to 14 June.

Programme

The latest version programme is now available at:
<http://www.medvetnet.org/cms/templates/doc.php?id=208>

Abstract Book

Abstracts for the meeting are available online:
<http://www.medvetnet.org/cms/templates/doc.php?id=232>

For those unable to attend the meeting, printed copies of the abstract book are available on request to the Communications Unit.

Forum Discussion

There will be a panel discussion on 'Needs and tools in the future of EU-funded research' on Friday 13 June. The panel will include:

John Stringer – Berkley Associates

Béla Nagy – Veterinary Medical Research Institute, Budapest

Imre Varadi – Open Interface Association

Therese Westrell – European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

Chair: John Threlfall, Project Manager

Please send questions for the panel to MVNConf08@medvetnet.org

Virtual Communications Science Communications Internship

Module 4 of the Science Communications Internship will run again for 2 weeks from **25 August 2008**.

This module takes a look at communicating using new and emerging technologies. Topics include web design, mark-up languages, online communications, graphics, digital photography and podcasting. At the conclusion of Module 4, the aim is for participants to be able to:

- utilize one or more mark-up languages to create a simple static web page;
- explain the basic modes of operation of the client-server model of the Web and the HTTP protocol;
- understand something of the role of recommendations and standards in the design of web applications including, but not limited to, HTML, XHTML and CSS;
- be able to identify strategies, guidelines, and resources to help make the Web accessible to people with disabilities;
- understand the fundamentals of creating websites that are easy to use;
- understand the fundamentals of managing a website and have knowledge of tools that can make this more efficient;
- understand the process of creating, editing and delivering Podcasts;
- understand how Web 2.0 tools can be used for collaboration in science;
- understand to produce good photographs with digital equipment;
- understand how to use Adobe Photoshop to enhance digital pictures;
- be able to write and customize content for the Web;
- understand some of the techniques of electronic public relations;
- understand some of the developments in mobile technologies and how they can be used for communicating science.



If you would like to attend, please contact the Communications Unit (email communications@medvetnet.org). **Application deadline: 31 July.**

ASM Conference on Antimicrobial Resistance in Zoonotic Bacteria and Foodborne Pathogens, 15–18 June 2008, Copenhagen, Denmark

Conference Scope:

The focus of the conference will be on antimicrobial resistance and transmission of antimicrobial resistant bacteria via the food chain and other human-animal interactions. The meeting will provide numerous opportunities to interact and exchange knowledge, in this growing research area, between scientists as well as international policy and regulatory decision makers.

Scientific Sessions:

- Monitoring of resistance
- Diagnostic methods (susceptibility testing, rapid diagnostics and genetic methods)
- Mechanisms of antimicrobial resistance
- Resistance in bacteria of the food chain (Salmonella, Campylobacter, E.coli, Vancomycin resistant enterococci (VRE) and others)
- Methicillin resistant Staph. Aureus (MRSA)
- Epidemiology of resistance in the food production chain
- Strategies to control and prevent resistance in the food chain
- Late breaker session

For more information see:

<http://www.asm.org/Meetings/index.asp?bid=51597>

Future challenges to microbial food safety, an in-depth expert meeting to explore ways to address future challenges to microbial food safety, 9–12 June 2008, Bilderberg Hotel 'Buunderkamp', Wolfheze, Netherlands

The conference will be sponsored by the Dutch Food and Consumer Products Safety Authority (VWA) and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

Those interested in attending the conference are invited to E-mail their application to:
VWAfoodmicrobiology2008@vwa.nl

Australian Society for Microbiology Annual Meeting, 6–10 July 2008, Melbourne, Australia

For further information see:
www.asm2008.org/

Society for Applied Microbiology Summer Meeting 7–10 July 2008, Wellington Park Hotel, Belfast

'The microbiology of water in work, rest and play'

For more information see:
www.sfam.org.uk

American Society for Virology 27th Annual Scientific Meeting, 12–16 July 2008, Ithaca, New York

The 2008 ASV scientific program will include symposia and concurrent sessions on many aspects of virology.

For more information see:
www.asv.org/

Molecular Genetics of Bacteria and Phages, 20–24 August 2008, Cold Spring Harbor, NY, USA

The specific goal of this meeting is to bring together a group of scientists studying diverse aspects of prokaryotic biology using the tools of molecular biology, genetics, biochemistry, and structure analysis. The meeting is intended to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information and to discuss the latest research findings and technical advances. We encourage the submission of abstracts covering diverse topics and under-represented organisms and particularly encourage junior investigators to present their results at the meeting.

Evolving microbial food quality and safety (FOOD MICRO 2008), 1–3 September 2008, Aberdeen, UK

For further information, see:

Genomic Perspectives to Host Pathogen Interactions, 3–6 September 2008, Cambridge, UK

Abstract Deadline 11th June 2008

Joint Wellcome Trust/Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory conference

The focus for this conference is on how the rapid expansion in host, pathogen and vector genome data and other large data sets is changing the way we think about host-pathogen-(vector) interactions.

Topics include:

Pathogens: free-living / facultative/ opportunistic/epizootic/obligate / intracellular

Host niche/Defense: lung/GI/urogenital/skin/muscle/CNS/blood/lymph/other

Vectors: genomes/biology/ecology

For more information see:
www.cshl.edu/meetings

Or email: meetings@cshl.edu

41st Annual Meeting of the Society for Invertebrate Pathology, 3–7 August 2008, Warwick, UK

For more information see:
<http://www.ent.iastate.edu/sip/2008/details>



Contact us

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Contributions and suggestions are welcome. Deadline for publication is 1st of each month.

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