



STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY  
ANIMAL HEALTH  
28 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0028

JANET T. MILLS  
GOVERNOR

AMANDA E. BEAL  
COMMISSIONER

June 23, 2020

## Swine Health Update Summer 2020

Greeting, Maine pig owners! The DACF Animal Health Team has received an unusually high number of consults about sickly, coughing pigs in the past month. We have identified a number of possible reasons for this and thought it would be useful to share this information with you. Food for thought for your pig-raising venture:

The 2020 livestock production season has been impacted by the pandemic in much the same way as other aspects of our lives. Livestock producers in New England are experiencing a new or renewed interest in raising one's own livestock; whether it's for food security purposes or simply enjoyment now that we're all spending more time at home. This renewed interest in raising livestock has created a huge demand for piglets and feeder pigs in New England. Additionally, the delays in processing of market-ready hogs in the Midwest has caused a back-up in the commercial swine industry supply chain, making more piglets and feeder pigs available to this new market. Many swine producers across the country are doing their best to move animals within their production system or creatively sending animals out through non-traditional channels. This can result in animals traveling long distances through markets and facilities that wouldn't normally accept or redistribute these animals. *What this means for Maine pig producers is that the piglets you purchase from out of state may have had a significantly longer and more stressful journey than you realize!* The effect of this is that your piglet or feeder pig's health may be compromised at purchase or a few days later, and you should keep this in mind as you design your pig management strategy this season.

Some things you should consider:

- 1) **Does the animal I've purchased from out of state have an individual animal identification (ID)?** All pigs imported into Maine must have ID. This is most commonly accomplished with the use of an ear tag. For questions about animal ID, please call your veterinarian or a member of the DACF Animal Health team.
- 2) **Did the animal come into Maine with a health certificate (CVI)?** This document certifies that the animal originated from a facility that was free from several significant diseases of swine. While it doesn't mean the animals are free of all diseases or parasites, it's a minimum requirement for health assurance.
- 3) **Do I have a veterinarian I am ready to call if my new pigs get sick?** Several mixed practice and large animal-only veterinarians in Maine are available to evaluate pigs. DACF Animal Health maintains a list of farm animal veterinarians to share with livestock and poultry producers. Please call our office (207-287-3701) to request this resource if needed.
- 4) **Do I have a way to separate my new pigs when they arrive at my farm?** This is important for two reasons: 1) prevent introduction of new diseases by making sure the new pigs are free of signs of illness before mixing them with any animals already on your farm; and 2) the initial isolation allows the new pigs to get used to their new environment and diet and recover from the stress of travel.

MICHELLE WALSH, DVM  
STATE VETERINARIAN  
90 BLOSSOM LANE, DEERING BUILDING



PHONE: (207) 287-3701  
FAX: (207) 287-7548  
WWW.MAINE.GOV/DACF

Biosecurity practice and vaccination are important tools to maintain healthy livestock of any kind. At the end of this notice, please find some suggested farm biosecurity resources. Your veterinarian is best positioned to recommend farm-specific vaccination protocols, and these should always be used in combination with biosecurity and sanitation practice—never instead of them. If you have concerns about unusual numbers of sick or dead pigs, you can always reach a member of the DACF Animal Health team below.

As a reminder, COVID 19 has not been demonstrated to infect swine or pass from swine to people either through live animal contact or consuming pork. *COVID 19 is not a disease of pigs. All swine import requirements are in place, as usual, to prevent transmission of important diseases of swine.* Those requirements are summarized in the UMaine Extension Factsheet linked in the resources below. Please let us know if you have questions about this notice, or if you need information about biosecurity or our field veterinary resources in Maine.

Stay well and enjoy your summer!

Sincerely,

Maine State Veterinarians  
ME DACF Animal and Plant Health  
General Inquiries: 207-287-3701

*State Veterinarian*  
**Dr. Michele Walsh**  
[michele.walsh@maine.gov](mailto:michele.walsh@maine.gov)

*Assistant State Veterinarian*  
**Dr. Rachael Fiske**  
[rachael.fiske@maine.gov](mailto:rachael.fiske@maine.gov)

*Assistant State Veterinarian*  
**Dr. Carolyn Hurwitz**  
[carolyn.hurwitz@maine.gov](mailto:carolyn.hurwitz@maine.gov)

Swine Resources:

- 1) **Healthy Farms Healthy Agriculture:** <https://www.healthyagriculture.org/livestock/pigs/>
- 2) **PENN State Extension: Biosecurity Risk Assessment:** <https://extension.psu.edu/biosecurity-risk-assessment-livestock-exhibitions>
- 3) **Biosecurity for Pigs with Outdoor Access (USDA):** [https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal\\_health/biosecurity-for-pigs-outdoor-access-factsheet.pdf](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/biosecurity-for-pigs-outdoor-access-factsheet.pdf)
- 4) **UMCE Sourcing Piglets from Out of State:** <https://extension.umaine.edu/publications/1118e/>
- 5) **UMCE General Recommendations for Swine Producers:** <https://extension.umaine.edu/livestock/swine/>
- 6) **UMCE Roundworms in Swine:** <https://extension.umaine.edu/publications/1120e/>