



### **The OFFLU Swine Influenza Group – targeting and coordinating surveillance and research to meet global influenza needs**

The OFFLU Swine Influenza Virus (SIV) group is a network of experts on swine influenza who are actively engaged in research and surveillance activities to understand the disease and contribute to improving its control and prevention. The SIV group represents both animal health and public health sectors with a goal to have global representation. By sharing and analyzing surveillance data the group generates a global picture of influenza viruses circulating in swine which is shared with the international community through regular bulletins and scientific publications and made available on the OFFLU website. The ultimate goal of the group is to reduce the burden of swine influenza through promotion of detection and intervention programs on a global scale.

Through on-going dialogue, representation at national and international meetings and by publishing practical guidance, the group coordinates influenza surveillance and research in pigs at a global level and harmonizes approaches to diagnostics.

The outputs of the group are beneficial to both public health and animal health, ultimately providing a better understanding of the mechanisms behind pathogenicity of influenza virus infection in different species, interspecies transmission and host adaptation. This is needed so that influenza virus infections can be managed effectively to provide food security, maximal economic benefits from pig production, and to protect public health.

The OFFLU SIV group is flexible with minimal bureaucracy. It can be mobilized rapidly to provide technical advice and surveillance data from all regions that have significant pig population density.

Participation of pig farmers and the pork industry in influenza surveillance is entirely voluntary, so the importance of building trust with these stakeholders, and of demonstrating the benefits of surveillance to them, cannot be over emphasized. Members of the OFFLU SIV group have a long history of working with their industry stakeholders.

The OFFLU SIV group was established under the umbrella of the OIE-FAO network of expertise on animal influenza (OFFLU) and its collaboration with the WHO. It is led by scientists and is governed within the framework of the OFFLU network [www.offlu.net](http://www.offlu.net)

## Key outputs:

- Annual expert meetings to share surveillance data and latest research findings:  
[http://www.offlu.net/fileadmin/home/en/meeting-reports/pdf/SIV\\_Paris\\_2012/SIV\\_minutes\\_25May\\_final.pdf](http://www.offlu.net/fileadmin/home/en/meeting-reports/pdf/SIV_Paris_2012/SIV_minutes_25May_final.pdf)  
<http://www.offlu.net/fileadmin/home/en/meeting-reports/pdf/SIV-Summary.pdf>
- Scientific and regular publications describing the global influenza situation in pigs - Publication of “Review of Influenza A virus in swine worldwide: A call for increased surveillance and research”, Zoonoses and Public Health 2013 April 5. doi: 10.1111/zph.12049.
- OFFLU SIV group poster: [http://www.offlu.net/fileadmin/home/en/resource-centre/pdf/OFFLU\\_SIV\\_POSTER\\_2012.pdf](http://www.offlu.net/fileadmin/home/en/resource-centre/pdf/OFFLU_SIV_POSTER_2012.pdf)
- OFFLU SIV group slides: [http://www.offlu.net/fileadmin/home/en/resource-centre/pdf/SIV\\_Generic\\_slides\\_072011.pdf](http://www.offlu.net/fileadmin/home/en/resource-centre/pdf/SIV_Generic_slides_072011.pdf)
- Ad hoc technical advice to OIE, FAO and WHO to provide a scientific basis for global policy advice and communication on animal and public health issues relating to influenza in swine.
- Technical advice on diagnostics to facilitate accurate detection and characterization of influenza viruses in swine. A document on “Publication of lists of viruses and diagnostic tests, and testing algorithms by region” is under preparation.
- Guidance on targeted surveillance for influenza in pigs:  
<http://www.offlu.net/fileadmin/home/en/publications/pdf/OFFLUsurveillance.pdf>
- An OFFLU swine influenza research agenda:  
[http://www.offlu.net/fileadmin/home/en/publications/pdf/OFFLU\\_Research\\_Priorities\\_photo.pdf](http://www.offlu.net/fileadmin/home/en/publications/pdf/OFFLU_Research_Priorities_photo.pdf)

## Funding needs:

- A minimal level of funding is needed to maintain the OFFLU SIV group, to pay for annual meetings and a secretariat
- Swine influenza surveillance at a global level is inadequate and patchy at best. Funding is needed for research and to implement appropriate targeted and purposeful surveillance for influenza in pigs.
- Increased levels and sources of funding are needed for research to identify viral, host, and environmental risk factors. Several initiatives are underway to develop frameworks

to assess risk of influenza viruses to animal and public health. Until there are better research findings on the determinants and mechanisms leading to zoonotic transmission and spread, attempts to assess or predict risk will be rudimentary at best.