

Issues Alert 22

Pandemic H1N1 2009

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Pandemic H1N1 2009 in Australia

- With the Pandemic H1N1 2009 virus circulating in the human population, occasional spill-over events into pigs are likely to continue to occur. The response agreed with state and federal governments is to be one of containment and elimination on farm enterprises (i.e. all properties involved in a farming operation) to stop spread of the disease across enterprises and eliminate the virus on the affected enterprise and maintenance of export market access. Such incidents are reported to the state Chief Veterinarian Officers as they occur, in turn initiating appropriate response management.
- Affected premises will have to show clinical freedom of the disease for 22 days before restrictions i.e. quarantine and livestock movement controls will be removed. (Note that pigs can still be moved off farm directly to slaughter only provided they have been free of clinical symptoms for 7 days.) In other words, only healthy animals can be sent to slaughter.
- H1N1 2009 is not the same as "Swine Influenza" which is an exotic disease to Australia; rather H1N1 is only one particular strain of this virus. There is no food safety risk associated with the virus, and no evidence that animals are playing a role in the spread of the virus.
- Australia is keeping interested trading partners fully informed and taking necessary steps to see that the virus is contained to the properties where it has been diagnosed.
- APL is urging ALL producers to take extra precaution to protect their herds and workers.

Information and assistance for pig owners and the community

- Symptoms observed in Australia appear less complicated and very different to what is commonly observed in typical swine influenza outbreaks overseas. For the reason that the symptoms are very different, typical swine influenza and Pandemic H1N1 2009 infections in pig herds will be treated as two separate disorders. Most common symptoms in Australian herds are
 - (i) lack of interest in feed,
 - (ii) a dry cough
 - (iii) elevated temperatures in some animals
 - (iv) lethargy

As these symptoms may be indicative of other diseases, please contact your veterinarian or your local animal health officer or state government district

veterinarian, if you have any concerns about the well-being of your animals. More information regarding typical swine influenza is available on the APL website.

- APL has continued to lobby for pig farmers and workers, pig vets and abattoir workers to be considered a priority for vaccination when a vaccine becomes available (likely to be September). We await a decision from Health authorities.
- Both national and international food authorities firmly state that **PORK IS SAFE TO EAT**. It is impossible to contract Pandemic H1N1 2009 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.
- If you have any signs of Pandemic H1N1 2009 in your herd, contact your veterinarian. See the Enhanced Biosecurity Arrangements for Producers Alert available from APL website

Further Information

- **APL**– <http://www.australianpork.com.au> - For 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>

Key APL Contacts:

General H1N1 Inquiries	Kathleen Plowman	0402 794 901
Media Inquiries	Emily Mackintosh	0418 697 595