

Deadly Disease Could Affect Swine Production in Pennsylvania

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A potentially deadly disease to both animals and humans could significantly impact the pork production industry and has caused the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture to take swift action to curb the disease's spread.

On Monday, the department designated *Streptococcus equi* (subspecies *zooepidemicus*) a "Dangerous Transmissible Disease" (DTD) after it was blamed for a pig death in the state. *Strep zoo* is of particular concern because it can be transmitted to humans, and can cause severe and potentially fatal illness. *Strep zoo* does not affect poultry.

The disease was first detected in Pennsylvania at an approved livestock market after originating from a farm that was in the process of selling down. It had previously affected or decimated herds in various states across the eastern U.S. and Midwest. The recent outbreaks are the first of its kind affecting pigs in the country.

The designation of *Strep zoo* as a DTD means the state is monitoring the situation and tracking the pathogen's progression. Veterinarians must report all instances of the disease. Farmers may not interfere with testing, and may not conceal any instances of the disease.

Strep zoo can be identified through diagnostic testing. Farmers and those in the pork industry should immediately report these clinical signs:

- Sudden onset lethargy
- Weakness
- High fever
- Swift spread among pigs
- Rapid mortality

The disease is spread among multiple species via contact with respiratory droplets and other bodily fluids, and has historically been spread to humans by horses, or by drinking unpasteurized milk from infected cows.

Farmers can help reduce the spread of disease by implementing strict biosecurity protocols, monitoring visitors to the farm, and ensuring that all transportation personnel are careful to avoid introducing the pathogen via trucks and their clothing.

It is imperative that farmers, dealers, haulers, markets and slaughter facilities be on the lookout for signs of *Strep zoo*. Anyone observing clinical signs that could point to *Strep zoo* should immediately call an accredited veterinarian.

We will be monitoring the spread of Strep zoo across Pennsylvania and in the U.S., and will update this alert as more information becomes available.

If you are concerned about how a *Strep zoo* outbreak may impact your growing contracts, please [contact me](#) or anyone in the [Barley Snyder Food & Agribusiness Industry Group](#).

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