

## **EXHIBITOR MEETINGS TO PREVENT SWINE INFLUENZA:**

### **A CHECKLIST FOR BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE MEETING**

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and Michigan State University Extension would like to remind fairs and exhibitions to mitigate the risk of swine influenza at events by implementing extra precautions to protect exhibitors, the public and the pigs. We suggest swine project leaders and superintendents hold a meeting to remind exhibitors of the need to practice proper biosecurity practices and hygiene. The following can be used as a guideline to help you have a healthy fair week.

#### **Before the Meeting**

- Visit [msue.msu.edu/swineinfluenza](http://msue.msu.edu/swineinfluenza) and look at the signs available on "Fair and event resources" page
  - Print the signs you would like to use
  - Work with volunteers to hang signs up around fairgrounds and focus in particular on proper signage in the swine barn area
- Meet with fair personnel (and/or fair board) to explain the concerns and your plan for implementing prevention strategies
- Determine an adequate isolation area if any pigs should become sick
  - If needed, the isolation area should be away from other pigs where the animal cannot have nose to nose contact with other animals. Fans should be in the area to help keep the pig(s) cool, however air movement should not be encouraged from sick animals to healthy animals.
  - Fair visitors should not have access to the isolation area and interaction with the sick pigs should be limited to only a few people.
- Determine if there is a way to shorten the length of time that swine will be at the fair
  - Research shows that having swine at a fair for less than 72 hours (three days) will limit the spread of pathogens, including influenza
  - To make a change, consult fair staff (and board) and key volunteers to adjust the fair schedule
  - If it is not possible to reduce the schedule for all pigs to 72 hours, consider making modifications that would decrease the number of pigs at the fair. For example, sending breeding stock swine home after the show has concluded.
    - Encourage exhibitors who are taking pigs home to isolate their animals in an area away from other pigs at the facility.
- Determine if any modifications need to take place for the show or sale to minimize stress on the pigs or exposure to other pigs
  - Consider auctioning pigs without running them through the sale ring

- Tell buyers that the change is being made to protect the health of pigs that are under additional stress because of the hot weather
- Some sale alternatives include:
  - Projecting a photo of the animal and have the youth walk into the arena
  - Having the youth walk through the ring holding their ribbons and awards
- Purchase disinfecting products (Accel or bleach, bleach wipes, dish soap, several spray containers, and disposable plastic gloves) and other biosecurity products (such as disposable boot coverings)
- Select a group of core volunteers that will help implement prevention strategies
  - Be sure to include your fair veterinarian
- Promote the exhibitor meeting to parents and youth
  - Consider including auction personnel, a member of the livestock committee, fair management and other livestock superintendents (large and small)
- Arrange to have the point person for the fair and the fair veterinarian in attendance at the meeting
- Confirm that fair management knows how to contact the county health department if an outbreak should occur
- Determine who should be the media spokesperson if an outbreak should occur and make sure everyone knows who that person is
  - Usually this is the responsibility of the fair manager
- Only ONE person should be assigned to speak to the media and all others should send media inquiries to that person

### **Exhibitor Meeting Basic Agenda**

- Inform all exhibitors why extra precautions are needed
  - Priorities of animal health, exhibitor health and health and safety of fair visitors
  - Be transparent about the current swine influenza situation
    - Share details about the number and location of confirmed cases in the area/state
    - Swine influenza is zoonotic (explain what the means), and therefore extra precautions are necessary
    - Swine flu is common and runs its course quickly. Swine flu is **not** a foreign animal disease and does **not** wipe out entire populations, like highly pathogenic avian influenza.

- Review basic biosecurity practices such as cleaning and disinfecting equipment between animals
- Prevention methods
  - Clean and disinfect high traffic swine areas and materials
    - Wash rack – disinfect at least once per day
      - First remove all organic matter from the wash area then disinfect using a bleach/water solution (½ cup of bleach to one gallon of water mixed in a sprayer). Allow time for the wash rack to dry before use.
    - Scales – disinfect between weighing swine housed together at home or after every 6-8 pigs (determine your approach)
      - Remove all organic matter and then disinfect using a 10 percent bleach solution (½ cup of bleach to one gallon of water mixed in a sprayer)
    - Sorting boards – clean between classes during the show. If possible, source a second set of sorting boards to rotate between classes. This will allow one set to be disinfected while the other set is in the ring, causing minimal disruptions to the show.
      - Wood boards: Spray down with a bleach/water mixture of ½ cup of bleach to one gallon of water. (Individuals working the ring may want to consider wearing gloves to protect their hands)
      - Plastic boards: Use bleach wipes for quick cleaning
  - Do not allow food or drink to be consumed in animal areas
    - Make sure that crockpots, pizza and other food items are not allowed in the barn
    - Consider assigning a specific area in a different location for meal gatherings
      - Make sure that area has easy access to hand washing stations and/or disinfectants
    - Attempt to create a social area (eating, drinking, visiting) outside of the barn in order to limit the exposure to the animals.
  - Remind the public and exhibitors to practice good hygiene by washing their hands before and after handling animals.
- Review the procedures for letting the species superintendent and veterinarian know if you believe a pig may be ill
- Describe the isolation plan if a pig becomes sick
- Explain any changes made to the show or sale procedures (if applicable)

- ☐ Remind everyone that swine influenza cannot be spread by eating pork or handling pork products. All pork products from exhibition pigs remain completely safe for human consumption.
- ☐ Provide time to answer questions from exhibitors and parents

### **After the Meeting**

- ☐ Follow-up with volunteers to make sure that areas are being disinfected as requested
- ☐ Monitor barns to ensure that food is not being consumed in barns
- ☐ Assist with efforts during the swine show to disinfect
- ☐ If ANY pigs become ill or febrile (a temperature equal to or greater than 105 degrees), work with fair staff to report it to MDARD at 800-292-3939

### **After the Fair**

- ☐ Provide exhibitors with an area and materials to clean and disinfect equipment prior to going home
- ☐ Clean and disinfect the swine barn thoroughly
- ☐ Follow-up with exhibitors and volunteers to applaud efforts to prevent spread of disease
- ☐ Follow-up with exhibitor and volunteers if any health issues arise
- ☐ If any health issues arise be prepared to work with local and state health agencies, as well as the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. Information that may be requested by the agencies include:
  - ☐ Exhibitor list (name, birthdate or age, phone and address of all swine exhibitors)
  - ☐ Number of swine and exhibitors at the show
  - ☐ Destinations of all swine following the fair
  - ☐ Contact numbers and information for all swine destinations
  - ☐ Results of any testing or diagnostic work that has been completed
- ☐ Be prepared to communicate with your swine exhibitors if a health issue does arise. Typically, a hard copy mailing or email will suffice.