



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Smithfield Foods Sends Letter to Employees

SMITHFIELD, Va., April 30, 2009 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX News Network/ -- C. Larry Pope, President and Chief Executive Officer of Smithfield Foods, Inc. (NYSE: SFD), sent the following letter to all employees:

To Our Employees:

Like you, I have been closely monitoring all aspects of the H1N1 influenza outbreak (this is the official name of the mis-named but widely quoted "swine flu" since it has been determined by health officials throughout the world that the illness is a mutation of a number of strains). Unfortunately, the media and bloggers have jumped to conclusions based more on fear than fact and have sensationalized a serious illness.

As of this writing, there are still a number of facts about H1N1 that remain a mystery, including where the strain originated, how it is spreading, how far it will spread and when it will run its course. Hopefully, answers to these questions will soon be resolved. However, let me share with you some facts we do know at this time...namely, what Smithfield has done, is doing and will continue to do about keeping our workers and pigs healthy.

Earlier this week, when news of the virus first became public, we reported that we had found no evidence of the presence of the influenza virus in any of our pig herds or our employees at any of our worldwide operations, including those in the United States. Yesterday, we also announced that because so much attention was being given to the joint operation we run with a Mexican company in Veracruz (and it was believed by some that the initial outbreak of H1N1 flu originated with a little boy in La Gloria, a town not far from a farm that our joint venture partner operates in Mexico), we ran additional tests of pigs at that facility. The results of these independent laboratory tests should be available in a few days and we will, of course, announce the results. As you probably also have learned, Mexican health authorities, working with U.S. and health officials from other countries, have also inspected our farms in Veracruz and found no evidence of H1N1 flu at all.

As we have always said, our first priority as a company is to ensure the health and safety of our herds and our employees so that consumers can trust our products. Today, more than ever, and despite the fear generated by those who are not well-informed, I can assure you that consuming pork products is safe, and that Smithfield's brands, in particular, still stand for the highest quality.

It is an unfortunate fact of life these days that until more hard evidence is available from health officials, the public will continue to be bombarded by unfounded opinions, non-scientific statements and unrestrained internet media, rumor and speculation. Thus, it might be helpful to review some of the facts:

- According to The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the H1N1 influenza virus is not transmitted by food, so you cannot get the disease from eating pork or pork products.

- The CDC also stated that while the virus is contagious from humans to humans, it has not found any evidence to indicate that any of the illnesses resulted from contact with pigs, hence, the decision by the Government to rename the virus H1N1 makes sense and helps remove the "fear factor" from pork products.

- Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack confirmed that there is no evidence at this time showing that swine have been infected with H1N1 influenza.

In addition to conducting the recent tests I mentioned above, let me remind you of our policy regarding the health of our pig herds and employees. All of our herds at all of our operations, including at our joint ventures in Mexico and elsewhere, are tested regularly for instances of various bacteria and disease, including influenza. We routinely administer flu vaccines to our herds in order to protect them from potential viruses and conduct monthly tests to examine the presence and identity of

different flu strains. At no point have any of these tests revealed this strain of the influenza virus in our herds in any country where our company operates.

As we have previously said, we are cooperating fully with health officials and aiding in their investigation into the source of the H1N1 outbreak, and have allowed exhaustive testing of our hogs to ensure that this virus has not infected our farms. These actions were taken voluntarily by the Company. We will also continue to maintain rigorous safety procedures at all of our operations, including limiting farm access to necessary personnel, preventing access to personnel who have recently returned from international travel, and enforcing essential personal hygiene practices.

I am hopeful that the cause of the outbreak is soon found. Unfortunately, an epidemic such as this is difficult to contain, but we can pray that health officials and doctors around the world will find answers soon. For us, it is particularly important to remain focused on our immediate responsibilities. Every single one of us plays a critical role in demonstrating our uncompromising commitment to the safety of our products.

Thank you for all of your efforts. I will continue to update you as I can.

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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