

EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01 WEDNESDAY 6 JULY

Viral word game ZOODLE launched for World Zoonoses Day

Try the new daily ‘ZOODLE’ challenge to ‘diagnose’ a zoonoses-themed mystery word in six or fewer tries today <Wednesday 6 July>, World Zoonoses Day.

Launched by the GCRF One Health Poultry Hub, ZOODLE has been inspired by the popular New York Times word game Wordle played by millions every day. It will be free to play online until Thursday 3 November – One Health Day – in a campaign to highlight the link between zoonoses and a One Health approach.

Wordle was created by software engineer Jeff Wardle in October 2021. The average number of players went from below 100 on 1 November 2021 to around 300,000 by 2 January 2022 and to more than 2 million just a week after that.

Zoonoses are diseases transmitted to people from animals and include high-profile diseases such as COVID-19, Ebola, avian influenza and monkeypox – as well as many which rarely make the headlines such as foodborne illnesses. One Health is an approach that recognises the interconnections between human, animal and ecosystem health, and thus the need for many disciplines and sectors to work together to research, detect and manage complex issues, including zoonoses.

GCRF One Health Poultry Hub Director Professor Fiona Tomley, of the Royal Veterinary College, London, said:

“Wordle has proved an infectious bit of fun. We hope ZOODLE will also be great fun and perhaps a diverting start to people’s days. But behind it lies more serious concern for public health, food security, the environment and animal welfare. We aim to increase public awareness and understanding of the changing landscape of infectious diseases, the threats they present and, importantly, the way forward to minimise those threats.”

The GCRF One Health Poultry Hub is undertaking interdisciplinary research into zoonoses, including those connected with food safety and antimicrobial resistance (AMR), and the potentially pandemic avian influenza (‘bird flu’). The Hub is employing a One Health approach to identify factors influencing health risks associated with intensification of poultry production. Findings will inform the development of sustainable interventions for improved health for people, animals and societies.

Unlike Wordle words which are all five letters long, ZOODLE words might be five letters long – or they may be a little longer or shorter! Players can pit their wits against the game on each of the 87 weekdays between the two awareness days.



ZOODLE will also take regular deeper dives into ZOODLE solution words, offering information or reflections on how the word relates to zoonoses, One Health or the work of the One Health Poultry Hub. ZOODLE focus word articles will feature on the Hub's 'Chicken Nuggets' blog site.

To play Zoodle go to: bit.ly/PlayZoodle

For further information: n.marks@ids.ac.uk; +44 (0)7881 456498

Twitter – [@PoultryHub](https://twitter.com/PoultryHub)

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Notes to editors

1. Some 60% of human infections originate from animals; more than 70% of all new and emerging human infectious diseases are zoonotic. The rapid intensification of livestock production, including in poultry production, presents one increasing risk area for zoonotic disease emergence.
2. The UKRI GCRF One Health Poultry Hub is an interdisciplinary research project addressing the need to meet rising demand for poultry meat and eggs in developing countries, while minimising risk to public health. The Hub brings teams of laboratory, clinical, veterinary and social scientists together to take a One Health approach to the challenge of providing safe, secure food. Find out more at www.onehealthpoultry.org
3. The GCRF One Health Poultry Hub is funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) through the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF). This supports cutting-edge research to address challenges faced by developing countries. It is part of the UK's official development assistance (ODA) and is managed by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Find out more at <https://www.ukri.org/what-we-offer/international-funding/global-challenges-research-fund/>