

TRAINING CURRENT ONE HEALTH WORKFORCE TO RECOGNIZE AND RESPOND TO EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN SUSPECTED/INFECTED COMPANION AND EXOTIC ANIMALS

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Most emerging infectious diseases (EIDs) are zoonotic and a vast number of microbial pathogens exist in various species of wild and domestic animals. While domestic companion animals, such as pets and exotic animals, may serve as intermediate hosts to expand the extent of human contact, which constitutes an existential threat of new emerging pathogens from these animals. MERs-CoV from camels in Middle-Eastern countries and Ebola virus from bats, suspected/infected pets in Spain and USA and wild animals in Africa are just a few examples. Thus, guidelines, well-trained workers, response teams and a new generation of workforce need to be trained and prepared of the risks involved to ensure that workers can effectively and safely carry out their respective duties.

In order to respond rapidly and effectively to new outbreaks of zoonotic infectious diseases, workers in the field dealing with human, animal and environmental health issues must have adequate training in skills required to handle suspected/infected companion and exotic animals (both legal and confiscated) and to collaborate across other disciplines in charge of responding to EID outbreaks in humans. The outcomes of this training will provide stronger collaboration and communication tools among workers in these fields, especially university personnel and government workers who are experts in human, animal and environmental health problems, and acquaint participants to the activities of One Health workforce services in preventing and controlling the spread of EIDs from infected animals to the community. Moreover, the activities relating to active surveillance of EIDs in exotic animals provide an excellent opportunity for strong collaboration with PREDICT 2 project. This training course aims to support networks to assist government ministries to train their respective current One Health Workforce. This activity was divided into three modules, held during 25-27 May 2016, 7-8 July 2016 and

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Objective 3: Education and In-Service Training of Health Officers, Practitioners and Professionals (Current Workforce)

26-29 July 2016, respectively at the Faculty of Veterinary Science, Mahidol University.

The guidelines in recognizing and responding to suspected/infected EID in companion and exotic animals were developed based on procedures of Thailand Animal and Human Diseases Control and also adopted from “Interim Guidance for Dog or Cat Quarantine after Exposure to a Human with Confirmed Ebola Virus Disease”. The guideline procedures were then tested in three scenario-based simulations: (i) response to EID in companion and exotic pets exposed to similarly infected owners, (ii) response to EID in companion and exotic pets from unknown source, and (iii) response to EID in imported companion and exotic pets. In the last module, participants had the opportunity to apply their knowledge in the actual handling of animals suspected/infected with EID (Fig). Survey data from the participants indicated satisfaction of the workshop.



Fig – Participants applying good practice procedures in handling companion and exotic pets suspected/infected with emerging infectious disease.

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