



August 8, 2012
For Immediate Release

ADDITIONAL H3N2v CASES CONFIRMED IN OHIO

Surveillance to Continue Through Fair Season

COLUMBUS — The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) today announced that 15 additional cases of Influenza A variant H3N2 have been confirmed in Ohio. There are currently 30 cases of H3N2v statewide; all individuals had direct contact with swine at fairs and no human-to-human passage of the virus has been confirmed.

The case breakdown per county is as follows:

Butler: 16
Clark: 3
Gallia: 4
Greene: 4
Hamilton: 3

Those with confirmed cases of H3N2v are between the ages of 6 months and 36 years old. To date, one of the confirmed cases was hospitalized as a precaution, but they have since been treated and released.

"There has been a tremendous increase in surveillance across the state," said Dr. Ted Wymyslo, Director of the Ohio Department of Health. "We are not surprised by this increase in confirmed cases. We are also aware the flu viruses are not uncommon in swine. Even as we identify additional illnesses, this strain appears to remain mild and does not seem to be any more severe than what we see during most flu seasons."

ODH continues to partner with local health departments and health care providers across the state on any reports of human influenza-like illness. Individuals who have reported close contact with swine and are exhibiting flu-like symptoms should reach out to their healthcare provider. The ODH lab will now be able to do final confirmation testing on H3N2v cases, as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has changed protocol. ODH will provide notice of any additional H3N2v human case confirmations on its website, <http://bit.ly/OhioH3N2vUpdates> and will send out a press release if any additional counties identify cases of H3N2v.

"Although this strain of influenza does not appear to be severe, we want to make sure that local fair boards and veterinarians have all the support they need to continue monitoring the situation and to ensure that Ohioans can safely attend their county fairs," said David Daniels, Director of the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA). "We want to keep the people of Ohio healthy, just as we want to keep our animals healthy."

ODA is actively working with industry partners to assist with public education efforts and to increase the number of hand sanitation stations available at county fairs. ODA is contacting each upcoming fair veterinarian instructing them to post signage for both the exhibitors and for the visiting public, to closely monitor swine health and to take temperatures of any ill swine and notify ODA immediately of the results. ODA will continue to swab and test animals as needed throughout the fair season.

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With county fairs running into the first week of October in Ohio, ODA and ODH remind residents and visitors that fair attendance is safe. Those attending the fair should remember:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and running water before and after exposure to animals.
- Never eat, drink or put things in your mouth in animal areas, and don't take food or drink into animal areas.
- Young children, pregnant women, people 65 and older and people with weakened immune systems should be extra careful around animals.
- If you have animals – including swine – watch them for signs of illness and call a veterinarian if you suspect they might be sick.
- Avoid close contact with animals that look or act ill, when possible.
- Avoid contact with swine if you are experiencing flu-like symptoms.

More information is available from ODH at: <http://bit.ly/OhioH3N2vUpdates>.

Chronology

- 8/8 ODH provides updates to partners during the weekly local health department call.
- 8/7 ODA distributes communication to fair exhibitors and county fair boards across Ohio reiterating the importance of good hygiene to prevent the spread of influenza viruses.
- 8/7 ODH establishes an internal strike team and assigns specific duties to subject matter experts and other staff members as the number of cases is expected to increase with the state's increased vigilance.
- 8/6 ODH holds statewide conference call with local health departments to provide an update on the situation; ODA holds statewide conference call with state fair boards.
- 8/5 CDC confirms additional human cases of H3N2v. The totals include 14 in Butler County and one in Clark County.
- 8/3 CDC holds national call to provide media with an overview of the H3N2v investigation.
- 8/2 ODH sends MedScape alert to all subscribing health care providers encouraging them to monitor for influenza-like illness, especially in those who had close contact with swine; an additional alert is sent to hospitals and local health departments asking for increased influenza surveillance.
- 8/2 Two swine sent home from Ohio State fair after showing flu-like symptoms; testing of samples underway.
- 8/2 CDC confirms nine individuals who had direct contact with swine at Butler County Fair have Influenza A variant H3N2.
- 8/1 ODA works with the Ohio Expo Commission to move extra hand sanitation stations and informational signage to the O'Neil Swine Arena at the Ohio State Fair.
- 8/1 ODA asks fair exhibitors to take precautions and alerts attending veterinarians to closely monitor swine as they arrive on the fairgrounds for signs of influenza.
- 8/1 ODH investigates flu illness from Butler County fair. Preliminary positive results indicate H3N2v strain of influenza.
- 7/31 ODH notifies local health departments to monitor influenza-like illness in their area.

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County Health Department Contacts:

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