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# NEWSLETTER

*International Federation of Environmental Health*

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October 2009 Edition

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## Welcome to the October Newsletter

The H1N1 Pandemic is still very much with us, although perhaps not occupying as much news space as earlier in the year, as the media move on to other stories. In July this year the UK Health Departments decided to move from containment to the treatment phase. This new phase relies on symptoms rather than swabbing to diagnose H1N1 virus, stop tracing close contacts of those diagnosed with H1N1 and to only offer antivirals to those who have been diagnosed with the virus. Some countries have introduced medical screening for influenza A (H1N1) for passengers arriving on international flights, with travellers showing flu like symptoms being required to undergo further tests.

The monitoring of outbreaks in different parts of the world is providing good information about how the influenza pandemic might evolve over the next few months. At the end of August the WHO advised countries in the northern hemisphere to prepare for a second wave of the pandemic spread, while countries in the southern hemisphere were advised to remain vigilant. For countries with tropical climates, where the pandemic virus arrived later, there is also the advice to prepare for the inevitable increase in the number of cases. Monitoring of outbreaks worldwide demonstrates that the H1N1 pandemic virus has rapidly established itself and is now the dominant strain of influenza found in most parts of the world. The WHO indicate that the pandemic will persist for the next few months as it continues to move through susceptible populations. Thankfully the majority of patients continue to experience a mild illness.

Over the last 12 months the world has been hit by a recession, the likes of which has not been seen for many years, and more recently the Influenza A pandemic. The effect of the recession may see some of the major successes in improving public health, particularly in third world countries, being put on hold and, at the same time, the Influenza A pandemic will put a further strain on hard pressed health authorities worldwide. The events of the last year prove, yet again, the importance of good emergency planning and the benefit of inter agency working.

## Council meeting and AGM

The IFEH Council meeting and AGM took place in the Holiday Inn Atrium, Singapore on Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 July 2009. The AGM approved changes to the membership categories of the Federation to allow for Individual Membership, to replace the current Associate Member (individuals) category, and for the first time private companies with an interest in Environmental and Health will be able to become members under the new Affiliated Organisation category. Applications for these new categories, to take effect from the 1 January 2010, will be advertised in the coming months.

A committee has been set up to develop a proposal to establish a 'World Environmental Health Day'. There is already a World Health Day, a World Aids Day and a World Rabies Day so the 'health day' calendar is already well established and filled. However, the Council feel there is merit in establishing a 'health day' to mark a particular event or subject important to the environmental health community and the committee will hopefully develop this idea over the next few months. The intention is to declare the 29 September each year, which is the anniversary of the day that the Federation was inaugurated, for this purpose and the first day is scheduled for the 29 September 2010. The committee are Adam Grant, John Gerzim, Peter Davey, Jerry Chaka, Tanya Haman, and Chairman Les Milne. There was also agreement to look at the possibility of setting up 'Special Interest Groups' and Steve Cooper and Bernard Forteath volunteered to try to establish a Port Health group. Anyone interested please contact Steve or Bernard.

A paper from the International Faculty Forum, 'Developing an International Competence-Based Curriculum for Environmental Health', was discussed and we were fortunate to have one of the authors present to answer questions and points of clarification. It was agreed that further discussion should take place when all Member Organisations have had the opportunity to comment.



The Council meetings were well attended with representation from Europe, North America, Africa and the Asia Pacific region. The unanimous view of the delegates was that the meetings had been successful due in no small way to the arrangements made on our behalf by Dr Pranav Joshi, President, and Mr John Gerizim, Secretary, of the Society of Environmental Health, Singapore. Singapore is a beautiful place to visit with nice friendly people, a clean and healthy environment; in fact it is an Environmental Health Officer's dream. For anyone who wants to know more about what can be achieved with strong political will, sustained effort and a committed general public then a visit to the 'Lion City' is a must.

## **2nd All Africa Environmental Health Congress, Malawi**

The 2nd All Africa Environmental Health Congress will be held in the Crossroads Hotel, Lilongwe, from 24th – 27th May 2010. Those who wish to present a paper at this Congress should have submitted abstracts by 30 September 2009. Anyone who wishes to do so, and who has not yet submitted an abstract, is asked to contact the secretariat by Email at [washted@poly.ac.mw](mailto:washted@poly.ac.mw) immediately. Full papers must be submitted by 30th December 2009. The Congress theme is 'Environmental Health – key to a better life for all' – now who could argue with that? Therefore the Federation Council would wish to encourage as many environmental health professionals as possible to attend this Congress and by doing so support our colleagues in the Africa Group and the Malawi Environmental Health Association. For further information concerning this congress please contact [tracythomson@africa-online.net](mailto:tracythomson@africa-online.net) or [www.poly.ac.mw/2aaencongress](http://www.poly.ac.mw/2aaencongress)

## **Kenya**

Some good news just in from our colleagues in the Association of Public Health Officers Kenya (APHOK) that after almost 10 years graduate EHOs with a BSc in Environmental Health are now being given the opportunity to apply for vacancies by the Public Service Commission. An advertisement was placed recently for 170 graduate EHOs. This is a major step forward for the profession in Kenya which hopefully will also lead to graduates being paid during their one year internship.

