

News Release

Texas Animal Health Commission

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For immediate release:

Wild Hogs: No Indication of Flu Danger

You may catch the flu from your sick hunting buddy, but there's no evidence that you'll catch it from domestic or wild hogs, according to the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC). There is no evidence that the new strain of H1N1 influenza is in domestic or wild hogs. This disease is being spread from person to person.

"We are prepared to test hogs, if a human/animal disease link is identified. To date, there has been no indication that swine are involved," said Dr. Bob Hillman, Texas state veterinarian and head of the TAHC, the state's livestock and poultry health regulatory agency. "We are participating on all calls with health and emergency officials, are monitoring the situation, and are consulting with local officials, but so far, there is no indication of animal-to-human disease spread."

"Several hunters have asked about the safety of hunting wild hogs," said Dr. Hillman. "To repeat, there is no evidence that wild hogs are involved in this flu outbreak. Always, however, we advise wild hog hunters to protect themselves against potential exposure to swine brucellosis, a totally different disease that is not related in any way to the flu. We know from test results that about 10 percent of wild hogs carry swine brucellosis, a bacterial disease."

"When processing or butchering a wild hog, hunters should protect themselves against the blood and bodily fluids of wild hogs," he said. "When the wild hog meat is cooked, any swine brucellosis bacteria is destroyed by the heat."

Trappers who catch wild hogs and owners of domestic swine also should practice good biosecurity to prevent spreading the flu to pigs. "Don't get around swine if you become ill, and avoid having visitors near your pigs," said Dr. Hillman. "Have someone else feed the animals if you become ill with flu-like symptoms. Notify your health department or the TAHC so your pigs can be monitored for disease. Also, as a basic biosecurity measure, you should always wash your hands after handling animals."

Dr. Hillman said wild hog trappers and domestic swine owners should call their veterinarian if their swine develop a sudden onset of respiratory illness. The nearest TAHC area office or TAHC headquarters also should be notified so testing can be conducted according to the flu response protocol. The TAHC headquarters may be reached at 800-550-8242.