



**Key Questions and Answers for 2009 Pandemic H1N1
Influenza
Scenario 4: Food Safety
as of October 9, 2009**

Educating the media and the public about the complexities of the 2009 pandemic H1N1 influenza virus strain vs. swine influenza as a disease among pigs is one of USDA's primary communications objectives.

As part of this effort, USDA, in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services, has developed four scenarios in the event of a detection and/or outbreak of 2009 pandemic H1N1 influenza in the U.S. swine herd and provision of USDA services during the pandemic.

The scenarios are:

- 1) general animal health;
- 2) a detection of 2009 pandemic H1N1 influenza in commercial swine;
- 3) USDA services during pandemic; and
- 4) food safety

Each of these scenarios contains a series of key questions and answers about animal health, guidance for the public regarding USDA services during the pandemic, as well as a summary of the actions USDA would take in the event of a 2009 pandemic H1N1 influenza detection in U.S. swine.

KEY QUESTIONS

- 4-1 Is it safe to eat pork and pork products if pigs become infected with the 2009 pandemic H1N1 influenza virus?
- 4-2 Can this 2009 pandemic H1N1 virus infect pork meat?
- 4-3 My child ate pork for lunch at school, should I be concerned?



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4-1 Is it safe to eat pork and pork products if pigs become infected with the 2009 pandemic H1N1 influenza virus?

Yes. Influenza viruses are not spread by food.

- The 2009 pandemic H1N1 flu virus is not a food borne disease, it is a respiratory disease.
- USDA's recent study concluded that the 2009 pandemic H1N1 influenza virus did not infect meat or blood in pigs.
- We take food safety and public health very seriously and want to assure you that pork and pork products are safe to eat.
- According to CDC, human-to-human spread of the H1N1 flu occurs in the same way as seasonal flu – through contact with respiratory secretions.

You cannot get infected with novel H1N1 flu virus from eating pork or pork products.

- Any questions: call the USDA meat and poultry hotline – 1-888-MP HOTLINE
- To learn more facts about 2009 pandemic H1N1 influenza virus in swine, go to www.usda.gov/H1N1flu.

4-2 Can this 2009 pandemic H1N1 virus infect pork meat?

No, this virus has not been observed to infect pork meat so you cannot get infected with novel H1N1 virus from eating pork or pork products.

- The 2009 pandemic H1N1 flu virus is not a food borne disease, it is a respiratory disease.

Because the novel human H1N1 virus is evolving, USDA recognizes the importance of continuing to study the virus in agricultural animals to provide the best protection for both public and veterinary health.

- USDA experts studied a 2009 pandemic H1N1 virus isolate from a human case to determine if meat or blood from pigs infected with the new virus are free of infectious 2009 pandemic H1N1 virus.
- The pigs were inoculated with an infective dose of the 2009 pandemic H1N1 virus.
- Pigs were observed daily for clinical signs of disease and nasal swabs and fresh samples from lung, tonsil, inguinal lymph node, liver, spleen, kidney, skeletal muscle (ham) and colon contents were tested by the most sensitive virus diagnostic tests.

The study concluded that the 2009 pandemic H1N1 virus did not infect meat or blood in pigs.

- Pigs experimentally infected with pandemic 2009 H1N1 influenza A virus developed respiratory disease but there was no evidence of systemic disease.
- H1N1 influenza A virus was detected in the respiratory tract of infected pigs but the virus could not be detected in the meat.



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- These findings support the WHO recommendation that pork harvested from pandemic influenza A H1N1 infected swine is safe to consume when following normal meat hygiene practices.

4-3 My child ate pork for lunch at school, should I be concerned?

No. 2009 pandemic H1N1 influenza viruses are not spread by food.

- The 2009 pandemic H1N1 flu virus is not a food borne disease, it is a respiratory disease.
- USDA's recent study concluded that the 2009 pandemic H1N1 influenza virus did not infect meat or blood in pigs.
- We take food safety and public health very seriously and want to assure you that properly handled cooked pork and pork products are safe to eat.
- According to CDC, human-to-human spread of the H1N1 flu is thought to occur in the same way as seasonal flu.

The health and safety of the 31 million children that receive school meals is of the utmost importance to USDA.

- USDA agencies work in partnership with States to ensure the safety of meals served in schools.

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- Any questions: call the USDA meat and poultry hotline – 1-888-MP HOTLINE
- To learn the facts about 2009 pandemic H1N1 influenza virus in swine, go to www.usda.gov/H1N1flu.