



05-02-09

Joint U.S., Canadian, Mexican statement on H1N1 flu outbreak

By Agri-Pulse Staff

© Copyright Agri-Pulse Communications, Inc.

In a joint statement Saturday on the H1N1 flu outbreak, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, Canadian Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Gerry Ritz, and Mexican Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food Alberto Cardenas called for calm, for a science-based response and for rejecting trade restrictions. They emphasized that H1N1 virus transmission is person-to-person, without any relation to food or swine. The complete joint statement reads as follows:

“We would like to express our deepest sympathies for the victims of the current outbreak of H1N1 influenza and emphasize that our governments are doing everything they can to bring the outbreak under control.”

“We strongly urge the international community not to use the outbreak of the H1N1 influenza as a reason to create unnecessary trade restrictions and that decisions be made based on sound scientific evidence. H1N1 influenza viruses are not spread by food.”

“International organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) all reiterate that the consumption of pork meat and related products do not present a health risk of contracting H1N1 influenza. Canadian, American and Mexican authorities have emphasized that they have not found a case of influenza in swine herds. All three of our countries are committed to ongoing monitoring and vigilance in both public and animal health.”

“The current outbreak of H1N1 influenza, which is being spread from person to person, is being addressed by the health and sanitary authorities of our three countries, emphasizing the need for cooperation and a common front against this new virus. In addition, we fully support OIE efforts to alert and disseminate relevant information published by its members’ laboratories in real time about the disease.”