

Terms of Reference

Food and Environmental Parasitology Network (FEPN)

1. Purpose and Scope

- To facilitate information exchange on issues related to foodborne parasites and environmental parasitology
- To facilitate collaborative research and grant applications amongst members
- To develop and validate standardized methods for the isolation, detection, identification, typing and control of foodborne and environmental parasites
- To develop and validate methods for the surveillance and investigation of parasitic infection in humans
- To conduct knowledge translation for risk assessment / policy / guideline development
- To provide expert advice and testing in support of outbreak investigations and management
- To maintain an annotated directory of researchers, public health officials, and regulators actively involved in the areas of foodborne parasites and environmental parasitology in Canada

The scope of the Network includes foodborne and environmental protozoan and helminth parasites, as well as ectoparasites. Major issues to be considered are contaminated foods and infected food animals (e.g., imported and domestic produce, raw meats, fish and shellfish, country foods), potable and non-potable water, Northern / Aboriginal issues, epidemiology, and zoonotic transmission (e.g., livestock, wildlife, fisheries and aquaculture, companion animals).

Future goals of the Network include the establishment of a centralized culture collection, and a database for laboratory testing results and molecular data. Links to similar or complementary national and international networks and databases will also be established.

2. Objectives

- To identify key research needs and to initiate collaborative research projects amongst members
- To identify and address needs for standard methods for parasite detection and characterization
- To better understand parasite transmission, survival, and control from the farm or fisheries level (including aquaculture) to the consumer level
- To develop strategies in data gathering and knowledge translation for the purpose of risk assessment / policy / guideline development
- To facilitate access to scientific experts during outbreaks or in other emergencies

January 11, 2011

3. Membership

Membership in the Network is open to all individuals (Government, Non-governmental Organizations, Academia, and Industry) with a research, public health, or regulatory involvement in the fields of foodborne parasites or environmental parasitology in Canada.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Chairperson:

- Represents the views of the Network
- Serves as liaison for the Network
- Delegates tasks to Network members as required
- Prepares meeting agendas
- Chairs meetings

Co-Chair (2 year term):

- Assists in the development and maintenance of the Network
- Assists the chairperson in administrative issues
- Mediates any contentious issues

Secretary:

- Assists in the organization of meetings and distribution of agendas, minutes and other relevant documents
- Attends meetings and assists in the preparation of minutes
- Assists in the development and maintenance of a website
- Assists in the maintenance of an annotated directory of members

Member:

- Participates in developing and achieving Network objectives
- Attends and participates in meetings / teleconferences
- Contributes to discussions and completes specific tasks as required
- Identifies issues for future discussion
- Serves as liaison between their organization and the Network
- Identifies potential new members
- Participates with a spirit of cooperation

5. Administrative Arrangements

- Meetings to be held at least two times per year by teleconference
- Ad hoc meetings to be held in conjunction with scientific conferences whenever possible
- Members may be responsible for their own travel costs and arrangements

Note: Amendments to the Terms of Reference are subject to ratification by members of the Food and Environmental Parasitology Network.