

# REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

October 19 - 25, 2023

## WEEKLY EVENTS

- On October 25, 2023, the South Korean Yonhap News Agency reported that there were 29 confirmed lumpy skin disease cases in cows, with seven more under further investigation. The symptoms included loss of appetite, the appearance of large bumps on their skin, reduced milk production, and eventual death. This disease does not transmit to humans but can affect animals such as cows and cattle when they are bitten by disease-carrying insects. Currently, the government has expedited a nationwide vaccination campaign for cattle. It is expected to take about three weeks to complete.
- On October 19, 2023, the Regional Office of Disease Prevention and Control in Chonburi reported one case of rabies. The patient was a 44-year-old Thai male residing in Bang Lamung District, Chonburi. Subsequently, the patient passed away. Laboratory test results confirmed that the cause of death was rabies. The patient had previously been bitten by a 3-month-old puppy near his right knee approximately two months ago. Unfortunately, the wound was not cleaned, and the patient did not receive rabies post-exposure prophylaxis. Currently, the authorities have conducted a disease investigation and are searching for individuals who had contact with the patient. They are also providing rabies vaccinations to individuals with a contact history. Additionally, they are administering rabies vaccines to dogs within a 5-kilometer radius of the incident location.

## BE CAREFUL OF MELIOIDOSIS DURING THE RAINY SEASON

Information from the Week 42 disease surveillance report (October 16 - 22, 2023) of the Department of Disease Control showed that cases of melioidosis have been reported in various provinces, with one case each in Buriram, Phichit, Chumphon, and Nakhon Ratchasima. Most of the fatal cases were elderly individuals who engaged in agricultural occupations. They had histories of prolonged exposure to muddy water without wearing protective gear. Furthermore, all the deceased individuals had pre-existing health conditions, primarily diabetes.

From January 1 to October 13, 2023, there have been 3,228 reported melioidosis cases with 66 fatalities (2% of cases). The age group with the highest number of cases has been people over 65 years old (28% of cases), followed by people aged 55-64 years old (26%) and 45-54 (20%). Agricultural workers have been the most affected group based on occupation, accounting for 48% of cases.

Melioidosis is caused by the bacterium *Burkholderia*. It can enter the body through the skin when people are exposed to contaminated soil or water for an extended period. Other modes of transmission include ingestion and inhalation. The incubation period is approximately 1 to 21 days, but in some cases, it can last up to a year. Common symptoms include fever and the development of pustules on the skin or in the lymph nodes of the neck. In some cases, the infection can spread to other organs such as the lungs, liver, spleen, kidneys, and even the bloodstream, causing severe and rapid illness, often leading to death.

Individuals with pre-existing conditions such as diabetes, chronic kidney disease, and thalassemia are at a higher risk of complications and mortality from melioidosis. This disease typically begins with a fever, making it challenging to diagnose. Confirmation usually requires laboratory testing. Therefore, if you experience the above-mentioned symptoms and engage in high-risk behavior, and have underlying medical conditions, it is advisable to seek immediate medical attention. If you suspect you have symptoms of this disease, it is essential to consult a healthcare professional.



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Livestock and public health officials should coordinate with local agencies to jointly inform the public about melioidosis. This includes providing information on the causes, transmission methods, risk factors, early symptoms, and self-protection measures. It is essential to avoid wading in muddy water or having direct contact with potentially contaminated soil and water. If necessary, wear boots, rubber gloves, long pants, or water-resistant clothing. After prolonged contact with soil and water, people should clean themselves immediately with soap and clean water. Consume well-cooked food and drink clean or boiled water every time. If you experience a high fever and have a history of soil and water contact, seek medical attention promptly, especially for farmers and individuals with underlying medical conditions, to reduce the risk of fatalities from this disease.

## INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY

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