



Swine Influenza (Swine Flu)

Q & A for Swine Fair Exhibitors

Q: What is Swine Influenza?

A: Swine influenza is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses that regularly cause outbreaks in pigs.

Q: Why is the virus sometimes called “swine flu”?

A: Influenza viruses that commonly circulate in swine are called “swine influenza viruses” or “swine flu viruses.” Like human influenza viruses, there are different subtypes and strain of swine influenza viruses. The main swine influenza viruses circulating in U.S. pigs in recent years are: swine triple reassortant (tr) H1N1 influenza virus, trH3N2 virus and trH1N2 virus.

Q: What are Variant Influenza Viruses?

A: Swine flu viruses do not normally infect humans. However, sporadic human infections with swine influenza viruses have occurred. When this happens, these viruses are called “variant viruses” They also can be denoted by adding the letter “v” to the end of the virus subtype designation. According to CDC, human infections with H1N1v, H3N2v, and H1N2v viruses have been detected in the United States.

Q: Can I show my swine at the fair?

A: Currently, there are no restrictions for showing healthy swine at fairs. Swine with signs of respiratory illness, including nasal discharge or coughing, should not be taken to the fair. If your swine are showing signs of respiratory disease, contact your veterinarian or the nearest California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA) Animal Health Branch District Office.

Q: What signs should I watch for in my fair pig?

A: Pigs with swine influenza may show signs of disease including:

- coughing & sneezing
- runny nose and/or eyes
- depression
- lack of appetite
- difficulty breathing
- fever

Q: How is swine influenza spread?

- A: Influenza can be spread by:
- direct contact with infected pigs
 - contaminated equipment
 - contaminated clothing or boots
 - respiratory excretions, which become airborne and carried a short distance.
 - To prevent flu viruses from spreading between people and pigs, it is important for people working with pigs to follow proper biosecurity practices.

Q: How can I protect my pig at the fair?

- A: Proper hygiene and health management practices should be used when working with animals. The following practices should be implemented:
- Limit contact between animals
 - Clean and disinfect equipment between use
 - Wash hands before and after working with animals.

Q: My pig is vaccinated for swine influenza, can it still get sick?

A: Influenza vaccines for pigs can help, but are not 100% effective. There are several strains of influenza that can infect swine and current vaccines do not protect against all strains.

Q: Is it safe to eat pork?

A: According to CDC, swine influenza is not considered a threat to food safety. Swine influenza viruses are not spread by food. You cannot get swine influenza from eating properly cooked pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.

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