

Thousands of illnesses linked annually to organic foods

The World Health Organization used its annual World Health Day to focus on issues of food-borne illnesses and safety risks in global supply chains that ship meat and livestock, fruits and vegetables and bulk commodities around the world.

The UN agency released findings from an upcoming study that found 582 million cases food-borne illnesses in 2010, which resulted in 351,000 deaths. Salmonella, E. coli and norovirus were the most common of the 22 food-borne illnesses reported.

“Thousands of cases a year of food illness are triggered from organic products,” said Stuart Smyth, a professor at the University of Saskatchewan’s bioresource policy, business and economics department. “It’s largely due to the process of them using manure slurry as fertilizer and coming down to improper household food preparations in terms of making sure that they’re properly washing organic food.”

The WHO study found illnesses were most common in Africa and Southeast Asia. The organization is calling for strengthened food safety regulations and improved communication during emergencies.

“A local food safety problem can rapidly become an international emergency,” WHO director general Margaret Chan said in a news release.

Read full, original article: [Canada has world-class food safety system](#)