

NEWS RELEASE

Influenza Detected in Pigs at Oakland County Fair

Pontiac, Mich. July 17, 2023 – The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and Department of Health and Human Services have notified Oakland County Health Division that several pigs present at the Oakland County Fair tested positive for influenza A virus, the causative agent of swine influenza.

The pigs began displaying symptoms on July 14 at the fair which took place July 7-16 at Springfield Oaks County Park in Davisburg and is organized and managed by the Oakland County 4-H Fair Association. The swine barn closed to the public that evening. No human cases of swine flu have been reported in Michigan this year. The Health Division is working with state partners and fair management to contact trace and monitor exhibitors and fair staff who were exposed. In the meantime, out of an abundance of caution, the county is notifying the public who may have visited the swine barn.

“Fairgoers who visited the swine barn and develop respiratory symptoms are encouraged to talk to a health care provider and report potential exposure to infected swine,” said Dr. Russell Faust, Oakland County medical director. “Physicians are reminded to consider swine influenza in persons presenting with symptoms, even during the warmer months when seasonal influenza cases are low.”

Swine influenza (flu) is a respiratory disease in pigs caused by type A influenza viruses. Swine flu viruses don't usually infect humans, but human infections have been reported. People cannot get swine influenza from eating properly prepared pork or handling pork products – only from contact with an ill pig.

Symptoms of swine flu in people are like seasonal flu and may include fever, cough, runny nose, and sometimes body aches, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. Symptoms usually appear within three days of exposure but can occur for up to 10 days. On rare occasions, swine flu in humans can lead to severe illness such as pneumonia or death.

Those at higher risk of developing complications if they get swine influenza include children younger than 5 years, people 65 years and older, pregnant women, and people with certain chronic health issues, such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, weakened immune systems and neurological conditions. There is no vaccine for swine flu, and the seasonal flu vaccine will not protect against it. Antiviral drugs such as Tamiflu and Relenza, however, are effective in treating swine flu. Early treatment works best and may be especially important for people with a high-risk condition.

Additional subtyping, including whole genome sequencing, will be performed by the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) in Ames, Iowa. The expected turnaround time is approximately three weeks.

For media inquiries only please contact Bill Mullan, Oakland County public information officer, at 248-858-1048.