

SWINE INFLUENZA: ISSUES FOR FAIR ORGANIZERS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING FAIRS

Thousands of fairs take place across the United States each year, providing a fun venue for people to interact and show off their livestock, horticulture or agriculture projects. As you organize your local or state fair, you need to be aware of important information to help protect visitors and livestock. This information can help prevent illnesses associated with animals in public settings. This fair season, CDC is monitoring the occurrence of influenza caused by a specific H3N2 influenza virus that has been found in both people and pigs in a number of states. Some simple precautions are effective in reducing the spread of the virus—these include:

- 1.) Visitors to fairs and exhibitions, particularly to the animal barns including pigs, should receive information about disease risks and recommendations to protect visitors and animals from illness.
- 2.) Whenever possible, facilities should minimize human-animal contact. (for detailed information refer to the following web page:

<http://nasphv.org/documentsCompendiumAnimals.html>)

Please see the next page for steps to take to reduce the risk of illness.

Background

There are influenza viruses that typically infect people and there are influenza viruses that commonly infect pigs; the two are usually different. While uncommon, influenza viruses can spread back and forth between people and pigs. When an influenza virus normally found in pigs infects a person, it is termed a “variant virus.” In 2011, a new variant virus was detected that was an influenza A (H3N2) virus with genes from avian, swine and human viruses, that had acquired the M gene from the 2009 H1N1 virus. This 2009 H1N1 M gene may allow these H3N2 viruses to be more transmissible from pigs to people and possibly from person to person. Most cases of H3N2v have happened after contact with pigs at fairs. People infected with the H3N2v have had symptoms similar to those caused by infection with human seasonal influenza viruses, including some or all of these signs and symptoms: fever or feeling feverish, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, fatigue, and sometimes vomiting or diarrhea.

For more information:

Telephone: 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)/TTY: 1-888-232-63548

Email: cdcinfo@cdc.gov Web: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swineflu/influenza-variant-viruses-h3n2v.htm>

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TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF FLU VIRUSES BETWEEN PIGS AND PEOPLE

The risk of infection and spread of influenza viruses, including H3N2v, can be reduced by taking simple steps to reduce the risk of illness. CDC recommends the following for fair organizers:

Facility Recommendations:

- Post signs or otherwise notify visitors that, for health reasons, they should never eat or drink in animal areas and to wash their hands after leaving such an area.
- Persons with underlying medical conditions should be instructed not to have contact with pigs or to enter areas with pigs, especially if sick pigs have been identified.
- Instruct visitors not to eat, drink, smoke, place their hands in their mouth, or use bottles or pacifiers while in areas with pigs.
- Instruct visitors not carry toys, pacifiers, spill-proof cups, baby bottles, strollers or similar items into areas with pigs. (If possible, establish storage or holding areas for strollers and related items.)
- Instruct visitors to supervise children closely to discourage hand-to-mouth activities (e.g., nail-biting and thumb-sucking) and contact with soiled bedding. Children should not be allowed to sit or play on the ground in animal areas.
- Parents and children should be instructed to wash their hands after touching pigs or material contaminated by pigs. Instruct visitors that if children's hands become soiled, supervised hand washing should occur immediately.
- Control visitor traffic to prevent overcrowding.
- Provide accessible hand-washing stations for all visitors, including children and persons with disabilities.

Animal Area Recommendations:

- Provide adequate ventilation both for animals and humans.
- Store animal feeders and watering equipment, shovels and pitchforks in designated areas that are restricted from public access. Avoid transporting soiled bedding through non-animal areas or transition areas. If this is unavoidable, take precautions to prevent spillage.
- Where feasible, disinfect animal areas (e.g., flooring and railings) at least once daily.

Animal Health Recommendations:

- Monitor animals daily for signs of illness, including discharge from nose and/or eyes, lethargy (sleepiness), no appetite, fever, or sometimes coughing. Ensure that a veterinarian, such as the fair vet or state vet, is notified of any ill animals.
- Ill pigs, animals suspected or known to be infected with influenza viruses, and animals from herds with a recent history of respiratory disease should not be exhibited. They should be immediately isolated or sent home.

At Special Risk:

- Children younger than 5 years, people 65 years and older, pregnant women, and people with certain chronic medical conditions (like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, weakened immune systems, and neurological or neurodevelopmental conditions) are at high risk from serious complications if they get influenza. These people should consider avoiding exposure to pigs and swine barns during this fair season, especially if sick pigs have been identified.

