NEWS UPDATE – 1-5 December 2012

**CDC says flu season early and severe, urges people to get flu shot**

*Wed, 05 Dec 2012 00:00:00 GMT*

The cases of influenza-like illnesses reported from some areas this year have been higher than the cases reported in the past season. "It looks like it's shaping up to be a bad flu season, but only time will tell," said Dr. Thomas Frieden, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Associated Press reported.

**DARPA works on vaccines for troops**

*Wed, 05 Dec 2012 00:00:00 GMT*

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, which is dedicated to maintaining the U.S. military's technology edge, wants to develop a commercially viable medicine that delivers quick, temporary protection for soldiers from a variety of diseases such as the flu, diarrhea and malaria.

**Moving Towards a Universal Influenza Vaccine**

*Wed, 05 Dec 2012 06:38:53 GMT [ThePoultrySite.com]*

Researchers at The Pirbright Institute, which receives strategic funding from BBSRC, in collaboration with colleagues at the University of Oxford working together as the Jenner Institute, have taken an important step towards a universal vaccine against avian influenza.

**College Students Report Low Flu Vaccination Rate**

*Tue, 04 Dec 2012 21:57:40 GMT [Infection Control Today]*

According to a new study by researchers at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center, colleges and universities should implement new or improved influenza vaccine strategies, such as giving flu shots at sporting events or during campus-wide, day-long campaigns, to increase the number of their students who get the annual flu vaccine.

**PLOS ONE: The Impact of Influenza Vaccinations on the Adverse Effects and Hospitalization Rate in the Elderly: A National Based Study in an Asian Country**

*Sun, 02 Dec 2012 06:27:48 GMT*

Based on data from the one-year follow-ups among 93,049 elderly persons in Taiwan, reassuring results for selected neurological and autoimmune diseases were found among the vaccinated individuals after adjusting other factors. Influenza vaccination decreased the risk for hospitalization. Public health strategies must continue to improve the influenza vaccination rate among the elderly with information based upon tangible evidence.

**What would wipe out the flu?**

*Sat, 01 Dec 2012 15:07:27 GMT [MarketWatch]*

Doctors and scientists say an 80% vaccination rate is the magic number for flu immunizations, that if reached could significantly reduce outbreaks – or even wipe out the virus entirely. Studies have shown that when the flu vaccination rate in a community hits or surpasses that threshold, flu cases have dropped off sharply or disappeared altogether.