

Emerging Pandemic Threats Program

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RESPOND

SUCCESS STORY

Wildlife Health Monitoring and Management with One Health Approach in Thailand



DNP wildlife veterinarians discuss their relationships to government, local communities, NGOs and researchers.

RESPOND is one of four partner projects of USAID's Emerging Pandemic Threats Program. RESPOND seeks to build local capacity of state and non-state actors to manage outbreaks of animal-borne diseases such as H1N1 flu and Ebola virus in hot-spot regions around the world.

Mahidol University, Sai Yok, Thailand – As in many global hot-spot regions for animal-borne disease outbreaks, in Southeast Asia proper management of animal wildlife health is vitally important for protecting humans from dangerous diseases. Wildlife veterinarians are at the center of wildlife health surveillance and treatment, but they often exercise complex positions, operating at the intersection of government, the scientific community and local populations.

Recognizing the critical role their veterinary staff, Thailand's Department of National Parks (DNP) sought to increase the awareness and understanding of DNP veterinarians about their responsibilities. To meet this demand, USAID's RESPOND project partnered with Mahidol University's Faculty of Veterinary Science to organize an in-service training course for DNP veterinarians to clarify their roles and promote stronger cross-sector relationships.

From January 31 to February 3, Mahidol's Sai Yok campus in Kanchanaburi, Thailand hosted the first of four planned trainings for 16 DNP wildlife veterinarians from across country. Trainers and experts from the university, Ministry of Public Health, World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) in Thailand and RESPOND presented to participants. Topics included differences between wildlife veterinarians, biologists and zoo veterinarians, One Health concepts and wildlife research, and epidemiology techniques. Participants will initiate projects to strengthen One Health practices in their posts throughout the remaining workshops in May, July and September 2011.

In addition to aiding DNP, RESPOND is empowering Mahidol University as a leader in promoting a One Health approach to disease outbreak response in Thailand. The workshops provide an opportunity for networking among their researchers and veterinary professionals. Through the program, however, Mahidol is also developing its own training and leadership capacities to continue strengthening One Health practices and coordination in Thailand and the greater Southeast Asia region for years to come.