



EUROPEAN  
COMMISSION

Community Research

## EU-FUNDED RESEARCH PROJECT

### 1<sup>st</sup> European surveillance network for influenza in pigs (ESNIP 1)

**Time of action:** ESNIP 1 started in January 2001 and ended in December 2003. It has been expanded to ESNIP 2

**EU budget (funding):** €270,000

Pigs are particularly prone to infection by viruses of human or avian origin; swine influenza viruses (SIV) cause considerable losses to European pig producers. Moreover, pigs may be involved in the epidemiology of influenza as they can act as 'mixing vessels' between viruses from both humans and birds, leading to the emergence of new hybrid subtypes.

The aim of this project was to form a coordinated surveillance system of influenza in pigs, using standardised diagnostic and reporting methods.

The available information about SIV isolates was collected in a database and selected virus samples were stored in a central virus bank. Subsequent analysis showed that three SIV subtypes are circulating in Europe. H1N1 and H3N2 originated from the transmission of the whole virus from birds and humans respectively; a third and entirely new H1N2 subtype appeared from the mixing of human and avian strains. This latter subtype should be added to currently used SIV vaccines.

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