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Pork Remains Safe to Eat

The detection of Influenza A (2009) virus in one pig herd, as a result of human-to-pig transmission holds no implications for Australian consumers, Australian Pork Limited (APL) CEO Andrew Spencer said today.

“Australian consumers can still have the utmost confidence in pork as a safe and healthy meat to eat.”

Mr Spencer said experts in Australia and overseas, including state and federal health departments, the Australian Medical Association (AMA), Australian Veterinarian Association (AVA), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), have agreed there is no food safety risk associated with the flu virus.

The WHO and OIE have stated:

- You cannot get this disease from eating pork
- There is no evidence that animals are playing a significant role in the spread of the virus in the general human population
- The virus does not behave any differently in pigs from other influenza viruses commonly detected in swine herds in many countries of the world

Mr Spencer said Australia was a world leader in on-farm biosecurity, and this was the first time the disease had been detected here.

He said producers were expected to maintain their normal strict biosecurity measures and monitor their animals and staff, and that eradication of the disease at the single affected farm was now the objective.

“The Influenza A/H1N1 (2009) virus has spread rapidly across Australia through person-to-person transmission and is affecting thousands of people. However, current tests on the animals at this piggery have only shown the Influenza A present in this pig herd. Confirmation of the H1N1 part of the virus will be forthcoming earlier next week” he said.

“Though it is unfortunate that the virus has been detected in some pigs on just one farm, consumers have absolutely nothing to be concerned about.

“This isolated incident is now being handled in accordance with exotic disease response procedures under the supervision of New South Wales Department of Primary Industries, with the health and wellbeing of the animals of paramount concern. We expect the animals affected to fully recover.”

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