

What's New?

Keep up to date with new initiatives and activities that are fostering research and practice pertinent to *EcoHealth* readers. In this issue, you can find out about:

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- Cary Conference on Ecology of Infectious Diseases
- Emerging Infectious Disease Symposium Builds on Collaborative Veterinary Environmental Health Practice in Canada
- “Globalization, Sustainability and Health” to Feature in Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change Program Open Meeting
- Project on the Application of Sustainable Livelihoods and Ecosystem Health Approaches at the Policy Level

Regular updates are also available at the *EcoHealth* website: <http://www.ecohealth.net>

REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM TO ADDRESS SUSTAINABILITY AND HEALTH CONCERNS IN TWELVE COUNTRIES

In January 2005, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) launched a new program: “Supporting the Contribution of Higher Education Institutions to Regional Development.” The OECD has based its program on 12 exemplar case-study regions across 10 countries spanning Europe, Asia, Mexico, and Australia, selected on the basis of their achievements in this regard. The results of this project are due toward the end of 2006.

The project includes a review of barriers to regional engagement and a regional self-evaluation against a set

of broad principles that include dialogue, stakeholder collaboration, learning, and leadership commitment. The process developed by the OECD challenges universities to take greater responsibility for regional sustainability by addressing the social, cultural, and environmental requirements of the region and by integrating and targeting their teaching, research, infrastructure, and community activities. The program will also challenge regional communities to recognize and value the potential significance of their human capital and labor market and the creative and enterprising outcomes that regional engagement can bring through shared knowledge and learning. These reciprocal relationships are intended to promote regional development for mutual benefit, thus leading to improved biophysical environments and improved health of the people in regional communities.

The Sunshine-Fraser Coast region of Southern Queensland, Australia, is one of the case-study regions in Australia. It is linked closely with the Institute for Sustainability, Health and Regional Engagement, University of the Sunshine Coast. More information about this Australian case study is available at <http://www.usc.edu.au/ishare> or by contacting Ron Neller (rneller@usc.edu.au). The overall project is profiled at <http://www.oecd.org/edu/higher/regionaldevelopment>

CARY CONFERENCE ON ECOLOGY OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

The Institute of Ecosystem Studies, based in the midst of a 778-ha research reserve in Millbrook (

ies.org), hosted an intensive 3-day meeting on May 3–5, 2005, as one of its prestigious biennial Cary Conferences. Convened by Valerie Eviner, Felecia Keesing, and Richard Ostfeld, the nearly 100 attendees included many individuals who are conducting groundbreaking work in disease ecology. The meeting's purpose was to help conceptually unify and expand understanding in this rapidly developing area, with the goal of defining directions for new, innovative, and unified research efforts. Participants at the event remarked that the conference achieved its goal in laying a crucial part of the groundwork toward unifying disease studies with community and ecosystem ecology. Topics spanned applications of population ecology theory and the roles of vector and host diversity to pathogen emergence and predicting disease emergence in plants, animals, and humans. The overarching theme was the reciprocal effect of diseases on ecosystem and ecosystems on diseases. It was clear from this meeting that the ecology of infectious diseases has fully emerged as a leading area of research at the interface of the ecological and health sciences. The outcome is being published as a multi-authored volume edited by the conveners with an expected 2006 publication date. More information about Cary Conferences can be found at <http://www.ecostudies.org/cary11/background.html>

EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASE SYMPOSIUM BUILDS ON COLLABORATIVE VETERINARY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PRACTICE IN CANADA

A symposium on new approaches to the study of emerging diseases was held in Victoria, Canada, on July 12, 2005. The symposium brought together more than 60 participants with a range of veterinary, medical, and biological backgrounds and a common interest in emerging zoonotic diseases. Topics ranged from disease ecology of food-producing animals to antimicrobial resistance surveillance to toxoplasmosis in Sea Otters. A panel debate addressing "Are Emerging Diseases Predictable?" generated fertile discussion and proposals to improve understanding and responses to emerging infections. More information about the symposium can be found at <http://web.mala.bc.ca/cch/EmergingDiseaseSymposium.htm>

