

REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

January 19 - 25, 2023

WEEKLY EVENTS

- The Ministry of Public Health opened COVID-19 vaccination services for foreign tourists in Chiang Mai, Chonburi, Phuket, Songkhla, and Bangkok. The vaccination fee is set at a specified rate. A list of service units is being compiled and will include private clinics. Free vaccination services for Thai nationals will continue.
- On January 25, 2023, Mae Nam Khong School (Chiang Khong District, Chiang Rai Province), the representative of the People's Network to Protect the Mekong River in northeastern Thailand, traveled to learn about the impact of the Mekong River dam construction. Also present were representatives from the Water Keepers organization, Indonesia, Cambodia, Bangladesh and Nepal. They outlined an urgent proposal to halt and review the construction of dams in the Mekong Basin to address existing dam problems and solve water management problems. There must be a holistic study of the Mekong Basin through cooperation from all sectors and a rejection of the "Mekong River Diversion Project, Loei Chi Mun."
- On January 18, 2023, livestock officers from Wiang Kaen District, Chiang Rai Province went to collect mucosal poultry neck samples, an activity to monitor avian influenza among poultry flocks along border trade routes, particularly the Ban Jam Pong Market at the relief point of Lai Ngao Subdistrict. The authorities are providing advice to safely sell poultry and they are checking documents of traders who want to move poultry across the area.

THE DANGERS OF METHANOL

According to the Department of Disease Control's disease surveillance report from January 16-22, 2023, there were 18 cases of alcohol poisoning in Krabi province among men who consumed mixed drinks. All patients were hospitalized. The cases are under investigation for two possible types of alcohol: ethyl alcohol (ethanol) and methanol (methanol). They cannot be distinguished by the naked eye so the similarities may result in error in use and consumption.

The Ministry of Public Health's list of prohibited substances in food (No. 151; 1993) includes methanol because of its role in the production of plastics, plywood, paint, explosives, etc. If it touches the skin, it can cause irritation. If inhaled, it can affect the nervous system and the respiratory system. If ingested, it can cause blindness or even death. Patients will start to experience symptoms from 1 hour to 3 days after consumption, such as nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. The symptoms are quite specific, and can include ocular toxicity, headache, dizziness, fatigue, confusion and acidosis. In some cases, there may be seizures and loss of consciousness if not treated promptly.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Public health officers should work with related agencies to engage the local community. They should provide education on the differences between ethanol and methanol, highlight the dangers of methanol consumption, and point out the initial symptoms of consuming methanol. If purchasing alcohol, it is important to buy it from a trusted store and to always read the label on the bottle. Most cases of methanol-contaminated liquor are from counterfeit liquor products or homemade bootleg liquor. Consumers must have the correct knowledge, be observant, and always read the label to ensure their best protection.

INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY



Multisectoral Capacity Development Program for Public Health Emergency Detection and Response in Border Areas

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