



For Immediate Release
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‘Pork Is Safe To Eat, Handle,’ Says Pork Industry

“Pork is safe to eat and handle,” the U.S. pork industry continues to reassure people in the wake of a report from Canada that pigs in an Alberta pork operation contracted an H1N1 virus. A worker who recently visited Mexico – and became ill with the flu – is suspected of transmitting the virus to a pig.

“People cannot get the flu from eating or handling pork,” said Dr. Liz Wagstrom, assistant vice president of science and technology for the National Pork Board. “The flu is a respiratory illness, it’s not a food-borne illness.”

According to the World Health Organization, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Health and Human Services and Homeland Security the H1N1 flu strain that has been contracted by 763 people worldwide cannot be transmitted by eating pork; it is not a food safety issue.

May 2, 2009, the World Trade Organization, the OIE and the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization issued a joint statement saying pork is safe.

“Influenza is not uncommon in pigs,” Wagstrom said, “but they recover, and it does not affect the safety or quality of pork.

“It is well known that influenzas are transmissible, and it is not a surprise that a flu virus might have passed from people to pigs. The bottom line is pork is safe to eat and handle.”

The National Pork Board has responsibility for Checkoff-funded research, promotion and consumer information projects and for communicating with pork producers and the public. Through a legislative national Pork Checkoff, pork producers invest \$0.40 for each \$100 value of hogs sold. The Pork Checkoff funds national and state programs in advertising, consumer information, retail and foodservice marketing, export market promotion, production improvement, technology, swine health, pork safety and environmental management. For information on Checkoff-funded programs, pork producers can call the Pork Checkoff Service Center at (800) 456-PORK or check the Internet at www.pork.org