



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service • Legislative and Public Affairs
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USDA TO MAKE INFLUENZA A H1N1 ISOLATE AVAILABLE TO LICENSED VETERINARY BIOLOGICS MANUFACTURERS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SWINE INFLUENZA VACCINE

WASHINGTON, June 2, 2009--The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced that it will make the master seed virus (MSV) for the novel H1N1 flu available to interested veterinary biologics manufacturers.

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's Center for Veterinary Biologics (CVB) will issue a notice to manufacturers next week making them aware that the MSV will be available as soon as it is fully characterized and tested. APHIS estimates the MSV will be ready in early- to mid-July 2009. USDA is deriving the MSV from a sample acquired from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through collaboration between Agricultural Research Service's (ARS) National Animal Disease Center (NADC) and CVB.

Since 1993, CVB has licensed swine influenza vaccine for several strains of swine influenza virus. However, preliminary results from work conducted at NADC in response to the 2009 H1N1 situation seem to indicate that current swine influenza vaccine products may not provide adequate protection against the new strain. APHIS and ARS continue to run additional tests to determine if any vaccines currently available protect against the 2009 H1N1 strain.

By providing all interested manufacturers with the same approved H1N1 MSV, APHIS will eliminate the need for each manufacturer to focus resources on developing its own master seed that would then require CVB confirmatory testing. Instead, while the "global" MSV is undergoing tests at CVB, each interested manufacturer can begin working immediately on the next steps involved in novel vaccine production. In the event that the virus appears to be an emerging disease in swine, producers will have a vaccine available much more quickly than they would under the normal production process, possibly as early as November or December 2009.

In March 2009, Mexico first noticed an increase in influenza-like illness in humans. The number of human cases rose steadily during April. On April 24, the World Health Organization issued a statement indicating that the United States and Mexico had confirmed several cases of human influenza virus H1N1. The number of confirmed and suspect cases in people spread rapidly through the United States, Canada and Europe. On May 2, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency reported that the virus had been confirmed in a swine herd located in Alberta, Canada; it is likely the herd was exposed to an infected person. The virus strain causing the current outbreaks is a novel H1N1 virus that has not been seen previously in either humans or animals.

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The CVB notice will be available online at
http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/vet_biologics/vb_notices_2009.shtml.

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