

FAIRS & EXPOS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2018

POST CONVENTION SPECIAL

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Excellence in Exhibition: Preventing Disease in Animals and People – Bring Home the Blue, Not the Flu!

By: Center for Food Security and Public Health
at the Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine



Human Influenza

Seasonal influenza infections in the United States are most common during the fall and winter, and peak flu activity is often during December and February. Influenza viruses are mainly spread among people by droplets when infected people cough, sneeze, or talk. The viruses can also be spread by inanimate objects (called fomites), such as clothing, that are capable of transmitting infectious organisms from one living thing to another. Some strains of influenza A viruses of avian and swine origin are zoonotic and can infect people. In recent years, there have been over 400 human infections with influenza A viruses of swine origin (IAV-S). Strains that commonly circulate in swine and can infect humans include influenza A H1N1, H1N2, and H3N2. Influenza viruses that are normally found in swine are called variant viruses when they infect people and the letter “v” is attached to the influenza strain name (e.g., H3N2v).

The people with the highest risk of being infected by a zoonotic influenza virus are those in close contact with infected swine or poultry. The viruses can be transmitted to humans by fomites or aerosol (tiny infectious particles suspended in the air). Clinical signs of variant influenza viruses in people are similar to those of seasonal influenza;

both can occasionally cause severe illness.

Influenza and Animal Exhibitions

One location where influenza viruses can be transmitted between swine and people is at swine exhibitions. During 2012, influenza A H3N2v was responsible for more than 300 cases of illness in humans.

The median age of those infected was 7 years. Of the infected people, 93% reported having attended an agricultural fair and 95% reported having contact with swine. Since 2012, there have been small numbers of H3N2v cases in the United States each year. During 2016, 18 cases were reported. So far during 2017, 61 cases have been reported,

including two outbreaks in Ohio (15 total cases) and Maryland (39 total cases).

Preventing Influenza Transmission at Exhibitions

Youth agriculture programs, including raising and showing livestock, help youth develop responsibility, learn good sportsmanship, gain confidence, and teach the public about animal agriculture. However, many zoonotic diseases can affect exhibitors and spectators, especially when people have close contact with animals. Understanding disease risks and preventive measures is critical to reduce the occurrence of zoonotic diseases among youth associated with animal agriculture. Awareness of these risks can help youth to understand the importance for disease prevention for themselves, their animals, and the public. Additionally, fair organizers, teachers, volunteer leaders, and parents who understand these same disease risks can further reinforce measures needed to prevent zoonotic disease transmission.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) have an ongoing partnership to educate youth on the transmission and prevention of zoonoses, like influenza and E. coli O157:H7. The Influenza Education among Youth in Agriculture project is supported by CDC through a cooperative agreement with CSTE. The goal of this project is to help empower millions of youth in agricultural organizations like 4-H and FFA to learn ways to enjoy their animals while reducing the risk of zoonotic diseases. CDC and multiple organizations, including state public health departments, departments of agriculture, 4-H programs, and other partners, collaborate to create educational materials for youth to protect the health of animals and people.

One example of the Influenza Education among Youth in Agriculture project is a new online course, Excellence in Exhibition: Preventing Disease in Animals and People, which was developed to teach youth how to keep themselves and their

“Understanding disease risks and preventive measures is critical to reduce the occurrence of zoonotic diseases among youth associated with animal agriculture.”

animals safe and healthy so that they can continue to enjoy showing and teaching others about animal agriculture. The main focus of the course is influenza prevention; however, discussion of other zoonoses, including enteric pathogens that cause diarrheal disease, is included and prevention practices taught throughout the course can be applied to all zoonotic diseases.

The course is divided into six lessons. The first three lessons focus on specific zoonotic diseases, such as influenza, and ways to prevent transmission to humans and animals. Two additional lessons are presented as case studies, and the sixth lesson highlights agencies and career opportunities in One Health — the health of animals, people, and the environment. Estimated completion time for each lesson is 20-30 minutes. A certificate of completion with the student's name, chapter or club, and county is provided at the end of each lesson.

This course can be taken independently by anyone at any time, but is targeted at youth aged 13-18 years. A similar online course focusing on influenza and zoonotic disease prevention for a younger audience is under development and will be available during the summer of 2018.

Additional resources are available to students and instructors, including:

- Learning objectives for each lesson
- Disease factsheets
- Lesson worksheets
- PowerPoints that contain the same information as the online course
- Biosecurity and disease prevention poster

Additional materials have also been developed specifically to aid instructors, including:

- Learning objectives with answers for each lesson
- Answers to supplemental worksheets
- A hands-on biosecurity and disease spread activity guide.

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Excellence in Exhibition: Preventing Disease in Animals and People

Bring Home the Blue, Not the Flu!

Developed by: the Center for Food Security & Public Health
IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
College of Veterinary Medicine

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1: Introduction to Influenza, Zoonoses, and Disease Risks

2: Zoonotic Disease Transmission

3: Zoonotic Disease Prevention and Biosecurity

4: Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Outbreak Case Study

5: Influenza A Virus of Swine Origin (H3N2v) Outbreak Case Study

6: One Health Agencies and Careers

Introduction, Acknowledgements, and Directions

Finished? Take a survey to evaluate the course.

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We hope this course is used widely by youth, parents, advisors, leaders, and fair organizers. To maximize participation, we suggest:

- Requiring completion of the course as a prerequisite for showing at local or state animal exhibitions or fairs
- Incorporating the course into 4-H

- projects in animal or human health
- Developing competitions between clubs or chapters for participation
- Awarding chapters or clubs for the most participation (completion certificates)
- Incorporating the online course into classroom curriculum
- Using the course to prepare for FFA contests

The course was developed by the Center for Food Security and Public Health at the Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine in collaboration with the Iowa Department of Public Health and the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. To learn more and to take the course and access additional resources, visit www.bluenotflu.org. ■

References and Resources

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