



International Feed Industry Federation

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PRESS RELEASE

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H1N1 not connected to pig meat safety

Cheltenham, June 11, 2009 – Food products from pigs are not linked to the spread of the virus Influenza A(H1N1) – and furthermore, eating processed pork products or food products from pigs does not increase the risk of contracting the virus.

That's the message the International Feed Industry Federation wants consumers to understand at a time when The World Health Organization (WHO), on the verge of declaring the first influenza pandemic in more than 40 years, voiced concern at the sustained spread of the new H1N1 virus.

"It is important that our Federation, which represents many of the animal feed producers supplying pig producers globally, reminds consumers that pig products are not implicated in the spread of H1N1 to humans," says IFIF Secretary General Roger Gilbert.

"To avoid misunderstanding, we cite the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and the International Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) which recently re-issued a statement that the ongoing spread of the Influenza A(H1N1) virus is not known to be transmissible to people through eating processed pork and other food products derived from pigs," he adds.

There have been no reported cases of transmission between pigs and humans.

Mr Gilbert says the implication that pig products pose a risk to human health through the H1N1 virus is groundless and consumers should be confident when consuming cooked pork products based on common heating treatments of over 70 deg C.

"Pork and pork products, handled in accordance with good hygiene and cooking practices recommended by WHO, FAO, Codex Alimentarius and the OIE, cannot be a source for infection."

The World Health Organization announced in early May that it would stop using the term 'swine flu' to avoid confusion over the danger posed by pigs. The policy came a day after Egypt announced a plan to slaughter thousands of pigs in what appeared to be a misguided effort to prevent the risk of H1N1. A disastrous consequence of this presumed linkage occurred in Egypt

when its government decreed that it should slaughter its 300,000-pig herd even though experts said H1N1 is not linked to pigs and not spread by eating pork.

From Paris, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) said there was no evidence of humans acquiring infection directly from pigs.

A WHO spokesman said the agriculture industry and the UN food agency had expressed concerns that the term 'swine flu' was misleading consumers and needlessly causing countries to ban pork products and order the slaughter of pigs.

While the virus originated in pigs, today's H1N1 virus contains a mix of genes from human, bird and pig viruses. WHO says the virus is being spread from human to human, not from contact with pigs or pork products.

Mr Gilbert says the move to re-name 'swine flu' to its technical name Influenza A(H1N1) is a sound step toward disconnecting pig production from the inference that it is helping to spread the flu.

"Killing pigs will not help to safeguard public nor animal health against the virus and it is inappropriate given the information currently available from reputable sources such as WHO, FAO, Codex and OIE," concluded Mr Gilbert.

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About IFIF

Founded in 1987, the objective of the International Feed Industry Federation is to bring together national and local associations and federations that are involved in the feeding and growing of food-producing animals. One of its main missions is the organisation of regional and international forums for scientific, technical and commercial debates.

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