

**STATEMENT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON THE FOOD CHAIN AND ANIMAL HEALTH OF 5 MAY 2009**

On 2 May 2009, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency announced that it had found the Influenza A/H1N1 virus in a swine herd in Alberta. While investigations are still ongoing, the Canadian authorities consider that it is highly probable that the pigs were exposed to the virus from a worker who had recently returned from Mexico. If these findings are confirmed this would be the first reported case of human-to-animal transmission of the novel influenza A/H1N1 virus.

This Committee has discussed the event and acknowledges the transparency of Canada and the rapidity with which the Canadian authorities have taken measures to prevent spread of virus from the concerned pig farm.

The findings in Canada do not suggest that there is a need to change the statements made by the relevant international organisations (OIE/WHO/FAO/WTO/ECDC/EFSA) on the safety of eating pork and pork products. This Committee considers that from the evidence available restrictions on trade of pigs and their products based on this event would not be justified.

However, the importance of the pigs in the epidemiology of the novel influenza A/H1N1 virus is still to be fully understood and assessed by the scientific community. To this end this Committee welcomes the announcement made by the Commission that it intends to grant financial support to the experimental studies to be carried out by the Community Reference Laboratory for avian influenza in Weybridge, UK, together with other European laboratories, in the near future.

The Committee concluded that as a normal precaution pig farmers should rigorously apply biosecurity and hygiene rules in order to reduce the risk that any virus enters a pig farm by means of movements of people, vehicles, and any other material.