

## MESSAGE FOR WORLD VETERINARY DAY 2015 FROM THE CHIEF VETERINARY OFFICER



### **Theme: Vector-Borne Diseases with Zoonotic Potential**

Greetings from the Veterinary Services Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries! World Veterinary Day 2015 explores yet another tremendously important area for both veterinary and human medicine. Vector-borne diseases have had a major impact on health throughout the millennia and the majority had their origin in various animal species.

Vectors such as the mosquito, the tick, the flea, biting flies are the lynchpin in the spread and transmission of these diseases. Historically we think of the Black Death – otherwise called the Plague which decimated populations in 12<sup>th</sup> Century Europe, causing up to 200 million deaths. It was thought to have been caused by “miasmas” floating in the air – but in reality it was a bacterial infection carried by rodents and spread by fleas.

The Chikungunya virus that ran roughshod over our human population late last year made the jump from chimpanzees to humans in the 1950's and its mosquito vector has allowed it to spread with devastating effect.

We are fortunate in Jamaica to be free of the vast majority of serious zoonotic vector-borne diseases which are prevalent on the world stage. Nevertheless, we must keep up our guard to prevent their introduction or to eliminate them in short order should they be introduced.



The Veterinary Services Division is unwavering in its commitment to preserve and protect the health of Jamaica's animal population and by extension that of our people. We are committed to working with our veterinary community and the human medical community in the spirit of One Health in order to achieve this.

On behalf of the entire staff of the VSD, I wish all a very happy World Veterinary Day and trust that the information provided in this newspaper supplement will be useful to all readers!

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