

State Health Department Confirms H3N2v Influenza Case Common flu precautions recommended

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) laboratory has confirmed one case of what is known as the H3N2v influenza virus, which has now been reported in four states this year – Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. IDPH is working with local, state and federal health officials, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Illinois Department of Agriculture and the Coles County Health Department, to identify how a child, who attended the Coles County Fair, contracted the virus last week. This child has not been hospitalized. CDC is conducting additional laboratory testing.

H3N2v is a variant form of influenza A, which was first detected in 2011. The CDC is currently reporting more than a dozen cases in the U.S. this year, but the numbers will rise dramatically in the next few days. Most infections have occurred following contact with swine, and cases of the virus being transmitted from person to person are rare. So far, the severity of illnesses associated with this virus in people has been similar to the severity of illnesses associated with seasonal flu virus infections.

“The H3N2v virus is relatively new, but the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Illinois Department of Agriculture and our federal partners are watching this situation closely,” said IDPH Director Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck. “We want you to enjoy your time at the state or county fair, so one key thing to do to stay healthy is to wash your hands frequently, especially if you are around swine.”

The state health department and the state agriculture department have increased hand washing stations on the fair grounds and provided guidance and prevention recommendations to fair exhibitors, local health departments and health care providers. The department of agriculture looks at every animal at the state fair grounds and a veterinarian is on site.

Tips to avoid influenza include:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water before and after exposure to animals.
- Do not eat, drink or put anything in your mouth while visiting animal areas.
- Do not take food or drinks into animal areas.
- Avoid close contact with animals that look or act ill.
- Use caution when deciding to visit an animal area if you have an underlying health condition.

Influenza is contracted through droplets when an infected person or animal coughs or sneezes. Those droplets can either be inhaled or can be on a surface you touch with your hand, and then touch your mouth or nose.

Flu symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache and fatigue. Illness can last a week or two. Certain people have a higher risk of serious infection from influenza including the very young, elderly, pregnant women, people with weakened immune systems and those with asthma, diabetes and heart disease. If you have, or do come into contact with swine and are experiencing flu symptoms, contact your health care provider.

Influenza A (H3N2v) Virus

Influenza A (H3N2v) may be circulating widely in U.S. swine at this time. This virus has acquired the 2009 H1N1 virus M gene which may make H3N2 viruses in swine more transmissible to humans.

From July 12 through August 1, 2012, 16 confirmed human cases of H3N2v virus were reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from residents of three states (Indiana, Ohio and Hawaii). Influenza virus is more commonly reported in winter months. All 16 cases reported contact with swine prior to illness onset; 15 reported contact while attending or exhibiting swine at an agricultural fair. These cases have had direct or close contact with swine, including walking in a barn with sick pigs. A small number of the cases were believed to have been infected from other people. Most cases have occurred in children. Children are believed to have little to no pre-existing immunity to this new virus, while adults may have some pre-existing immunity. More severe illness can happen in persons with high risk conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, neurological or neurodevelopmental conditions, or women who are pregnant. Also, those younger than five years or older than 65 years are also at higher risk.

CDC recommendations:

- Annual seasonal influenza vaccination for all persons 6 months of age and older to protect against seasonal influenza. This vaccine is unlikely to protect against variant viruses like H3N2v. However, seasonal influenza vaccination in persons with swine contact will reduce the number of influenza like illnesses in these persons that may be confused with H3N2v virus infection and decrease the opportunity for reassortment of multiple virus strains in one person.
- Persons with swine contact who have influenza-like illness (fever, cough, runny nose and possibly vomiting and diarrhea) and who are at high risk for influenza virus complications may wish to go to their doctor and mention they have swine contact. Doctors may prescribe antiviral drugs.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water before and after exposure to animals.
- Never eat, drink or put things in your mouth while in animal areas and don't take food or drink into animal areas.
- Avoid contact with pigs if you are experiencing influenza-like symptoms as people can transmit influenza virus infection to pigs.
- Persons who are at high risk for complications from influenza should avoid contact with pigs that have signs of influenza (coughing, sneezing, high fevers, breathing difficulties, nasal discharge and going off feed).

Risk Reduction at fairs and other places animals are exhibited:

- Maintain hand-washing stations that are accessible to both children and adults and signage that directs visitors to wash hands when exiting animal areas.
- Provide visitors with educational messages before they enter animal barn or exhibition areas

Resources:

CDC information at http://www.cdc.gov/flu/spotlights/h3n2v_us_cases.htm

Brochure: (What People who Raise Pigs Need to Know about Influenza) at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swineflu/people-raise-pigs-flu.htm>

Signage for fairs: <http://nasphv.org/documentsCompendiumAnimals.html>

[Safety at Animal Exhibits Poster](#)

[Animal Exhibits Handwashing Poster](#)

Public Health Veterinarian Warns About West Nile Virus (WNV)

Many Illinois residents are not thinking about West Nile Virus (WNV) prevention because they believe that the recent drought has eliminated most mosquitoes. Actually, the drought has eliminated "floodwater mosquitoes," which very rarely carry WNV. In contrast, the extreme heat and dry weather actually favors the "Culex" mosquito, the primary carrier of WNV, which breeds in street catch basins (storm drains) and similar locations. Also, the high temperature accelerates WNV multiplication in the mosquito and mosquitoes feeding on birds. For example, the 2002 WNV outbreak in Illinois occurred during a dry hot summer. Consequently, hot summer temperatures increase Culex mosquitoes, which in turn increases the proportion of birds infected with WNV and the risk of human or unvaccinated horse infections. Currently, 26 Illinois counties have reported at least one WNV positive bird or mosquito sample compared to 19 counties for all of 2011. Several counties have reported multiple WNV positive mosquito samples, which is associated with an increased risk of WNV in people or unvaccinated horses. Educating the public that WNV risk increases during hot, dry weather (despite the absence of hordes of non-vector "floodwater" mosquitoes produced by heavy rainfall) continues to be a challenge to local and state officials. WNV infection in both horses and humans is reportable to state authorities.

