

Answer Sheet: Enough Is Enough— Major Diseases Linked to Eating Animals

COVID-19: The pandemic brought about by this illness is thought to have originated in a “wet market” in the Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019. It was caused by a coronavirus, which began in other animals before being transmitted to humans. The latest research links it to bats and pangolins, and both species were sold for their flesh at the Wuhan market.

SWINE FLU: The virus that causes swine flu, known as H1N1, triggered a pandemic when it was transmitted from pigs to humans, killing up to 575,400 people worldwide.

MAD COW DISEASE: This rare condition causes brain damage in humans and is contracted by eating the flesh of cows who have bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). Cows, who are herbivores, developed BSE after being fed brain tissue from other cows. Globally, 226 people have died of this disease.

BIRD FLU: This flu originated in farmed geese before infecting chickens raised for meat and eggs. Some strains can be transmitted from birds to humans, and the most deadly of these are H5N1 and H7N9, which have killed hundreds of people in China and around the globe. The virus can be passed on to humans who come into contact with the feathers, flesh, or feces of infected birds.

SARS: Severe acute respiratory syndrome is caused by a coronavirus that originated in wild animals—bats and civet cats—and was transmitted to humans. It’s thought to have begun its spread in a wet market. The SARS pandemic started in China and resulted in the deaths of 774 people from pneumonia.

EBOLA: This deadly disease causes extensive bleeding and leads to organ failure. It is caused by a virus transmitted to humans from wild animals such as bats, porcupines, and primates. Between 2014 and 2016, over 11,000 people in West Africa died of this illness.