

## Questions and Answers on 2009 or Novel 2009 H1N1

### 1. What is the current situation with 2009 H1N1 flu?

Since the 2009 H1N1 flu virus first appeared in humans March 2009, the virus has been diagnosed in multiple states and several other countries.

### 2. Can you get 2009 H1N1 flu from being around or touching swine?

Human-to-human spread of the 2009 H1N1 flu is thought to occur in the same way as seasonal flu. Influenza is believed to be spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people. Infected people may also infect pigs. While none of the people who originally contracted the 2009 H1N1 flu had contact with swine, it can be spread by:

- direct contact with infected pigs
- contaminated equipment
- contaminated clothing or boots
- respiratory excretions, which become airborne and carried a short distance

### 3. If swine get the 2009 H1N1 virus from humans, can the swine transfer it back to people?

To date, this particular strain of 2009 H1N1 has not been found in Florida swine. However, it is possible that infected swine could transfer the virus to humans if good biosecurity measures are not followed.

### 4. Is Florida testing and monitoring to make sure swine are not infected with the virus and if so, how?

Since the onset of the outbreak in humans, a network of federal and state animal health officials and private practitioners are regularly involved with monitoring U.S. swine for signs of significant disease. As a proactive measure, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) have developed a "Swine Influenza Surveillance Plan." This is a document detailing guidelines for surveillance and investigation of 2009 H1N1. To date, there have been no reports that the influenza virus currently causing illness in humans is circulating anywhere in the U.S. in swine. Florida has taken a further step by encouraging private practitioners to alert officials at FDACS of any animals showing signs of a respiratory infection. In the event of a suspect infection, nasal swab samples will be taken and sent to the state laboratory for testing.

### 5. Are any Florida swine infected with the 2009 H1N1 flu?

The 2009 H1N1 flu is primarily circulating in humans. There are no known confirmed cases of the 2009 H1N1 flu in Florida swine. FDACS recently tested swine with signs of a respiratory disease but the results were negative for the 2009 H1N1 flu.

### 6. How will the public be notified if FDACS finds the 2009 H1N1 flu in a Florida herd?

Delivering factual, timely information is a priority for FDACS. Should there be a detection of influenza in Florida swine, those results would be shared with the public in a timely fashion. As with all potential animal health disease situations, Florida's state laboratory and the USDA's

National Veterinary Services Laboratories are ready to provide support of disease control and eradication programs, reagents for diagnostic testing, training and laboratory certification.

## **7. If I have pigs, what signs should I watch for if they are infected with the 2009 H1N1?**

Pigs with the 2009 H1N1 flu may show some of the following signs:

- coughing
- runny nose and/or eyes
- sneezing
- depression
- lack of appetite
- difficulty breathing
- fever

## **8. What are the appropriate measures to protect swine?**

The swine industry understands the importance of preventing spread of the virus as quickly as possible to protect the industry. We encourage commercial pork producers to intensify the biosecurity practices they have long had in place. They should not loan equipment or vehicles to, or borrow them from, other farms. Swine from outside sources should not be brought back to the farm, only essential workers and vehicles should enter the farm. Swine workers should disinfect their shoes, clothes and hands. They should thoroughly clean and disinfect equipment and vehicles entering and leaving the farm and avoid visiting other livestock farms without proper cleaning and disinfection. Swine workers with respiratory disease should avoid close contact with swine. Limiting human contact and taking proper sanitary measures will greatly reduce any disease spread. In addition, swine with signs of respiratory disease should be examined by a veterinarian and be reported to state animal health officials for follow-up investigation and testing.

## **9. Is there a vaccine against the 2009 H1N1 flu for swine?**

While there are several licensed swine influenza vaccines available for the prevention of swine influenza, preliminary results from work conducted by the USDA indicate that these products will not provide adequate protection against this novel strain of influenza. Manufactures are now working on a vaccine that could be available as early as December 2009.

## **10. Is my potbelly pig in danger? Can I get it from my pet?**

There is no evidence at this time that the virus is in U.S. swine. Swine owners should learn the warning signs of swine influenza. If your pig is showing any of these signs, call your veterinarian. Buy your animals from reputable sources and ensure that you have documentation of your new pet's origin. Be sure that you get your new animals checked by a veterinarian. Keep your pigs and areas around them clean. If you have been around other animals, make sure that you clean your shoes, clothing, and other items. Moreover, do not forget to wash your hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling your pet. If you have a respiratory disease, try to avoid having direct contact with your pig, ask a friend or family member to care for your pet until 7 days after symptoms have resolved.

## **11. Can I show my swine at the fair?**

Currently, there are no restrictions for showing healthy swine at fairs. Swine with signs of respiratory illness, including nasal discharge or coughing, will not be allowed in the fair. If your

swine are showing signs of respiratory disease, contact your veterinarian or the nearest FDACS animal health branch district office.

## **12. How can I protect my pig at the fair?**

Proper hygiene and health management practices should be used when working with animals. The following practices should be implemented:

- Limit contact between animals
- Limit contact between sick people and animals
- Clean and disinfect equipment between uses
- Wash hands before and after working with animals

## **13. Is it safe to eat pork?**

The 2009 H1N1 flu is not spread by food. You cannot get the 2009 H1N1 flu from eating properly cooked pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.

## **14. What does proper food handling mean?**

Proper handling and cooking of pork products provides protection against viruses and other food-borne pathogens such as *Salmonella* and *E.coli*. Safe food handling and preparation is important at all times. Cooking pork and pork products to the proper temperature and preventing cross-contamination between raw and cooked food is the key to safety. These include:

- Wash hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling raw meat
- Prevent cross-contamination by keeping raw meats away from other foods
- After cutting raw meat, wash cutting board, knife, and countertops with hot, soapy water
- Sanitize cutting boards by using a solution of 1 tablespoon chlorine bleach in 1 gallon of water and
- Use a food thermometer to ensure meat has reached the safe internal temperature of at least 160 degrees Fahrenheit to kill food-borne germs that might be present

## **15. Where can I get more information on the 2009 H1N1?**

For more information on the 2009 H1N1, please visit:

<http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/ai>

[http://www.cdc.gov/2009\\_H1N1flu/guidelines\\_pig\\_workers.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/2009_H1N1flu/guidelines_pig_workers.htm)

<http://www.pork.org/Documents/Biosecurity%20recommendations%20for%20producers.pdf>, or [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov).

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