Both the hot dry weather and the environmental results for WNV testing of mosquitoes and birds in Illinois indicate we are entering the period of high risk for WNV infection. Up-to-date information on WNV in Illinois this summer can be found at <http://www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/wnvsurveillance12.htm>.

NIOSH Develops Web Page on Veterinary Safety and Health

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), an Institute of the CDC, has developed a Web page on Veterinary Safety and Health. The main Web page and its linked sub-pages contain a compilation of information and resources about hazard prevention and infection control, and physical, chemical, biological, and other hazards to veterinary personnel. The page was reviewed by many veterinarians and national veterinary associations, including some NASPHV members. Thank you very much to those who assisted in its development and review; your input was very helpful.

NIOSH Veterinary Safety and Health Web page:

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/veterinary/>

There will be an ongoing effort to keep this resource current and useful. If anyone has suggested topics or resources to add to these pages please contact me. The intent of this Web resource is to focus on priority topics and the best resources available about preventing veterinary hazards and protecting veterinary workers.

India Grapples with Millions of Stray Dogs

(Courtesy AVMA) - Since 2001, euthanizing dogs has been illegal in India, resulting in an explosion in the stray dog population. It's estimated that tens of millions of strays roam the country's streets, biting millions of people with the human rabies toll reaching an estimated 20,000 deaths each year. Some health officials and animal advocates are promoting aggressive spay and neuter programs along with vaccinations, while others are calling for the use of a contraceptive vaccine and reinstating euthanasia. ([The New York Times](#))

New Jersey Court Refuses Non-economic Damages

(Courtesy AAHA) - Suing for emotional distress is reserved for the deaths of humans, not animals, the New Jersey Supreme Court recently ruled.

On July 31, 2012, the court ruled that a close relationship with a pet could not be considered at the same level of a close familial relationship.

"Although we recognize that many people form close bonds with their pets, we conclude that those

bonds do not rise to the level of a close familial relationship or intimate, marital-like bond," Justice Helen Hoens wrote for the court in a 5-0 decision.

According to nj.com, Joyce McDougall, sued after her 9-year-old maltese-poodle mix named Angel was mauled by a larger dog owned by Charlot Lamm in 2007.

McDougall, a divorced mother of three living alone with Angel, sued for emotional distress and the cost to replace the dog, estimated at \$1,395. [Read full article...](#)

AAFP Announces 150 Cat Friendly Practices

HILLSBOROUGH, NJ – The American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) has reported that 150 veterinary clinics have been awarded with the AAFP Cat Friendly Practice (CFP) status.

"The AAFP's Cat Friendly Practice program was designed to incorporate the cats distinct needs by providing the veterinary team with the resources and strategies needed to achieve elevated standards of feline care," said Dr. Elizabeth Colleran, spokesperson for the Cat Friendly Practice program. "We are pleased to see that these 150 veterinary clinics have taken the necessary steps to become an AAFP Cat Friendly Practice."

Developed to equip veterinary practices with the techniques needed to address the distinct needs of cats, the CFP program utilizes an online self-assessment checklist. Veterinary practices review the checklist criteria, evaluate their clinic and implement the necessary criteria needed to meet the standard. Clinics may achieve one of two standards. The Silver Standard is designated to those practices that meet the essential criteria for a CFP, while the Gold Standard is awarded to those practices that have incorporated the optimum cat-friendly checklist criteria.

After earning the Cat Friendly Practice designation, veterinary clinics are encouraged to continue that momentum through education for all veterinary staff, emphasizing the essential role of client communication and education during the veterinary visit to convey the importance of preventive care for cats and conveying the value of the veterinary visit.

"This is one of the first coordinated efforts in the United States to standardize the elements that make a practice cat friendly and to give those practices additional tools for making the most of the program," Dr. Colleran emphasized. "We are proud of the achievement that these 150 AAFP Cat Friendly Practices have earned and are looking forward to providing them with additional resources so they can provide the highest quality of feline care. In addition there are 439 practices who are also going through the process to become an AAFP Cat Friendly Practice."

To view a complete listing of veterinary clinics that have achieved the Cat Friendly Practice status, [click here](#).

About the Photo

A striking black-winged red bird, the [Scarlet Tanager](#) (*Piranga olivacea*) is a common species of the eastern forest interior. Despite its brilliant coloring it is often overlooked because of its rather secretive behavior and its preference for the forest canopy.

The adult is a medium-sized songbird. The male is a distinctive bright red bird with black wings and tail. In alternate plumage it is bright red all over; although variable in hue and can sometimes be somewhat orange. It has a black tail and wings, whitish bill, dark eye and gray legs. In basic plumage it has a bright olive-green body, black wings and tail. During molts in spring and fall, the male shows mixed red and olive green in body feathers.

The female has an olive green to yellow body; brightest on throat, rump and undertail. It has brownish olive wings and the tail is edged in green.

Immature Scarlet Tanagers resemble the adult female. The first spring male has a lighter red or

orange body.

The response of the Scarlet Tanager to habitat fragmentation varies from place to place. In the heart of its range in the Northeast, it can be found in small forest patches. In the Midwest, similar sized forest patches would have no tanagers. These conclusions are based on Project Tanager at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology; more information can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

I photographed this male Scarlet Tanager in Union County, IL in 1993.

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