



News Release

AN ALBERTA SWINE HERD INVESTIGATED FOR H1N1 FLU VIRUS

OTTAWA, May 2, 2009 – The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) indicates that it has found H1N1 flu virus in a swine herd in Alberta. The safety of the food supply is not affected and Canadian pork continues to be safe to eat.

It is highly probable that the pigs were exposed to the virus from a Canadian who had recently returned from Mexico and had been exhibiting flu-like symptoms. Signs of illness were subsequently observed in the pigs. The individual has recovered and all of the pigs are recovering or have recovered.

While further testing is needed to more fully characterize the virus, the CFIA is taking a precautionary approach. The herd has been placed under quarantine, and the Agency is working with public health colleagues to determine the most appropriate next steps to ensure that public and animal health remain protected. The chance that these pigs could transfer virus to a person is remote.

Influenza viruses do not affect the safety of pork, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). As with any raw meat, pork should always be properly handled and cooked to eliminate a range of food safety concerns.

Pigs in Canada are tested for influenza viruses on an ongoing basis across the country during routine investigations into respiratory illnesses. The CFIA is working with provinces, territories, the swine industry, and private sector veterinarians since April 24th to enhance monitoring of swine herds for signs of illness and to maintain enhanced biosecurity measures on farms across the country.