

Managing the source of parasitic tapeworm infection

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Tapeworm. Credit: Murdoch University

A team of researchers at Murdoch University are helping prevent parasitic tapeworms from entering the food chain in Southeast Asian farming communities.

Zoonotic parasites are infectious diseases found in animals that can be naturally transmitted to humans.

Researchers at Murdoch University took part in an Australian government aid project aimed at helping small-holder pig farming communities in Laos.

The project was designed to assist those affected by *Taenia solium*, a tapeworm which is transmitted to humans who eat pork.

A hyper endemic focus of the zoonotic and pathogenic parasite was identified in northern Laos.

Murdoch researchers helped develop and implement control measures to treat affected animals and also reduce the risk of infected meat being consumed by the human population.

Dr Amanda Ash, from the Parasitology Group at Murdoch University's School of Veterinary and Life Sciences, led the project.

She said: "The project provided evidence that control of *Taenia solium* can be obtained through a one-health initiative involving both the veterinary and medical professions.

"The Laos government now has a method of controlling infection within at-risk communities, whilst also controlling the high level of soil transmitted parasitic worms present there.

"Broader benefits are available for the wider research community involved in controlling the parasites, as this project provided the first empirical evidence for current World Health Organisation recommendations in controlling this neglected tropical disease."

Professor David Morrison, Deputy Vice Chancellor Research & Innovation at Murdoch, said: "Food security is a core pillar of the research carried out at Murdoch University.

"This [project](#) is a perfect example of the University's translational research.

"The research team has addressed an issue which affects many communities in the region and their work will have a significant impact in protecting the health and [food security](#) of the people who live there."

Provided by Murdoch University

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