



## **Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) Activities Associated with Influenza A (H1N1) Q and A**

### **What is Influenza A (H1N1)? (Previously referred to as Swine Flu)**

This influenza virus has historically been diagnosed in swine, however it is able to pass from human to human. In swine, three influenza A virus subtypes are circulating throughout the world. In the United States, the H1N1 subtype was exclusively prevalent among swine populations before 1998. Not all strains of influenza in swine affect humans.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security:

1. People cannot get Influenza A (H1N1) from eating pork or pork products.
2. Most influenza viruses, including this strain of Influenza A (H1N1), are not spread by food.
3. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.
4. No food safety issues have been identified, related to the flu.
5. Preliminary investigations have determined that none of the people infected with the flu had contact with hogs.
6. The virus is spreading by human-to-human transmission.

### **Michigan Department of Agriculture's Emergency Preparedness:**

While conditions can change, the principles of preparedness for emergency situations remain constant. MDA has been actively preparing for the possibility of a serious livestock disease, from tabletop discussion based reviews of policies and procedures to hands-on practices with biosecurity and live animals. We have worked with our private sector partners and colleagues at the federal, state, and local levels to identify and work through potential issues, and we stand ready to be of assistance in this event.

### **No reported illness in U.S. swine:**

The CDC and other health organizations continue to caution that the virus is contagious and is spreading from human to human. The CDC has said it has not found any evidence to indicate that this novel strain of influenza A (H1N1) virus originated in swine or that any of the illnesses resulted from contact with pigs.

There have been no reports of this virus in swine, according to scientists at USDA.

MDA is encouraging pork producers, hog farmers and 4-H families to maintain strict biosecurity procedures on their farms. It is imperative that producers protect their animals from influenza. Sick people should not work with swine.

Swine are routinely vaccinated against influenza as part of preventative health care on large production facilities.

**Pork consumption/food safety:**

According to scientists at USDA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Influenza A (H1N1) viruses are not transmitted by food so you cannot get Influenza A (H1N1) flu from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork, or pork products, is safe. Cooking pork to an internal temperature of 160°F kills all viruses and other foodborne pathogens.

**USDA/ MDA Influenza A (H1N1) Surveillance:**

USDA has requested all state veterinarians report any cases of Influenza A (H1N1) identified in their respective states now and in the coming days to their Veterinary Services Regional Office as promptly as possible.

Influenza A (H1N1) cases that meet any one of the following three criteria:

1. Atypical case presentations in swine;
2. Un-typeable or novel SIV isolates;
3. Suspected concurrent SIV infection in humans and swine, particularly involving public swine exhibitions (e.g., fairs, shows).

This is a coordinated effort among:

- Veterinary Services;
- States and their diagnostic laboratories;
- USDA-ARS-NADC;
- the National Pork Board;
- the American Association of Swine Veterinarians;
- the CDC; and,
- other stakeholders.

USDA-Veterinary Services staff will be contacting Michigan's State Veterinarian with additional information on surveillance.

**MDA routine actions for animal disease surveillance:**

MDA takes the following actions with industry, field staff and veterinarians whenever there is a disease of concern.

1. Michigan's State Veterinarian has alerted field staff to pay extra attention to hogs at markets.
2. Through the Michigan Veterinary Medical Association (MVMA), the State Veterinarian has asked all private practice veterinarians to be aware of the issue and notify the MDA office of any suspect cases.

3. MDA has requested the Michigan State University Diagnostic Center for Population and Animal Health to report all confirmed cases of swine influenza in livestock to the State Veterinarian.
4. Commercial swine facilities always have and continue to conduct swine health surveillance.
5. If illness in swine is suspected at a fair or exhibition, the barn at the location will be quarantined. The animals will remain in the quarantined barn until they recover or diagnosis is confirmed.

### **Veterinary Corps:**

The Vet Corps is a group of licensed veterinarians and veterinary technicians willing to help state and federal agencies provide veterinary-related services to Michigan citizens and animals in the event of a large-scale animal health emergency or disaster emergency.

The Vet Corps was established in the spring of 2004, and is about 150 members strong. Volunteers may be involved with everything from planning and organizing activities to examining and collecting samples from animals. Any species of animals could be involved (from pets to livestock to wildlife). In the event of natural disasters or other hazards, Vet Corps members may be asked to work closely with their local emergency management programs.

### **Communications:**

Influenza A (H1N1) information is posted on:

1. The MDA Web site: [www.michigan.gov/mda](http://www.michigan.gov/mda)
2. The Emerging Diseases Web site: [www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases](http://www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases)

### **Michigan swine figures:**

- ~ 2 million market hogs per year
- ~ 2,100 hog farms in Michigan
- ~ 5,300 pork-related jobs
- ~ Swine are valued at \$343.4 million of gross state product

### **How is MDA reaching out to migrant workers?**

MDA routinely conducts inspections of migrant worker housing sites before the workers arrive. MDA checks:

1. All licensed housing – safe and healthy housing leads to improved food safety and migrant labor health.
2. The water supply
3. The sewage disposal

MDA can provide messages in housing sites regarding health issues.

- Michigan only licenses housing provided for five or more workers in agriculture.

- On an annual basis, MDA licenses housing for occupancy by slightly over 22,000 individuals.
- Over 90,000 migrant workers come to Michigan to work in agriculture each year.
- Many more workers come for seasonal restaurant, landscaping, manufacturing, and recreational employment.
- The MDA will work with farm commodity groups, licensed veterinarians and farmers with licensed housing to help make migrant workers and their families aware of safe health practices and ways to prevent transmission.

**Influenza Prevention Actions:**

The CDC recommends the following measures to prevent the transmission of flu:

1. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
2. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
3. Wash your hands frequently and use alcohol-based sanitizers.
4. Try not to touch surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu virus.
5. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
6. Try to stay in good general health.
7. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.