

Message from the Minister of Health

Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton

Jamaica Veterinary Medical Association

One Health Symposium

Faculty of Law, Lecture Theatre 2, U.W.I. Mona

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Diseases that can be transmitted between animals and humans, such as bird flu and tuberculosis, can be devastating on the health of both organisms. Researchers have found approximately thirteen diseases (zoonoses) that affect both humans and animals that are responsible for 2.2 million human deaths every year. Approximately sixty (60) percent of all human diseases and 75 percent of all emerging infectious diseases can affect both humans and animals.

These figures show a link between human and animal health which will require strategic management. The 'One Health' movement seeks to foster collaboration to prevent and control epidemic and epizootic diseases within the animal-human-ecosystem. One Health is an internationally accepted approach for attaining better health for humans and animals and for improving the environment.

As the world celebrates Veterinary Day, we acknowledge that there is much more that can be done to strengthen the Human Health and Animal Health interface. This is needed to address not only infectious diseases but other emerging health challenges such as antimicrobial resistance, veterinary drugs residue and contaminants in foods of animal origin. With the rapid emergence of infectious diseases that continue to impact human and animal health, we must embrace a more holistic approach by applying 'One Health'.

The Ministry of Health congratulates the Jamaica Veterinary Medical Association, which celebrates its 70th anniversary, on its first symposium which will be open to all professionals from the veterinary, human health and environment sectors in an effort to introduce, promote and build the practice of 'One Health' in Jamaica.