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NRCS GUIDANCE TO EMPLOYEES REGARDING H1N1 FLU OUTBREAK

On April 28, 2009, NRCS Chief and National Food and Agriculture Council (NFAC) Chairman Dave White held a multi-agency teleconference to communicate information regarding the "H1N1 Flu Outbreak." USDA and NFAC jointly emphasized that their number one concern is the health and safety of USDA employees and their families. While the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has declared a public health emergency which is being managed under the direction of the Department of Homeland Security, it is important to remember that these steps are procedural and routine. By declaring a public health emergency, the CDC gains access to vaccines and has the ability to create more if needed. USDA is addressing three issues regarding this emergency:

1. Assure consumers that the food supply is safe. No pork products contain the H1N1 virus strain.
2. Assure the public that a robust animal health and disease surveillance system is in place. The system has not detected the H1N1 virus in swine herds in the United States or Mexico.
3. Assure United States trade partners that our food commodities are safe and trade should continue as normal.

In the near future, employees should expect to see emails regarding the H1N1 Flu Outbreak. For general information, please refer to the USDA website. Chief White encouraged all employees to bookmark the following sites on both work and home computers. These websites contain substantive measures employees and their families can take in the event of a human pandemic.

<http://www.da.usda.gov/beprepared/>

www.pandemicflu.gov

Employees are encouraged to use the correct nomenclature when discussing this outbreak. While the media has begun calling this event "The Swine Flu," the name is incorrect and potentially damaging to agricultural interests. The correct nomenclature is "H1N1 Flu Outbreak."

For more information about any of these subjects, please contact Ron Davidson, Assistant State Conservationist for Operations, at 801-524-4552 or ron.davidson@ut.usda.gov.

NRCS

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