



Mitchell Veterinary Services

Pauly Veterinary Clinic

243 Ontario Road  
P.O. Box 1224  
Mitchell, Ontario N0K 1N0  
Phone (519) 348-9711  
Fax (519) 348-4432

62 Main St. S.  
P.O. Box 359  
Milverton, Ontario N0K 1M0  
Phone (519) 595-8888  
Fax (519) 595-8758

Swine Newsletter

November 1, 2015

## Influenza Season

Dear Pork Producer,

It is flu season again! I've already suffered through one cold in October. Many of you have pointed out that when people in the barn get sick, it follows that pigs do likewise and vice versa. Apparently, according to a memo from the Ministry of Health and Long term care, this really does happen! They even suggest that people who work in pig barns should stay away from the barn if they get flu like symptoms. Yeah! Good luck with that! Anyway, the following is reproduced directly from the memo that I received encouraging all of us to get vaccinated.

### **Flu vaccination recommendations for swine workers:**

While we encourage everyone in Ontario to get vaccinated, we are also recommending that workers in the swine industry, in particular, get vaccinated because of the recent evidence that human flu viruses can infect and cause disease in swine and other animals, as well as people. The flu strains covered by the vaccine are primarily human community-based infections, meaning that you are most likely to get this flu from coming into contact with infected individuals in your community. However, preventing the movement of influenza viruses between the human and animal populations is an important public health measure aimed at trying to prevent the reassortment or mixing of different flu strains to produce new influenza viruses, which could cause significant disease in both people and animals. We are sending a similar letter to poultry industry workers.

Swine workers who get the flu vaccine will help to reduce the potential for human influenza viruses mixing with flu viruses commonly found in Ontario's swine herds, and help to keep the human viruses out of Ontario's swine herds.

Although it is unusual for individuals to get influenza infections directly from livestock, personal protective equipment – masks, eye protection and gloves – should be worn when working with sick swine to prevent infection, as occasional human infections have been reported. Individuals co-infected with two or more different influenza viruses can also serve as mixing vessels for these viruses, leading to the emergence of novel viruses.

### **Swine workers who develop influenza-like illness:**

Individuals with influenza-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, muscle aches and, in some cases, eye infections and pneumonia) should, if possible, be kept out of barns and away from swine herds until seven days after their symptoms have resolved. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) has developed a poster which producers can print out and use at entry points to barns to reinforce this idea and help screen individuals/employees who may be infected with influenza before they enter swine barns. Electronic versions of this poster, in two size formats, are available as attachments to this letter.

Individuals who develop influenza-like symptoms after working with swine that show signs of respiratory illness should seek medical attention and advise their health care provider of their exposure to ill swine.

### **Practise Good Personal Hygiene:**

To protect against the flu, the MOHLTC recommends that everyone, not just swine workers, incorporate these simple steps into daily routines:

- wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and warm running water after handling animals and before eating or drinking
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you sneeze, dispose of the tissue immediately, and then wash your hands
- if you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve – not into your hands
- avoid sharing food, eating utensils, towels or handkerchiefs
- keep an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (gel or wipes) handy at work, home and in your vehicle

MOHLTC is working closely with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) to reduce the risk of influenza transmission between humans and livestock.

If you have any human health questions, please contact your physician or your local public health unit. If you have concerns about your livestock, please contact OMAFRA and/or your veterinarian.

We appreciate your assistance in helping to protect everyone in Ontario from influenza.

For more information on getting the flu vaccine, speak to your doctor, nurse practitioner, public health unit or pharmacist. To find a flu vaccination clinic near you, please contact your local public health unit (a list of local public health units can be found at [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/contact/phu/phuloc\\_mn.html](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/contact/phu/phuloc_mn.html)).

### **So what about the pigs!!!**

Classically, if a barn of naïve pigs get swine influenza virus they all go off feed, lie around (are lethargic), will have fevers (this is where a rectal thermometer might be a handy tool to be able to check a few of the sick pigs!) and will cough abit.

Classically, they get over it in a few days (just like people) and start growing again. Problems arise if other bugs take advantage of the pigs while they are sick and their immune systems are compromised. This is why I usually recommend some sort of antibiotic treatment be administered during the illness.

In pig barns SIV always seems to involve more than one bug. Pasturella, Streptococcus, Actinobaccillus, mycoplasma, Bordetella, Hemophilous, etc. often rear their ugly heads.

That's enough for this month.