

BRIEFING

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT H1N1 INFLUENZA VIRUS FOR PRODUCERS

Q: *What is this flu that people are talking about in the news?*

A: It is a new strain of flu that consists of a mixture of genetic material from swine, avian (bird) and human influenza viruses. The new flu strain is called novel (new) H1N1 or 2009 H1N1.

Q: *Do any swine in the United States have the H1N1 flu virus that has infected humans?*

A: There is no evidence at this time that swine in the United States are infected with this new strain of influenza. Swine are susceptible to this new flu virus strain, so persons with influenza-like illness should avoid contact (including coughing and sneezing) with swine on farms and at fairs or shows.

Q: *What are the symptoms of influenza in pigs?*

A: Signs of influenza in pigs can include sudden onset of fever, depression, coughing (barking), discharge from the nose or eyes, sneezing, breathing difficulties, eye redness or inflammation, and going off feed. The herd's veterinarian should be consulted if pigs are showing any of these signs.

Q: *Who is testing and monitoring to make sure swine are not infected with the virus?*

A: A network of federal veterinarians, state animal health officials and private practitioners are regularly involved with monitoring U.S. swine for signs of significant disease. Only healthy swine may be delivered to packing plants for processing, and all are inspected on arrival to ensure pork is safe and wholesome for consumers.

Q: *Can I get this new strain of virus from eating pork or pork products?*

A: No. It is not possible to get 2009 H1N1 from eating pork or pork products. Scientific studies show that H1N1 flu is not a food-borne disease, it is a respiratory disease.

Q: *What is the most likely way that H1N1 flu could spread to me or my family?*

A: The most likely ways this virus could spread to a person is:

- Through contact with another person with H1N1 flu. Human-to-human spread of the H1N1 flu is thought to occur in the same way as seasonal flu (via coughing and sneezing).
- Through contact with environments contaminated with H1N1 flu virus.

Q: *Can the new H1N1 virus be transferred from pigs to people?*

A: Classical swine influenza viruses typically do not infect humans. However, sporadic human infections have occurred, most commonly in persons with direct exposure to pigs. Though no swine- to-human cases are known to have occurred with the 2009 H1N1 virus, the possibility exists based on our knowledge of other influenza viruses.

Q: *How should swine producers take appropriate measures to protect Ohio's pigs?*

A: Pork producers are encouraged to intensify the bio-security practices they've long had in place. Because several of the herds that have been infected with the novel H1N1 have reported that ill farm workers likely passed the virus to pigs, special emphasis should be placed on protecting the animals from humans potentially carrying the virus. Some general practices to consider:

- Limit the number of people allowed into a pork production operation.
- Establish, implement and enforce strict leave policies for workers who have developed influenza-like symptoms (fever, cough, muscle aches, and/or sore throat).
- Follow industry-accepted bio-security and good hygiene practices, such as farm specific clothing, boots, gloves and careful hand washing.
- Maintain proper ventilation and temperature in animal areas.

- Recommend that all workers are vaccinated against the seasonal influenza virus.
- Review bio-security and herd health programs with a veterinarian on a routine basis.
- Do not share equipment, vehicles or tools with other farms.
- Provide workers with personal protective equipment and training, including a properly fitted N95 respirator, gloves and safety goggles.
- Purchase animals from reputable sources and review their documentation.
- Isolate new arrivals away from resident farm swine, especially upon returning home from exhibitions.

Q: *What is an N95 respirator and is this different than a face mask?*

A: An N95 respirator is designed to seal tightly to the wearer's face and filter out very small particles (i.e. viruses) that would otherwise be breathed in or out by the user. Facemasks do not seal tightly to the face and are used to block large droplets from coming into contact with or out of the wearer's mouth or nose.

Q: *Where can an N95 respirator be purchased?*

A: Several companies make N95 respirators and they can be purchased from many different distributors. Remember that proper fit is important for a respirator to work correctly.

 **FOR MORE
information:**

www.usda.gov
www.ars.usda.gov/2009H1N1/
www.pork.org
www.befoodsafe.gov
www.cdc.gov
www.cfsph.iastate.edu/