



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Smithfield Sends Update to Employees on Testing Process at Veracruz Joint Venture

SMITHFIELD, Va., May 1, 2009 /PRNewswire via COMTEX News Network/ -- C. Larry Pope, President and Chief Executive Officer of Smithfield Foods, Inc. (NYSE: SFD), sent the following update to all employees on the progress of the testing being conducted at its joint venture operation in Veracruz:

To Our Employees:

The media continues to cover the global A(H1N1) influenza outbreak on a minute-to-minute basis, and while we would like to accommodate them and the public about the day-to-day status of the testing being conducted at our joint venture farm in Veracruz, it is physically impossible. Unfortunately, the testing and evaluation process takes time. Nevertheless, we have promised to keep you apprised of events, and therefore, in keeping with that commitment, here is the latest "news."

Due to a lack of any connection to swine, the World Health Organization has renamed this virus A(H1N1). In addition, the CDC and all other regulatory and scientific bodies have confirmed that you cannot get A(H1N1) influenza from eating pork or pork products, and there is no evidence that any of the people affected had contact with pigs.

We are pleased that the continuing coverage has included the affirmation by public health officials, government officials, including President Obama and others, that the A(H1N1) influenza virus is not transmitted by food and can only pass from human to human. I am also pleased to reconfirm that there is no evidence at this time that the hogs at Veracruz, or anywhere else, have been infected with A(H1N1) influenza.

This notwithstanding and so the public can have full confidence in the health of our Mexican pig herd, yesterday we submitted samples from our farm in Veracruz for further testing under the direction of Mexican governmental authorities, including genetic sequence analysis that will determine what, if any, strains of flu are present. The results will enable us to conclude with certainty that the A(H1N1) strain is not present in our hogs. These tests will take approximately twelve days.

Finally, I would like to reinforce that since A(H1N1) cannot be transmitted through food, these results - positive or negative - will not have any effect on the food chain. This virus spreads the same way that the seasonal flu does every year - through the coughs, sneezes, and germs of people that are infected. Pork and pork products, whether they come from Smithfield or anyone else, are and will continue to be safe.

We will continue to update you as we have more information.

C. Larry Pope

With sales of \$12 billion, Smithfield Foods is the leading processor and marketer of fresh pork and packaged meats in the United States, as well as the largest producer of hogs. For more information, visit www.smithfieldfoods.com.

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