



Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC)

September 7, 2012

Attention Swine Exhibitors: The 2012 Texas fair and rodeo season is right around the corner. The Texas Pork Producers Association, the Texas Animal Health Commission and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service would like to share important information to help ensure that show hogs remain healthy.

Influenza or "flu" occasionally can be transmitted from people to pigs and pigs to people. Texas has not had any cases of the H3N2v (variant). Remember: Pork is safe. You can't get flu from eating or handling pork and pork products.

Here are some simple recommendations to help keep you and your animals healthy:

- If anyone in your family has flu-like symptoms, please do not attend fairs/exhibitions for 7 days after symptoms begin or until you have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications, whichever is longer.
- If any of your pigs show signs of flu-like illness on the farm, check with your veterinarian before bringing your pigs to the fair/exhibition.

While at the show, follow these simple precautions to protect yourself and others:

- Wash your hands often with soap or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner, especially after you cough or sneeze or have contact with animals.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If a tissue is not readily available, use your elbow joint to minimize hand contact.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Do not eat or drink near animals or animal pens.
- During the fair/exhibition, monitor your pigs for any signs of illness and report any illness to the veterinarian on-call.
- When you come home from a fair/exhibition, be sure to quarantine your hogs, disinfect your trailer and equipment (show boxes, feed pans, etc.), and watch for any

illness in your pigs.

For more information, refer to the *Biosecurity and your Pig Project Guide*

<http://www.pork.org/filelibrary/NPB%20A%20Champions%20Guide%20to%20Youth%20Swine%20Exhibition.pdf>

Useful information can also be found on the *Good Habits that Keep You and Your Pigs Healthy Information Sheet*

http://www.pork.org/filelibrary/ExhibitionPoster_ExhibitorCopy2012%2008.09.12.pdf

Other Useful and Helpful Information for Swine Exhibitors

- [Swine Exhibitor Fact Sheet](#)
- [Understanding Influenza](#)
- [Exhibition Poster_Visitor](#)
- [Exhibition Poster_ Exhibitor](#)

Good Habits that Keep You and Your Pigs Healthy

Influenza or “flu” occasionally can be transmitted from people to pigs and pigs to people. In order to keep you and your animals healthy and protect pig farms across the country, here are some recommendations to follow:

- If anyone in your family has flu-like symptoms, please do not attend fairs/exhibitions for 7 days after symptoms begin or until you have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications, whichever is longer.
- If any of your pigs show signs of flu-like illness on the farm, check with your veterinarian before bringing your pigs to the fair/exhibition.



While at the show, take these simple precautions to protect yourself and others:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner, especially after you cough or sneeze or have contact with animals.



- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If a tissue is not readily available, use your elbow joint to minimize hand contact.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Do not eat or drink near animals or animal pens.
- During the fair/exhibition, monitor your pigs for any signs of illness and report any illness to the veterinarian on-call.

- When you come home from a fair/exhibition, be sure to quarantine your hogs, disinfect your trailer and equipment (show boxes, feed pans, etc.), and watch for any illness in your pigs. For more information, refer to “A Champion’s Guide to Youth Swine Exhibition: Biosecurity” available at www.pork.org.

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Influenza H3N2v:

Key Facts for People Exhibiting Pigs at Fairs

Background

Pigs may be infected with swine influenza viruses that are different from human flu viruses. Swine flu viruses spread among pigs and -- while rare -- they can spread from pigs to people too. Spread of swine flu viruses from a pig to a person is thought to happen in the same way that human flu viruses spread; mainly through droplets from infected pigs coughing and sneezing. This has happened in different settings, especially at fairs where pigs from many farms come in close contact with each other and with people.

Right now, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is concerned about a new flu virus that has been found in U.S. pigs and that has infected people too. This virus is called "H3N2v" when it infects people. Most cases have happened in people exhibiting pigs at fairs. Exposure to pigs, especially close contact with pigs, is the main risk factor for infection with this virus. While most illness has been mild, some people have been hospitalized. To protect those most likely to get infected and develop serious illness, CDC and USDA have recommendations for people (and their friends or family) who may be exhibiting pigs this fair season.

Who is at high risk of serious H3N2 illness?

- People who are at high risk for serious complications from flu, including H3N2v, include children younger than 5 years, people with certain long-term health conditions like asthma and other lung diseases, diabetes, heart disease, weakened immune systems, neurological or neurodevelopmental conditions, as well as pregnant women and people 65 years and older .
- Most of the people hospitalized from H3N2v have had one of these factors that put them at high risk. Some people are at high risk of serious complications if they get the flu, including H3N2v.

Recommendations for Fair Exhibitors with High Risk Factors:

- **Anyone at high risk of serious flu complications planning to attend a fair where pigs will be present should avoid pigs and swine barns at the fair this year.**
- This includes pig exhibitors and family members with high risk factors.
- This may mean that exhibitors with one or more high risk factors do not show their pig(s) this year.



