

NEWS RELEASE



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H1N1 SWINE FLU PANDEMIC - LINKS TO FACTORY FARMING

Compassion in World Farming analysis shows evidence of risk to human health posed by factory pig farms

Plus undercover investigations into intensive pig farming conditions – broadcast quality footage available. Warning: some of the images are disturbing.

Compassion in World Farming, the world's leading charity for farm animal welfare, today published a report analysing the latest scientific opinion on the significant risks posed to human health as a result of farming pigs in unnatural and inhumane conditions.

Key points from the Compassion in World Farming report include:

- Several scientific sources report links between the current swine flu outbreak and the 1998 outbreak which became widespread throughout North American factory farms (see below).
- There have been clear warnings in a number of highly regarded scientific publications over the last twenty years of the heightened potential for lethal pathogens to mutate and spread rapidly under cramped and unhygienic intensive farming conditions.
- A number of independent research bodies including The Pew Commission, The US Council for Agriculture, Science and Technology and The American Public

Health Association have warned of the public health risks resulting from industrialized animal agriculture.

- Scientists have been aware of the risk of a swine flu pandemic for many years. The current H1N1 virus is similar to swine viruses that have been circulating in the United States since the 1990s and it is understood to have genetic components that are very similar to the H3N2 type virus which struck a North Carolina pig farm in 1998 and became widespread throughout North American factory farms.
- The first H1N1 swine flu variant was identified almost 80 years ago. It was found to have been related to the H1N1 influenza epidemic in 1918-19 which killed more than 20 million people.
- However, in the UK swine flu is not recognised as a notifiable disease, nor do global animal disease control authorities require notification. There are no formal national surveillance systems in the majority of swine-producing countries.

Philip LyMBERy, Chief Executive of Compassion in World Farming said: “This pandemic is a global wake-up call. The scientific and public health communities have known for years that the cramped and squalid conditions on factory farms can present a significant danger to human health. Intensive farming is cruel and unnatural. These appalling industrial facilities are at odds with the most fundamental principles of animal health and welfare – and could potentially be a threat to the welfare of the consumer.”

This is not the first time that factory farming practices have threatened public health:

- The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) predicted in 2007 that ‘Industrial pig and poultry production has potential consequences for the development and transmission of some zoonotic disease agents. The proximity of thousands of confined animals increases the likelihood of transfer of pathogens within and between these populations, with consequent impacts on rates of pathogen evolution.’

- The World Health Organization has documented evidence that antimicrobial use in farm livestock has resulted in the emergence of drug resistant and untreatable strains of Salmonella, Campylobacter, Enterococci, and E coli.
- The UK Government's BSE Inquiry Report published in 2000 concluded that 'BSE developed into an epidemic as a consequence of an intensive farming practice - the recycling of animal protein in ruminant feed. This practice, unchallenged over decades, proved a recipe for disaster.'

- ends -

For further information, stills, broadcast footage, or to arrange interviews contact Valentina Moressa on 01483 521952 or 07771 926005 (out of office hours) or email valentina@ciwf.org; Carol McKenna on 07979 805 169 carolmckenna@ciwf.org.uk or Glenda Ross on 07957 432 451 glenda.ross@ciwf.org

READ THE FULL REPORT http://www.ciwf.org.uk/swineflu_report_050509

1. Stills and Film footage of Intensive Factory Pig Farms

(copyright Compassion in World Farming). FTP site available to download footage on request.

Undercover investigation of pig factory farming in Poland: Shows Smithfield-owned intensive pig farms (Filmed in 2005; conditions current at the time of the investigation)

<http://www.ciwf.org.uk/swineflu>

Expose of pig factory farming throughout Europe: Shows full range of conditions of intensive pig farms throughout Europe (Filmed in 2008)

http://www.ciwf.org.uk/what_we_do/pigs/state_of_eu_pigs/default.aspx

2. Current Scientific Sources for pig origin of the new flu

1. [://www.eurosurveillance.org/ViewArticle.aspx?ArticleId=19193](http://www.eurosurveillance.org/ViewArticle.aspx?ArticleId=19193) Eurosurveillance is a leading independent peer-reviewed European scientific journal originally co-funded by the European Commission, the Institut de Veille Sanitaire in Paris and the Health Protection Agency in London and now published by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control in Stockholm.

2. <http://blogs.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2009/04/exclusive-cdc-h.html#more> Virologist Ruben Donis, chief of the molecular virology and vaccines branch at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) discusses the genetics of the virus and confirms it is 'definitely' swine in origin and 'quite similar to viruses that were circulating in the United States.

3. http://www.promedmail.org/pls/otn/f?p=2400:1001:7541101479308610::NO::F2400_P1001_BA CK_PAGE,F2400_P1001_PUB_MAIL_ID:1000,77250

Raul Rabadan, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Biomedical Informatics, Center for Computational Biology and Bioinformatics, Columbia University College of Physicians and

Surgeons

4. New Scientist: Andrew Rambaut, University of Edinburgh - <http://www.newscientist.com/blogs/shortsharpscience/2009/04/why-the-pork-industry-hates-th.html>

3. Welfare issues in Intensive Pig farming

At least half of the world's 1.3 billion pigs that are slaughtered annually for meat are produced in intensive farming systems.

- pregnant sows are often confined in narrow crates and unable to move freely
- the piglets reared for meat are often kept in barren, crowded and sometimes dark conditions on slatted concrete floors without straw for bedding or rooting.
- pigs are often mutilated, and have their teeth clipped and tails docked without anaesthetic