

Frequently Asked Questions regarding A H1N1 Influenza

1. Did A H1N1 influenza originate in animals?

The current pandemic infection of A H1N1 influenza is not caused exclusively by a swine-type virus. Studies conducted by a number of organizations conclude that the infection is caused by a virus which includes swine, avian and human virus components. The results of those studies have led the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) to declare that the current outbreak of A H1N1 cannot be traced directly to swine.

2. It is possible to become infected through direct contact with swine or swine by-products?

No. The consumption of pork and pork by-products is completely safe, especially if they have been handled and prepared following good hygiene practices and they have been cooked to an internal temperature of 71°C (160°F), which, according to experts, is high enough to kill the swine flu and other bacteria and viruses.

3. What should you do if there is an outbreak of swine flu or A H1N1 on your farm?

First, it is important to understand that outbreaks of swine flu are very common among swine during rainy and winter months. They also occur when new animals that have been infected or have been under great stress, which lowers their defenses and compromises their immune systems, arrive on the farm.

Should an outbreak of swine flu occur on your farm, the best way to contain it is to isolate the sick animals and administer the corresponding treatment. It is also necessary to step up the application of good hygiene practices to protect the health of workers (to wash hands frequently and correctly, to use protective clothing, to wear facemasks, to keep workers with common flu away from livestock, etc.), and improve biosafety on the farm (keeping sick animals on the farm, preventing the entry of animals from infected farms, use of footbath mats, etc.)

If you suspect or are certain that that it is A H1N1 influenza, notify health authorities immediately. They will collect samples, test and confirm or deny the presence of A H1N1.

4. What measures can be taken to prevent A H1N1 on your farm?

Infections of swine flu can be prevented by:

- Vaccinating livestock;
- Applying effective biosafety measures;
- Promoting and applying good hygiene practices among workers;
- Installing ventilation systems; and
- Quarantining infected animals.

5. How should pork industry associations handle information on A H1N1?

In winter, when swine flu is common, the leaders of the industry must ensure that hog farmers and farm workers receive training in, and are made more aware of, the good hygiene practices established by the health authorities of the country.

It is important that the associations of the pork industry be transparent and provide the public with information in order to avoid a drop in the consumption of pork. In addition, they must promote the implementation of biosafety measures and ensure that workers use proper equipment, comply with established hygiene standards and do not come to work with the flu.

6. What entities are responsible for dealing with this disease?

The Ministries of Agriculture and Health of your country. The international organizations responsible for making information available include the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the World Animal Health Organization (OIE).

7. What is IICA's position on this topic?

IICA recognizes the importance of public official veterinary services. Therefore, we will continue to support the countries in their efforts to strengthen same since they are the best tool for preventing and managing diseases or health emergencies. In addition, we recommend reinforcing efforts to monitor hog farms, implementing biosafety measures and applying good livestock practices.

Bibliographic References

- <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swineflu/>
- <http://www.thebody.com/content/art51974.html>

