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December 14, 2009

Dear Livestock Transporter:

**Re: Pandemic H1N1 (H1N1 flu) influenza vaccination**

People working directly with swine or poultry are encouraged to receive the H1N1 flu vaccine. Please share this information about vaccination and H1N1 flu within your company.

Vaccination helps prevent the spread of the H1N1 flu virus in the community and also protects individuals from severe complications that can be caused by influenza. All Manitobans are eligible to get the H1N1 flu shot.

People are most likely to get H1N1 flu from coming into contact with infected people in the community. However, infections have also occurred in swine in Manitoba and elsewhere, and in turkeys in Ontario and Chile. When livestock transporters who work with swine or poultry are vaccinated, this may reduce the likelihood that H1N1 flu will be introduced onto swine and poultry farms.

Vaccinating individuals who work directly with swine or poultry may help prevent the mixing of animal and human flu viruses which may result in changes to the circulating viruses (virus mutation).

Finally, although it is unusual for individuals to get influenza infections directly from swine or poultry, N-95 respirators, eye protection and gloves should be worn when working with sick swine or poultry to prevent infection. Vaccination will provide additional protection should the H1N1 flu virus be introduced into livestock.

**If you develop flu symptoms:**

It is recommended that people with flu symptoms (see the attached *Self Care for Influenza* fact sheet,) stay off of farms and away from swine or poultry for seven days. If you would like additional copies of this fact sheet, it is available at [http://www.gov.mb.ca/asset\\_library/flu/self\\_care.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/flu/self_care.pdf).

**To protect against the seasonal flu and H1N1 flu,** Manitoba Health and Workplace Safety and Health, Manitoba Labour and Immigration recommend that everyone incorporate these simple steps into daily routines:

- wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and warm running water after handling animals and before eating or drinking;
- use hand sanitizers if soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly soiled;

- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you sneeze, dispose of the tissue immediately, and then wash your hands;
- cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve – not into your hands, if you don't have a tissue; and
- avoid sharing food, eating utensils, towels or handkerchiefs.

Manitoba Health and Workplace Safety and Health are working closely with Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI) to reduce the risk of influenza transmission between humans and livestock.

For information on where to get the shot, or if you have any other human health questions, please contact your health care provider, your local public health unit or Health Links-Info Santé at 788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257 (toll-free).

Sincerely,

*Original Signed by Dr. Susan Roberecki*

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Planning Table  
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*Original Signed by Dr. Ted Redekop*

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Cc: Dr. Joel Kettner, Chief Provincial Public Health Officer  
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