



August 7 2009. 18:00

Issues Alert #19 Pandemic (H1N1) 2009

- With Influenza A/H1N1 confirmed in one Australian piggery, stringent biosecurity on-farm remains critical! APL recommends that visitors to a piggery should be discouraged. Piggery employees, especially those in close contact with the animals, should notify their manager or leading hand if any members of their family or any people they have frequent contact with are exhibiting flu or flu-like symptoms.
- Both national and international food authorities firmly state that **pork is safe to eat**. It is impossible to contract Influenza A/H1N1 from eating pork and pork related products. There is no connection between pork products and this disease.

CLINICAL SIGNS AND BIOSECURITY TIPS FOR PIG OWNERS/HANDLERS

Swine influenza may be caused by different strains of influenza viruses. It is a reportable disease - if you suspect the disease immediately contact your veterinarian, state or territory animal health officer or call the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline - 1800 675 888.

There are some basic signs of swine influenza you should be able to recognise. There are also simple biosecurity measures that will reduce the risk of swine influenza being introduced to your pigs.

Swine influenza affects pigs in a similar way as the 'seasonal flu' affects humans. The current A/H1N1 strain is easily transmitted, and produces a range of clinical signs such as high temperature, coughing, runny nose and poor appetite etc. Young, pregnant and nutritionally and/or physically stressed pigs are more susceptible to catching this disease, and some of these animals might die. However, the majority of pigs will experience only mild signs and will then fully recover.

SIGNS	YES	NO
If you tick yes to one or more of the signs below you should consult your veterinarian immediately.		
Do your pigs have any of the following signs?		
Coughing		
Watery nasal discharge, (this may be thick and smelly)		
Depression		
Loss of appetite		
Laboured breathing		
Stiffness		
A fever (with a temperature above 39°C)?		

Contact your private veterinarian or a government veterinarian immediately if you suspect your pig/s has signs of swine influenza or phone the **Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888**.

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SITUATION UPDATE

- NSW DPI continues to manage the incident and Australian Pork Limited is working closely with the NSW CVO, the office of the Australian Chief Veterinarian and the farm in question.
- All pigs are recovering or near recovery. There continues to be ongoing monitoring of pig health and the farm remains under quarantine with livestock movement controls in place.
- APL has been liaising with the Australian Chief Veterinary Officer, who has progressed our request with the relevant health authorities to put pig farmers and workers (including vets) at the top of a list to be vaccinated when a vaccine becomes available (likely to be August). APL has made a request that abattoir workers also be given priority vaccination.
- No retail impact has been reported at this stage and no reported market access issues have arisen.
- Media coverage of this outbreak has slowed significantly in recent days. International reaction continues to be monitored.
- See APL website for an updated Biosecurity Fact Sheet and Swine Influenza Fact Sheet as well as information for veterinarians.

ESCALATE YOUR ON-FARM BIOSECURITY!

It is critical that pork producers are vigilant with biosecurity to protect against disease incursion. If in doubt contact your vet. APL is recommending that all farms implement the following routines:

1. **Quarantine all pigs purchased from saleyards or other farmers**
 - All purchased pigs should be quarantined away from pigs already on farm for a period of 7-10 days
 - Your daily animal care routine, until the quarantine period has ceased should be to care for the purchased stock **only after** completing all feeding, husbandry tasks etc. associated with the pigs that are currently on farm.
 - After caring for incoming stock you shouldn't return to the pigs that are not in quarantine without changing clothes, having a shower etc.
 - If pigs are coughing and look sick ie. have some or all of the following symptoms; not moving, not eating, shivering, nasal discharges, contact either your local vet, the local DPI animal or veterinary officer or the Emergency Disease Hotline (1800 675 888)
2. **Establish, implement and enforce strict sick leave policies for workers presenting influenza-like symptoms** such as fever, cough, body aches, and sometimes vomiting and diarrhoea.

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- Prevent anyone working with the pigs exhibiting these symptoms from coming to work for 7-10 days after presenting symptoms of respiratory illness, even mild ones.
- Recommend that people with these symptoms be seen by a doctor immediately
- Sick farm workers or family members should inform their doctor of their contact with pigs to obtain a medical certificate
- Any person not able to get a medical certificate in these circumstances should contact their local public health unit (contact APL on 1800 879 099 for further details)
- Encourage all farm workers especially those in close contact with the animals to notify the owner if any members of their family or any people they have frequent contact with are exhibiting flu or flu-like symptoms. Consider restricting the contact that this worker has with the animals.

3. Limit visitors to farms

- Maintain a visitor register which visitors have to sign indicating that:
 - they have showered and changed clothes since their last exposure to pigs;
 - they are not experiencing fever or any flu-like symptoms.
- Unnecessary visitors that will have contact with your pigs should be discouraged. If this is not possible ensure that the visitor register (including name, address, phone number) are filled out, they shower in or at least wash their hands & scrub fingernails.

4. Follow other generally accepted biosecurity practices

- Routinely clean clothing and footwear
- Implement and enforce the use of personal protective equipment
- Control entry to the farm
- Implement a policy which does not permit staff to own or work with other pigs
- Specify to staff that they must not come to work
 - if they have a fever or are ill
- Specify to staff to notify the farm owner if members of their household or immediate family have flu or flu-like symptoms
 - Maintain a visitor register which visitors have to sign indicating that: they have showered and changed clothes since their last exposure to pigs; they are not experiencing fever or any flu-like symptoms.
- Keeping non-farm vehicles outside of farm or at least their drivers inside their vehicles
- Recommend that all workers are vaccinated against the seasonal influenza virus

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- See APL's Enhanced Biosecurity Arrangements for Producers Alert available from APL website <http://www.australianpork.com.au/pages/page140.asp>
- See APL's Enhanced Biosecurity Arrangements for Farm Visitors and Employees: <http://www.australianpork.com.au/pages/page140.asp>
- APL's website provides alert messages and useful links <http://www.australianpork.com.au/pages/page140.asp>

Other contacts

- **Emergency Animal Disease Watch** hotline - Producers are encouraged to check their properties regularly and if they see anything unusual to call 1800 675 888.
- **H1N1 09 Hotline:** 1802007 – For the general public with health concerns.

Other information

- **APL website** – <http://www.australianpork.com.au/pages/page140.asp> - For more information and updates on **Pandemic (H1N1) 2009**
- **Animal Health Australia** - <http://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/>
- **Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer** - <http://www.daff.gov.au/animal-plant-health/animal>
- **NSW DPI:** <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/pigs/health/swine-flu>

Key APL Contacts:

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