The symposium marked 10 years of the Centre for Coastal Health (CCH), a unique health practice in British Columbia, Canada. The CCH combines the problem-solving tradition of veterinary medicine with health-promotion

principles embracing the built and natural environments. The July symposium exemplified the One Health model that characterizes the Centre's activities and its focus on helping people to make decisions on health issues at the interface of humans, animals, and their shared environments. The CCH is a nonprofit organization that links the expertise of colleagues in universities across Canada through its core staff of veterinary epidemiologists and biologists. Through problem-oriented research, risk assessments, policy development, field investigations, and education, the CCH has worked on issues ranging from the environmental effects of aquaculture to the use of animals as sentinels for environmental health risks. Other developments that indicate the growing interest in and relevance of the Centre's approach include the appointment of Dr. Craig Stephen (CCH Director) as a Canada Research Chair in Integrating Human and Animal Health. For more information about the Centre for Coastal Health, see <http://web.mala.bc.ca/cch/> or contact Dr. Craig Stephen at cch@mala.bc.ca

"GLOBALIZATION, SUSTAINABILITY AND HEALTH" TO FEATURE IN HUMAN DIMENSIONS OF GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE PROGRAM OPEN MEETING

The upcoming meeting "Global Environmental Change, Globalization and International Security: New Challenges for the 21st Century" to be held in Bonn, Germany, October 9–13, will feature a special session: "Globalization, Sustainability and Health." The event is the sixth open meeting of the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change Program and Research Community. The "Globalization, Sustainability and Health" session is organized by Maud Huynen (International Centre for Integrative Studies, Maastricht University) and Greg Martin (London School of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene).

The session is designed to respond to the progressively interconnected and complex context of human health in our globalized world, with a particular focus on the intergenerational equity implied by sustainable development which is forcing attention to the rights of future generations to a healthy life. Contributors will profile research approaches that reflects health as the integrated outcome of its ecological, sociocultural, economic, and institutional determinants. Furthermore, they will address the multiple and complex pathways from globalization to human health. As such, the session will consider both the threats and

opportunities afforded by globalization. The session will examine global interconnectedness and its role in increasing capacity to act, to mobilize resources, to build scenarios, and to intervene in a timely manner. In this way, globalization will be addressed as a process that should not be described from the sidelines, but rather one with which we engage and interact and, if possible, one we exploit to the benefit of mankind.

This session will contribute to the ongoing discussions on the positive and negative health effects of globalization and will stimulate an integrated approach toward global health governance. For more information, see <http://openmeeting.homelinux.org> or contact m.huynen@icis.unimaas.nl

PROJECT ON THE APPLICATION OF SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS AND ECOSYSTEM HEALTH APPROACHES AT THE POLICY LEVEL

In both the developed and developing world, policymakers have not always demonstrated an appreciation for the complexity of the environment in which rural development occurs. The University of Guelph, with support from the Canadian International Development Agency, is undertaking a project that attempts to address this shortcoming. The project is entitled "Building Institutional Capacity for Sustainable Rural Development: Tools from Best Practice and Analytical Thinking."

The project extends on insights gained from more than a decade of applying approaches such as sustainable livelihoods and ecosystem health which have been used to help rural development practitioners to expand their thinking beyond particular sectors and disciplines. Although these approaches can be applied at any scale, from community development to international policymaking, in practice, it is primarily at smaller scales of intervention that these approaches have been put to use.

The project, which involves a series of workshops and policy discussions, is examining ways in which these approaches can be put to work at the policy level. How can sustainable livelihoods and ecosystem health approaches inform policy? How can they be made easily accessible and useful to those, such as Canadian International Development Agency personnel, who work at the macro scale and who are many steps removed from community-level interventions? How can sustainable livelihoods and ecosystem health help us to make the micro-macro link?

The project will be sponsoring a rural development conference in the spring of 2006. For further information, watch these pages in future issues of the journal. For further information, please refer to the project website: www.uoguelph.ca/~sl-esh/ or send an e-mail to sl-esh@uoguelph.ca

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