

BIOSECURITY

What is it?

Biosecurity isn't about terrorism. The risks of global infectious diseases from factory farming are far more serious. Keeping animals in crowded and stressful conditions is the perfect way to breed new diseases.

Background

Infectious diseases were once thought to have been defeated by antibiotics and vaccination. We now appreciate the substantial risks of new diseases that can strike faster than vaccines can be developed and of antibiotics losing their effectiveness.

In its first 12 months following its appearance in 2009, Swine flu killed 284,000 people¹ globally. "Normal" seasonal influenza kills mainly the sick, elderly and infirm, but 80 percent of Swine flu deaths were in people younger than 65. Swine flu is a mixture of pig, chicken and human flu² which emerged in factory pig farms in the US and spread across the world.

The avian influenza known as "bird flu" (H5N1) can also kill people, but doesn't easily spread from person to person. A chance mutation could give it this capacity and spark a global pandemic similar or worse than swine flu.

Other diseases have jumped from wildlife to people as we destroy or invade their habitat. These include the hendra, nipah and ebola viruses. Nipah³ spread to pigs from bats in Malaysia in 1998 as farms invaded bat habitat. It also jumped directly from bats to people in Bangladesh with people drinking sap from date palms where bats were roosting. Ebola⁴ can kill both gorillas and people in large numbers. Thousands of gorillas were killed by the disease in 2002-2003 and thousands of people in 2014-16. Hendra⁵ jumped from bats to horses to people in Queensland in 1994 killing 13 horses and a trainer. Since then there have been dozens of outbreaks killing horses, but only one other human death. It took 18 years to develop a vaccine.

Apart from new diseases associated with animal production, animal products cause existing diseases via food poisoning. Most of Australia's 4 million cases of food poisoning annually come from animal products; salmonella,

campylobacter and E. coli. All come from animal products.

Factory farms keep animals in crowded and stressful situations and are frequent users of antibiotics. The evolution of antibiotic resistant strains of bacteria is a major global health problem and antibiotic use on farms is a significant cause.

Policy

Factory farms pose significant biosecurity risks to all Australians. Phasing them out will prevent many infectious disease threats to humans and animals. It will also reduce the risks of new diseases emerging.

The Animal Justice Party (AJP) advocates a reduction in the interference with wildlife and its habitat. This reduces conflict which risks spreading infectious diseases carried by wildlife.

Key Objectives

1. To establish programs to inform the public about the inherent biosecurity risks associated with intensive animal industries.
2. To establish programs to inform the public about the inherent biosecurity risks associated with reducing wildlife habitat.
3. To support research into bat habitat protection with a goal of reducing conflicts which can be dangerous to both us and bats.
4. To roll back and actively oppose all "ag-gag" laws that use bio-security as a justification for attempts to silence activists and whistle blowers attempting to prevent or expose poor treatment of animals.

¹[http://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099\(12\)70121-4/abstract](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099(12)70121-4/abstract)

²http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/swine_flu/facts/flu_factories.html

³<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/nipah/en/>

⁴<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4456362/pdf/pntd.0003652.pdf>

⁵<http://www.ava.com.au/hendra-virus>



Want a political voice for animals? Join, donate, or find out more about the Animal Justice Party at animaljusticeparty.org. You can also read our policies designed to provide animals with a voice here: animaljusticeparty.org/policieslist.

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