



Thomas G. Gillespie, DVM, Diplomate, ABVP
Swine Health Management Specialty
Amy L. Woods, DVM

210 East Wood Road
Rensselaer, IN 47978
(219) 866-6465
Fax (219) 866-3431
www.rssvet.com

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Swine Influenza Update

There have been confirmed cases of Swine Influenza causing infections in people in Mexico, the USA and Canada. It has caused deaths in Mexico and mild disease in Canada and the USA.

More cases are expected to surface over time.

It is important for everyone involved in the swine industry to have an understanding of the relationship between this virus, pigs, and people:

- For decades now, Swine Influenza virus (SIV) has been commonly seen in the United States as causing disease in pigs.
- Only **VERY** rarely has it ever been shown to have caused disease in people. Human health officials have recognized for many years that these Influenza viruses seen in birds or pigs will very rarely be passed to humans from infected animals. **People** could **only** become infected from sick **animals**.
- What has changed with the new virus is that **people are now infecting other people**
- This new virus is different from any SIV viruses seen in pigs in the United States and is not present in pigs in the United States.
- Swine workers in the United States at this time are not at risk of becoming infected from pigs- the risk of infection will be from other people.
 - At this time, in fact, there is more concern that infected people may infect pigs
- Public Health officials are recommending caution and that people with symptoms of Influenza see their doctor.
- Swine barn workers who are sick should be encouraged not to go to work and to ensure they see their physician.

We will continue to update the situation as it evolves.

A/H1N1 influenza like human illness in Mexico and the USA: OIE statement

Paris, April 27 - 2009 - A virus circulating in Mexico and the USA and involving person to person transmission appears to cause in some cases severe disease in certain people infected by this virus. There is no evidence that this virus is transmitted by food.

It is not a classical human influenza virus called seasonal influenza, which causes every year millions of human cases of influenza worldwide but a virus which includes in its characteristics swine, avian and human virus components.

Any current information in influenza like animal disease in Mexico or the USA could support a link between human cases and possible animal cases including swine. The virus has not been isolated in animals to date. Therefore, it is not justified to name this disease swine influenza. In the past, many human influenza epidemics with animal origin have been named using their geographic name, eg Spanish influenza or Asiatic influenza, thus it would be logical to call this disease “North-American influenza”.

Urgent scientific research must be started in order to know the susceptibility of animals to this new virus, and if relevant to implement biosecurity measures including possible vaccination to protect susceptible animals. If this virus would be shown to cause disease in animals, virus circulation could worsen the regional and global situation for public health.

Currently, only findings related to the circulation of this virus in pigs in zones of countries having human cases would justify trade measures on the importation of pigs from these countries. The OIE will continue its alert function and will publish in relation with its Members, Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres all appropriate information in real time.

OIE and FAO underline the great value of the influenza veterinary laboratory network called OFFLU, in charge of the surveillance of the evolution of influenza viruses in animals. There is a strong need to reinforce this network whose members are urged to put immediately in the public domain any genetic sequence of influenza virus they obtain.

This influenza event underlines in all countries the crucial importance of maintaining worldwide veterinary services able to implement in animals early detection of relevant emerging pathogens with a potential public health impact. This capacity is fully linked with veterinary services good governance and their compliance with OIE international standards of quality.

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http://www.oie.int/eng/press/en_090427.htm

The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)

The need to fight animal diseases at global level led to the creation of the Office International des Epizooties through the international Agreement signed on January 25th 1924. In May 2003 the Office became the World Organisation for Animal Health but kept its historical acronym OIE.

The OIE is the intergovernmental organisation responsible for improving animal health worldwide.

It is recognised as a reference organisation by the World Trade Organization (WTO) and as of April 2009, had a total of 174 Member Countries and Territories. The OIE maintains permanent relations with 36 other international and regional organisations and has Regional and sub-regional Offices on every continent.

Suggested Talking Points

Human infections with Swine Influenza Virus in California and Texas

April 26, 2009

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified cases in the United States where people have been diagnosed with a form of influenza virus known as swine influenza virus subtype H1N1. That is the same virus causing human illness in Mexico.

Preliminary investigations indicate that in all cases there was no contact with swine.

The swine influenza subtype isolated from these cases is unique and not previously recognized in either pigs or people.

According to the CDC, "This virus is different, very different from that found in pigs." **At this time there is no evidence that this swine influenza subtype is present in pigs in the United States.** The CDC's investigation continues.

The National Pork Board is collaborating with the CDC and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide information on swine influenza. Information on influenza can be found in the fact sheet, "INFLUENZA: Pigs, People and Public Health" available at <http://www.pork.org/PorkScience/Documents/PUBLICHEALTH%20influenza.pdf>

Swine influenza virus in meat

The risk of illness from consuming pork is minimal. **The CDC said Thursday that humans cannot contract this strain of swine influenza from eating pork.**

- In pigs, swine influenza is a respiratory disease. Few reports exist supporting theories of influenza entering the bloodstream or causing systemic infection in pigs. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that swine influenza cannot be found in pork/pork products.
- If an animal with active swine influenza infection should arrive at a harvest facility, it would not pass the Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) ante-mortem inspection and would be condemned as an animal not fit for human consumption.
- FSIS has stated that even if surface contamination of a product should occur, common-sense food handling and preparation practices would minimize the risk of illness as normal cooking temperatures should inactivate the virus.

Background Information on Swine Influenza in Pigs

- The clinical signs/symptoms of influenza in pigs are fever, lethargy, lack of appetite and coughing.
- As external temperatures drop in the fall and winter, influenza persists better in the environment. Extreme temperature changes and other stressors can affect the susceptibility of pigs to the virus.
- Influenza season in pigs typically runs from November through April, although influenza viruses can be isolated from pigs year round.

About interspecies transmission

- It is possible for humans to transmit some influenza viruses to pigs. And it is possible, though not common, for pigs to transmit some influenza viruses to humans.
- Interspecies infections are most likely to occur when people are in extremely close proximity to pigs.
 - The cases have been investigated, and it appears that they did not have contact with swine.

Reducing interspecies transmission of influenza viruses

It is in the best interest of both human public health and animal health that interspecies transmission of influenza viruses from people to pigs and pigs to people be minimized.

Pork producers should work with their herd veterinarian to reduce transmission of influenza viruses:

- Influenza virus vaccination of pigs
- Influenza virus vaccination of swine farm workers
- Implement worker sick-leave policies that encourage employees to remain away from work when they are suffering from acute respiratory infections. *People typically shed influenza viruses for approximately 3-7 days, with the period of peak shedding correlated with the time of most severe clinical illness.*
- Maintain appropriate ventilation in the barns
- Enforce basic hygiene and biosecurity practices
- Prevent pig to bird contact. *Bird-proof buildings and treat water if it supplied from an open body of water where birds and migratory fowl may be found. Separate pig and bird production to prevent any potential cross-contamination of the animals with influenza virus. Protect feed from feces of birds and migratory fowl.*

Potential names this virus may be identified as:

Swine Influenza Virus

SIV

Swine Flu

Pig Flu (new term being used by media)