## **3rd OECD World Forum – 'Statistics, Knowledge and Policy'**

Henning Hansen, our Webmaster, has been invited to speak at the 3rd OECD World Forum on 'Statistics, Knowledge and Policy' Charting Progress, Building Visions, Improving Life. The World Forum will take place on 27-30 October 2009 in Busan, South Korea. Henning's paper prepared in consultation with Lazlo Pinter, Program Director, International Institute for Sustainable Development will cover the 'Compendium of Sustainable Development Indicator Initiatives' and in particular how to define, find, share, develop and follow best practice on the use of systematic indicator initiatives. The conference is expected to be attended by about 1500 delegates from around the world and this is an ideal opportunity for the OECD to hear what the IFEH is currently doing in the area of sustainability.

## **Launch of the Crofton Award**

On Tuesday 1 September the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS), in partnership with ASH Scotland, launched the Crofton Award, which will recognise the contribution that young people in Scotland make towards reducing the harm caused by tobacco. Groups across Scotland who have been engaging young people on the issues surrounding smoking and tobacco are being encouraged to apply for the award. A REHIS funded prize of £1,000 will go towards the further development of tobacco control work for the winning group of young people. Applications for the award are welcome – the closing date is 21 October. The award will be presented at the REHIS Annual Awards Ceremony in Edinburgh's Apex International Hotel on the evening of 18 November. The Crofton Award is named in honour of Sir John Crofton, and Lady Eileen Crofton. Sir John Crofton, born in 1912, was a pioneer in the treatment of tuberculosis (TB). As Professor of Respiratory Diseases and Tuberculosis at the University of Edinburgh from 1952-1977, Crofton is famous for developing a highly effective treatment for TB and insisting that a 100% cure for pulmonary TB is both a reasonable and achievable target. He was knighted in 1977. Dr Eileen Crofton was the first Director of what is now ASH Scotland, founded in 1973. She has also published on the story of women medics during the First World War. Sir John and Lady Eileen live in Edinburgh and continue to campaign on tobacco control and other health issues.



## Progress made on emissions

Greenhouse gas emissions in Scotland, including international aviation and shipping, have fallen by more than 18 per cent since 1990, according to latest official statistics published recently. Published figures for greenhouse gas emissions in Scotland indicate that total emissions, which include international aviation and shipping, were 56.9 million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e), compared with 61.0 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2006 - a 6.8 per cent reduction on 2006 figures. This means that compared to the 1990 baseline of 70.0 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e, greenhouse gas emissions in Scotland have fallen by 18.7 per cent. Further advice and guidance is available from the Scottish Government website [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)

## TB-free status

Earlier this month all European Member States voted in favour of Scotland becoming officially tuberculosis free. This followed a presentation by Scotland's Chief Veterinary Officer, Simon Hall, who outlined the low incidence of tuberculosis (TB) in Scottish herds and the high standards of animal welfare. The unanimous vote was carried at a recent meeting of the Standing Committee on Food Chain and Animal Health in Brussels. Scotland has been successful so far in controlling bovine tuberculosis through rigorous pre and post movement testing of cattle coming to Scotland from areas with high incidence of bovine TB. The situation in other parts of the UK is worsening and this exposes Scotland to an increasing risk of disease unless it takes steps to prevent it. The final disease controls that will be required to maintain this status are still to be decided. The Scottish Government will continue to work with livestock industry representatives to ensure that the new controls have minimal impacts on trade. Further advice and guidance is available from the Scottish Government website [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)

**Finally** the next edition of the Newsletter will be published in January 2010. If you have any news for the Newsletter from your organisation please send this to me by the first week in December. My thanks go to Tom Bell, Andrew Forteath and Henning Hansen who have assisted in the production of this issue.

**If you wish to feature any news from your organisation in the next IFEH Newsletter, please contact: Bernard Forteath, President, Email: [president@ifeh.org](mailto:president@ifeh.org)**

