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SPA
SEAFOOD PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION

"Swine Flu" Information Bulletin

In response to numerous inquiries we are receiving from members, the Seafood Products Association is providing this information bulletin to address questions regarding;

1. The safety of seafood with regard to transmission of swine influenza; and
2. Processing facility considerations for optimal protection of process workers and manufactured food products

The following is a digest of information from public health resources referenced at the conclusion of this bulletin. As this is a rapidly developing issue, it would be advisable to access the links provided for these resources for current updates.

General Information

The type of influenza of current concern appears to be a novel human infection identified as Influenza Type A (H1N1). It is being widely referred to as "swine flu" because it contains genetic material commonly identified in other strains of influenza infecting swine, but also contains genetic material from other human and avian flu strains. The mixing or re-assortment of genetic material from a variety of flu types can occur in infected pigs.

The strain of current concern has demonstrated human to human transmission.

Since this is a new strain, people will likely have no natural immunity to protect against the virus, and concern has been raised due to clinical confirmation of this strain in several countries (11 as of April 30). The severity of the infection has appeared to vary by geographical location, but has ranged from mild typical flu symptoms to severe respiratory ailment and death. Severity may also be affected by other underlying health conditions of infected individuals.

Safety of Seafood Products

- There is no evidence of swine influenza being transmitted to humans from food products for human consumption, including seafood.
- Cooking food to an internal temperature of 160°F kills the swine flu virus as it does other bacteria and viruses. This reference to thermal destruction of the virus does not imply cooking is necessary to prevent transmission, as noted above there is no evidence of human transmission from either raw or cooked foods.
- With regard to processed seafood, canned commercially sterile, and pasteurized products are cooked at temperatures well beyond those necessary to destroy viruses and bacteria of public health significance. Again it is important to note that these process steps are not necessary to prevent transmission of the virus from food to humans, but are typically applied to many types of seafood.

Processing Facility and Worker Considerations

- All seafood processing facilities are required to have appropriate Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOPs) and comply with Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) that control employee health conditions that could result in contamination of food, packaging, and/or food contact surfaces.
- Supervisory personnel should be trained to recognize symptoms of illness, including typical flu-like symptoms that are also associated with the current strain of concern. The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue.
- With regard to worker travel, at this time the World Health Organization (WHO) advises no restriction of regular travel or closure of borders.
- The main way that influenza viruses are thought to spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. This can happen when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person are propelled through the air and deposited on the mouth or nose of people nearby. Influenza viruses may also be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets on another person or an object and then touches their own mouth or nose (or someone else's mouth or nose) before washing their hands.
- Flu viruses are typically contagious for up to 7 days after the onset of symptoms, and while fever persists. This should be considered with regard to company policies for handling situations where employees are symptomatic.

Other public health resources;

- World Health Organization (WHO)
  - http://www.who.int/en/
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) -
  - http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
  - http://pandemicflu.gov/faq/swineflu/
- United Sates Department of Agriculture (USDA)
  - http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome
- Health Canada
  - http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/index-eng.php
- State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Services
  - http://www.pandemicflu.alaska.gov/