

Issues Alert #20

H1N1 Influenza update

19 August 2009 16:00



H1N1 Virus in Victoria - the latest information

- A preliminary diagnosis of Influenza A H1 has been found in pigs at a piggery in Victoria. AAHL is yet to confirm if N1 is present. Workers at the piggery have shown signs of possibly having had influenza.
- Further test results will be available over the next couple of days. While diagnostic tests are still to be completed, it is likely that this will be a case of Pandemic H1N1 2009 strain. If conclusive this will be the second case of swine influenza in Australia.
- The farm is in quarantine, and movement controls (including facilities, equipment and feed) have been instituted on the affected piggery. All precautions are being taken to contain the virus on site and the movements of animals on and off the property are being traced to ensure that influenza has not spread to other properties. This in accordance with Australia's policy to contain the spread of the disease under the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement.

H1N1 Virus in NSW - update

- NSW DPI continues to manage the NSW 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 at the NSW IP 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 until Proof of Freedom is established.

Information and assistance for pig owners and the community

- 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 September). APL has made a request that abattoir workers also be given priority vaccination.
- With Influenza A/H1N1 confirmed in an 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.

Enhanced biosecurity measures for piggeries

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:

- Quarantine all pigs purchased from saleyards or other farmers
- 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. **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.**
- Limit visitors to farms
- Follow other generally accepted biosecurity practices

See the Enhanced Biosecurity Arrangements for Producers Alert available from APL website

Swine Influenza

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.

For more information on Swine Influenza Virus, check the Australian Pork Limited Website

What to look out for in pigs

There are some basic signs of swine influenza you should be able to recognise.

SIGNS If you tick yes to one or more of the signs below you should consult your veterinarian immediately.	YES	NO
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)?		

If you have any of these signs in your herd, contacting your veterinarian or the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888 (24-hour hotline).

More information for pig owners and stockpeople on Swine Influenza and what to look for in your pigs can be found on the APL website

Further 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>

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