

INFLUENZA BRIEFING

27/04/09

Statement from Defra's Chief Veterinary Officer on the outbreak of swine flu

"There is continual surveillance of pigs in this country and there is currently no evidence of this variant of the disease. Swine Influenza cannot be transmitted by eating pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork and pork products is perfectly safe. Existing EU rules which prevent imports of all live pigs and pig meat from Mexico into the EU will continue to be upheld."

Further information about swine flu can be found on the Defra website, [click here](#) for more.

There is also advice from the [Health Protection Agency](#) and the [Department of Health](#).

A Question and Answer has also been produced by Defra:

Why is this called swine influenza ?

The virus associated with the human cases in Mexico and USA have characteristics from a number of influenza viruses found in pigs, birds and humans.

There are no reports of the virus which is currently causing disease in humans being found in pigs (although the situation in Mexico is uncertain)

There are no reports of an increase in influenza in pigs occurring in the US/Mexico or elsewhere in the world.

Therefore, although parts of this virus may have originated in pigs, it now appears to be transmitting from human to human direct.

There is no evidence that pigs are currently involved in this human disease although further work is needed.

What are the rules about imports of pigs and pigmeat into the EU?

EU rules do not permit the importation of live pigs from either the US or Mexico

EU rules do not permit the import of pig meat from Mexico, but pigmeat products can be imported from the US.

However, even if pigs are involved with this virus, the risk to humans from pigmeat is considered by the US CDC to be negligible

EU rules do not allow the personal import of meat or meat products from either the US or Mexico.

Can people catch swine flu from eating pork?

No. Swine influenza viruses are not transmitted by food. You cannot get swine influenza from eating pork or pork products.

Eating properly handled and cooked pork and pork products is safe.

Cooking pork to an internal temperature of 160°F kills the swine flu virus as it does other bacteria and viruses.