

REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

September 15- 21, 2022

WEEKLY EVENTS

- On September 13, 2022, the Laotian Times reported improvements in the Mekong River Commission's (MRC) flood surveillance, tracking and forecasting system for effective responses to help residents of the region cope with natural disasters. Climate change has led to serious impacts on the community, agricultural ecosystems and lifestyles in places like Chiang Saen in Thailand, Vientiane in Laos, Phnom Penh in Cambodia, and Chau Doc in Vietnam which have seen changes in the water level and river basin conditions. The MRC website (www.mrcmekong.org) provides regular updates on the situation.
- On September 15, 2022, the Guan Lei Port in Yunnan Province, China was reopened. This important shipping port will allow the transport of permissible products between Thailand, Myanmar, and China via the Mekong River Basin. After more than two years of closures, the reopening of the port marks a unified step forward in driving the economy.

LEPTOSPIROSIS: BE ALERT DURING THE RAINY SEASON

During the rainy season, many people are familiar with leptospirosis or its colloquial name in Thailand: "rat urine disease". Initially, it was discovered that rats carry the pathogen and shed it in the urine, but it was later confirmed that other animals like dogs, cats, cows, buffaloes, pigs, etc. can also carry the pathogen that causes leptospirosis.

The Division of Epidemiology, Department of Disease Control reported that from January 1 to September 12, 2022, there were 1,545 cases and 10 deaths due to leptospirosis. The age group that was most affected consisted of people from 45-64 years old. The most common occupations of those affected were farmers and day laborers. The provinces with the most cases were Mae Hong Son, Ranong, Phang Nga, Phatthalung and Nan. This is consistent with the Mekong Basin Disease Surveillance (MBDS) report, which indicated that Nan province had 10 times as many leptospirosis cases in August 2022.

Infected individuals may or may not have symptoms. Symptoms usually appear a few days to 2-3 weeks after exposure. The most notable symptoms are fever, headache, conjunctivitis, and muscle pain, especially the calf muscle. If not treated properly, some patients may experience complications such as jaundice, kidney failure, or neurological symptoms. This group must seek treatment immediately, otherwise it may be fatal.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Local health officers and volunteers should provide information about leptospirosis to their communities, especially to people who have occupational hazards such as working and wading in water or working in close contact with animals. Special attention should be given to prevention, reducing risky behaviors, notable symptoms, and complications that require prompt medical attention.

To reduce the risk of leptospirosis, avoid prolonged exposure or walking barefoot in muddy water. This is especially important for people with wounds or scratches on their feet, because these are potential channels for pathogens to enter the body. Therefore, people should wear boots when working in places like rice fields and they should cover wounds with waterproof plaster or bandages. After finishing their work, people with high-risk exposure should properly and promptly clean themselves.

INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY

Multisectoral Capacity Development Program for Public Health Emergency Detection and Response in Border Areas

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