

April 3, 2008

LOCAL ACTION, GLOBAL HEALTH – MAIN VIDEO – TRANSCRIPT

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A nearly invisible threat is taking over our planet. From SARS to Avian Influenza to malaria, microbes and diseases are threatening global health in ways never before seen. At the heart of this threat is the connection between humans, animals and the environment.

Our human population is growing. This growth is happening worldwide but is most dramatic in developing regions. These very places are also struggling environments that are least able to support a population boom. The rest of the world is becoming more and more dependent on these developing regions for food, such as meat and animal products.

Global transportation systems move animals and products faster than ever before. As these systems become more efficient, however, they can also bring diseases from distant places to our own backyards.

These factors are creating a connection between humans, animals, disease and the environment, rapidly turning local problems in one part of the world into global dilemmas.

Dr. Lonnie King, Director, Center for Vector-Borne and Zoonotic Diseases, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

"I see the convergence of animal and human health as producing some of our most recent phenomena and problems, actually producing a greater amount of problems as we go into the future, so the scope, the scale and the consequences of human and animal diseases is very much unprecedented."

For many years, we have lived in a world where events seem distant. We now realize that events thousands of miles away can affect our own communities. Disease pandemics can start locally and rapidly spread across the globe. We also recognize that most of our human diseases come from microbes within the animal kingdom.

Ricardo Salvador, Program Director, Food Systems and Rural Development, W.K. Kellogg Foundation:

"The issue is going to be with us long-term. The issue as we see it is yet another instance of us creating a system that is not designed. The system we are talking about here is the global industrial food system and the way the there can be run away human disasters that can occur because our eye is not on the ball of what may go wrong – our eye is on the ball of the economic opportunities around the world."

Mike Robach – Vice President, Corporate Food Safety & Regulatory Affairs, Cargill:

"The next pandemic tells me that we need to be doing a better job globally for preparing for such a pandemic since we are involved with the global food system, we have supply chains that stretch around the globe and if we're not properly prepared for a pandemic and we don't have contingency plans in place, I think we really risk not only things from a health standpoint related to the pandemic, but also a major disruption in social structure and even having the food supply chain operate correctly."

Rita Ho, Physician, Hong Kong – Department of Health - Special Administrative Region of China:

"The issue is a global issue, the solution itself is also a global solution, but when we have a solution and a strategy the strategy must be able to be implemented at the local level."

Solutions to this global crisis require individuals and groups willing to take up the mantle of leadership in local communities throughout the world.

Catherine Adams - Corporate Vice President for Worldwide Quality, Safety and Nutrition, McDonald's Corporation:

"It's going to take a world wide approach and I think that's one of the very positive things we see, in looking upstream at how we prevent public health, food safety problems, and truly we can't identify that in any one country, so if we don't work holistically and if we don't look upstream then we won't be able to prevent public health issues in the future, so with this global, holistic approach we have a very good chance."

Howard Wong - Assistant Secretary for Food – Hong Kong Government - Health and Food Bureau:

"Local solutions and global solutions, solutions on a country-wide basis are very different and it requires a lot of work from different people to be able to make that work."

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Philip Yam, Editor, Scientific American magazine:

“There’s no one size fits all. There are many solutions to the problem. We have to be aware of what each other’s doing because we are all interconnected as well.”

Jose Zaglul, President, EARTH University – Costa Rica:

“We are all the same and sharing the same house, the same food, the same oxygen, the same water...If we understand that, we can make a tremendous difference.”