

June 2009

Swine Health Board Calls for Common Sense in Reacting to H1N1 Flu



The Canadian Swine Health Board is calling for common sense in reacting to an H1N1 influenza A outbreak. According to the OIE current scientific information indicates a novel H1N1 influenza virus first identified in Mexico is being transmitted among humans and there is no evidence of infection in pigs, nor of humans acquiring infection directly from pigs. Canadian Swine Health Board Chair Florian Possberg says, although this infection is a human disease, the name "swine flu" has undermined confidence in pork. Florian Possberg also stated that there's a number of countries that have questioned the food safety of North American pork and that's very very unfortunate. We even hear of the example of Egypt where they've decided to eliminate swine production from their whole country. Some of these things are not based on any kind of sound science, they're

based on panic. We know when the mad cow issue hit Canada it had a devastating impact on our beef producers. This potentially, if common sense is not followed, could have a devastating impact on our hog industry. Our hog industry has already went through very difficult times. I would characterize this as a drive by shooting. We're innocent, we don't need this, it's going to continue to hurt our industry if common sense isn't followed. The sooner people get back into the pattern of realizing that our pork is perfectly safe and buying it for their families on an ongoing basis the better off we all are. Possberg says, although there is no known case of this virus infecting pigs strict biosecurity protocols on farms should remain in effect. Reference: Cochrane, B., 2009. Swine Health Board Calls for Common Sense in Reacting to H1N1 Flu. Accessed online from: <http://www.farmscape.ca/2ShowScript.aspx?i=23088&q=Swine+Health+Board+Calls+for+Common+Sense+in+Reacting+to+H1N1+flu>. [Accessed May 4, 2009].

Phosphorus Application Management Varies According to Source

A researcher with the University of Manitoba says the management of phosphorus applications to crop land will vary according to the source of the nutrient.

The Manitoba government has imposed strict limits on phosphorus applications to reduce the risk of excess amounts ending up in waterways. Dr. Don Flaten, a soil fertility researcher with the University of Manitoba and chair of the National Centre for Livestock and the Environment says the source as well as rate, placement and timing of application are fundamental to managing phosphorus. Dr. Don Flaten stated if you're working with a synthetic fertilizer source you're probably going to go with something like an application rate that's modest and it's applied near the seed row at planting. That's going to be good agronomically, good environmentally. On the other hand, if you're working with some of these other forms of phosphorus that are maybe less available, let's say liquid pig manure phosphorus is not quite as available as synthetic fertilizer phosphorus, you may have to go agronomically at a slightly higher rate.

Once again though we would recommend, if possible, try to inject or band the liquid manure phosphorus underneath the soil surface to make it more agronomically efficient and also to reduce the risk of run-off losses. Then, in terms of solid manures and compost, those types of sources of phosphorus are less available to crops than the liquid manures or the synthetic fertilizers but they're also very difficult to band underneath the soil surface so in those sort of cases, we're dealing with a source of phosphorus that's not as environmentally risky but it's also harder to manage in terms of the rate and the placement and the timing is a little bit more awkward. Dr. Flaten says because of the difficulty of banding solid manures and composts under the soil surface, it's actually fortunate that phosphorus from these sources is less of a risk, environmentally.

Reference: Cochrane, B., 2009. Phosphorus Application Management Varies According to Source. Accessed online from: <http://www.farmscape.ca/2ShowScript.aspx?i=23089&q=Phosphorus+Application+Management+Varies+According+to+Source>. [Accessed online May 8, 2009]

Vigilance Encouraged to Protect Pigs from Swine Influenza

The Western College of Veterinary Medicine is calling for vigilance to minimize the risk of Canada's swine herd becoming infected by a human form swine flu. An outbreak of an H1N1 strain of swine influenza A in humans, which has spread throughout Mexico, is being blamed for over 100 deaths. Cases have also been reported in the United States and Canada resulting in mild illness. Western College of Veterinary Medicine Associate Professor Dr. John Harding says ironically, while we call it swine flu, this particular strain is not affecting pigs at this time but pigs are susceptible so veterinarians and producers must be vigilant in trying to prevent herds from being infected. Dr. John Harding said symptoms in humans are typical of the seasonal flues that may come, aches and pains, fever, respiratory disease, so anybody with contact with other infected people need to be contacting their physician as soon as they possibly can. In pigs it's also a respiratory disease. Pigs will develop a fever. We're not so sure about the aches and pains that humans would see, but certainly we can see very severe clinical signs which is more typical of the classic H1N1 or we could see just more very subtle clinical signs, a few pigs coughing in a barn which is almost difficult to diagnose and distinguish from other pneumonias so I think producers need to be very vigilant that, if they see changes in the respiratory disease status on their farms, then they need to be calling their veterinarian. Dr. Harding stressed pork is safe to consume for two reasons, we don't see high levels of influenza in meat or meat products and if you handle and cook your pork carefully and properly there is absolutely no risk.

Reference: Cochrane, B., 2009. Vigilance Encouraged to Protect Pigs from Swine Influenza. Accessed online from: <http://www.farmscape.ca/2ShowScript.aspx?i=23085&q=Vigilance+Encouraged+to+Protect+Pigs+from+Swine+Influenza>. [Accessed May 8, 2009]

CPC Calls on Canadians to Support Producers by Eating More Pork

The Canadian Pork Council is urging Canadians to eat an extra meal or two per week with pork to help producers cope with the economic impact of the H1N1 influenza outbreak. Hog prices have dropped an estimated 20 cents per kilogram because of the H1N1 flu at a time of year when prices should be increasing. Yesterday, to display to the world that pork is safe, representatives of the Canadian Pork Council and the federal government served a pork barbeque to about 500 guests on Parliament Hill. CPC Chair Jurgen Preugschas says the Canadian, American and Mexican governments have been extremely active in working together to get borders re-opened to North American pork. Jurgen Preugschas said that what's happening at the present time is that our government is concentrating on re-opening the borders of those countries who have chosen to close the borders at the present time.

Today the Philippines are going to announce that their borders will be open again. They will say that the reason why they closed the border was to err on the side of caution. Now that they have more information, they're very comfortable that the pork from Canada is safe and they will resume imports immediately. We do hope that that will happen with other countries, that they will start following suit. On the domestic side we need the help of Canadians in general. Canadians need to eat an extra meal or two of pork a week and, when you go to the grocery store, ask your grocer that it is Canadian pork that you're buying to ensure that we can continue to supply this safe and wholesome product in years to come. Preugschas says Canadians are generally well informed however the hype is driving the issue.

Reference: Cochrane, B., 2009. CPC Calls on Canadians to Support Producers by Eating More Pork. Accessed online from: <http://www.farmscape.ca/2ShowScript.aspx?i=23092&q=CPC+Calls+on+Canadians+to+Support+Producers+by+Eating+More+Pork>. [Accessed May 4, 2009].



Reference: Independent, 2009. Swine Flu. The Lethbridge Herald. May 8, 2009. Opinions Page.

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