

## **Suggested Talking Points**

### **Human infections with Swine Influenza Virus in California and Texas**

**April 23, 2009**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified five cases in Southern California and two in Texas where people have been diagnosed with a form of influenza virus known as swine influenza virus subtype H1N1.

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)