

Producer communication

Apr. 24, 2009. The National Pork Board is urging pork producers to enhance the biosecurity plans on their farms as the result of a new strain of the swine influenza virus type H1N1 being reported by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The virus is unique and has not been seen in the U.S. swine herd.

At this time, no pigs have been found to be infected or sick with the virus. It is unknown if this new strain causes any type of illness in swine. However, because it is novel, the National Pork Board is urging producers to take extra precaution to protect our industry's workers and our animals.

To prevent the introduction of the new strain of swine influenza virus type H1N1 into your operation, follow good biosecurity practices. Because people have been reported sick with this virus, make sure your biosecurity practices place special emphasis on protecting your animals and your operation's workers by monitoring all persons having access to your operation.

Consider the following practices:

1. Establish, implement and enforce strict sick leave policies for workers presenting influenza-like symptoms such as fever, cough, body aches, and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea.

- Prevent worker exhibiting these symptoms from entering swine facilities for at least seven days after presenting symptoms of respiratory illness, even mild ones.
- Recommend that workers with these symptoms be seen by a medical provider immediately and recommend that the person's contact with pigs is communicated to the care provider during the visit
- Encourage workers to report if members of their household present influenza-like symptoms. Encourage them to receive medical attention and to share that a member of the household has contact with pigs. Encourage workers to report if a member of the household is diagnosed with influenza. Consider restricting the contact that this worker has with the animals.

2. Implement biosecurity for workers reporting international travel.

- This recommendation is not limited to those people who had contact with animals in foreign countries.
- Consider preventing the entry of worker who have travelled internationally, and particularly to Mexico, into your operation.
- If entry is essential, consider requiring that these people use face masks, or preferably N95 respirators, and gloves, upon entering and during their permanence inside a swine housing facility.
- If workers reporting international travel present influenza-like symptoms, restrict their access to the farm. Recommend that they seek immediate medical attention and that they report their travel to the medical professional.

3. Limit visitors to swine facilities

- Limit the entry of people into your facility to workers and essential service personnel.
- Prevent international visitors from entering your facilities.
- Prevent the entry of people who report international travel (especially from Mexico) as recently as in the past two weeks.

4. Follow other generally accepted biosecurity practices, including:

- **Pay attention to ventilation** - Ventilation systems in production facilities should be designed to minimize re-circulation of air inside animal housing facilities. This is important to reduce the exposure of pigs to viruses from other pigs, to reduce their exposure to human influenza viruses.
- **Enforce basic hygiene practices** –
 - Workers should shower and change into farm-specific clothes and shoes before entering swine facilities. If this is not possible, enforce at least the use of farm shoes and hand and arm washing before contact with pigs.
 - Recommend frequent hand-washing of workers, in barns and in offices.
- **Implement and enforce the use of personal protective equipment**- Provide basic personal protective equipment (PPE) to the people working in barns. This should include face masks, or preferably respirators; eye protection and gloves.
- **Vaccinate pigs against the influenza virus**- Vaccination of pigs can reduce the levels of virus shed by infected animals
- **Recommend that all workers are vaccinated against the seasonal influenza virus** -The vaccine is produced on a yearly basis and contains only human, not swine, strains of influenza viruses. Nonetheless, these vaccines are likely to provide some level of protection against infection with swine viruses of the same type. Vaccination of farm workers will reduce the amounts of viruses they shed if infected during human influenza outbreaks, and limit the potential for human influenza virus infection of pigs.

If you observe, or employees report, respiratory illness in pigs, contact a swine veterinarian immediately, especially if the onset or presentation of this illness is unusual. If deemed necessary, your veterinarian may require samples be taken from animals to send to veterinary diagnostic laboratories. If animals present fever or go off feed, the veterinarian may take lung tissues samples and nasal swabs to send to a veterinary diagnostic laboratory.

If you have workers collect the samples, require that they use personal protective equipment including an N95 respirator, gloves and safety goggles.

Talk to your veterinarian if influenza-like symptoms have been reported or observed in any of the people that have or have had contact with your animals and report that upon submission of the samples to a diagnostic laboratory.