Recommendations for Fair Exhibitors Not at High Risk

- If you are responsible for the care of pigs, watch them for illness (like loss of appetite, cough or runny nose). Call a veterinarian if you suspect illness.
- Avoid close contact with pigs that look or act ill. (See signs of illness listed above.)
- Take protective measures if you must come in contact with pigs that are known or suspected to be sick. This includes wearing protective clothing and gloves and masks that cover your mouth and nose. (Sometimes this is called “personal protective equipment” or PPE).
- To further reduce the risk of infection, minimize contact (and avoid unnecessary close contact) with pigs in the pig barn and arenas.

As always, take the following preventive actions:

- Don't eat or drink or put anything in your mouth in the pig barn and show arena.
- Don't take toys, pacifiers, cups, bottles, strollers, or similar items into the pig barn and show arenas.
- Wash your hands often with soap and running water before and after exposure to pigs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, stay home to avoid spreading your illness.

What to do if you get sick:

- Flu symptoms usually include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, fatigue, and sometimes vomiting or diarrhea.
- If you are at high risk (see page 1) and you get flu symptoms, call a health care provider. Tell them about your high risk factor and your symptoms. If you have had recent exposure to pigs, tell them about that too.
- If you are not at high risk and you get flu symptoms after exposure to pigs, seek medical care as you normally would.
- A health care provider can decide whether influenza testing or treatment is needed.
- Influenza antiviral drugs can treat H3N2v as well as seasonal flu illness in people.
- These drugs work better the sooner you start them, so seek medical treatment promptly if you get symptoms and are at high risk.

For more information:

Telephone: 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)/TTY: 1-888-232-6354 Email: cdcinfo@cdc.gov

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

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Understanding influenza naming

Key Points

1. Influenza (flu) viruses have circulated in humans and animals (birds, pigs, cats, dogs, horses, etc.) for centuries.
2. Influenza viruses are very adaptive and are able to mix with other influenza viruses and create new viruses. This is common.
3. Most pig influenza viruses stay in pigs and most human influenza viruses stay in people.
4. Knowing the proper name to call a flu virus is important to be factual and to avoid misinterpretation and improper response.

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Influenza Basics

Influenza (flu) viruses have circulated in humans and animals (birds, pigs, cats, dogs, horses, etc.) for centuries. Some will infect only one type of animal. Others have more ability to move between species but may cause different signs of illness in different animals. These viruses are very adaptive, they are able to mix with other influenza viruses and create new viruses changing how well they spread and their ability to cause disease.

Influenza Type A

One strain of influenza virus is called Influenza A. It contains genetic materials that it has picked up from influenza viruses infecting birds, pigs and people. It circulates in susceptible pig herds and can cause high fever, lethargy and respiratory symptoms (coughing and sneezing). Most influenza A viruses in pigs are different from influenza A viruses that infect people. **Most of the time, these pig influenza viruses stay in pigs and these people influenza viruses stay in people.** Occasionally, influenza viruses can spread from people to pigs and from pigs to people.

Nomenclature Challenges

Sometimes people get confused about what they should call influenza viruses in people and in pigs. To ensure accurate naming, the World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with several federal and international health organizations, announced a standardized naming convention. Influenza viruses that normally circulate in pigs and may infect humans will be referred to as "variant influenza viruses," designated by a "v." "Variant" designates the virus as one that varies from infecting only the species that is its usual host.

Proper H3N2 Virus Naming

U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) officials say that when influenza A (H3N2) viruses are found in swine, they should be called "swine influenza A (H3N2)" viruses. Another way of saying this is "swine H3N2". **If human infections with these viruses occur, these viruses are then called "variant" viruses as designated by the WHO because they are infecting a different species and are called "influenza A(H3N2)v" or just "H3N2v".**

Calling a pig influenza virus that contains genes from birds, pigs and people influenza viruses and infects people, "swine flu" is misleading because it refers to the virus being in pigs – swine H3N2. When that virus crosses over and infects people, the accurate way to refer to it is "variant H3N2" or "H3N2v".

This new standardized naming convention will allow the media to use more accurate terminology to communicate to consumers and will help reinforce to consumers that you cannot get the flu from eating or handling pork and pork products.

Help Keep Our Animals Healthy: Wash Your Hands

WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN so you don't accidentally spread germs.

It is also important to wash your hands **CORRECTLY**.

Here's how:

- Wet your hands – use warm water if it's available
- Apply soap
- Rub hands to a lather for 15-20 seconds
- Scrub all surfaces to kill germs
- Rinse hands under running water
- Dry your hands with a paper towel or air dryer
- Use an alcohol-based hand rub if soap and clean water are not available

When should you wash your hands?

- You can't see germs, so wash your hands after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose
- Wash before and after you touch animals
- Wash before and after eating, and after using the restroom

**Clean hands equal healthy people and animals
– wash your hands often!**