

## Climate Change – Anthrax – By Bartosz Labuc

The constant threat of rising sea levels and heatwaves, while no laughing matter, are far from the only concerning effects of climate change.

*Bacillus Anthracis* also called “Anthrax” is a disease, the last recorded case of which in Ireland was over 100 years ago.

How is it relevant to the ongoing climate crisis? The answer is reindeer, one million of them, all infected with “Anthrax”, all preserved in frigid soil described as a “Giant Freezer” -Jean-Michel Claverie.

The increasing temperature worsened by the recent heatwaves are thawing the infected carcasses and exposing them to the wild animals and the elements.

Seeing as Siberia is so far from us you may be asking yourself if we should even be worried?

These days global trade happens so quickly and on such a tremendous scale that a contaminated piece of meat, fur, wood or even a single infected rat can make the journey to your doorstep in a matter of days, sometimes hours.

The sceptical readers may come to the conclusion that – since we’re still alive- clearly the pathogen is incapable of making the trip. Those sceptics would be mistaken.

“Anthrax” spores can become resistant to extreme heat and cold, dehydration, varying pH, and even radiation.

So, if it’s able to make the trip and nobody is dying of it, that must mean that it’s fairly harmless, right? No.

A cutaneous “Anthrax” infection, meaning an infection of the skin has a 20% mortality rate without treatment.

A gastrointestinal infection, meaning an infection in your digestive track, has a 50% mortality rate with treatment.

Inhaling “Anthrax” is almost almost fatal without treatment, with aggressive medical intervention your chances go up to 55%.

So, how are we still alive? In reality Siberia is colossal and mostly empty, on top of that not every “Anthrax” cell has survived the frigid cold.

While the risk of an outbreak is rising it can still be prevented and the odds are on our side for now.