

H1N1 tests on Smithfield's Mexican pig herd 'negative'

Contributed by Administrator
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SMITHFIELD, VA. — Results of tests conducted by the Mexican government confirm that no virus, including the human strain of AH1N1 influenza, is present in the pig herd at Granjas Carroll de Mexico (G.C.M.), Smithfield Foods's joint venture farm in Veracruz, Mexico. "These findings, which are consistent with our earlier communications to you, validate what we believed from the very beginning: that the recent subtype of H1N1 influenza virus affecting humans did not originate from G.C.M.," wrote C. Larry Pope, president and chief executive of Smithfield Foods Inc., in a letter to company employees.

Earlier this week, Mr. Pope remarked during the BMO Capital Markets Agriculture, Protein & Fertilizer Conference: "The week of April 27, domestic pork sales fell substantially. We had double-digit declines in some of our major retailers. Last week, pork demand has already started to recover. The packaged meats business never really suffered.....bacon, hams and hot dogs never really suffered." The recent concern over the health and safety of people and animals at farms only helps emphasize how important it is to keep these facilities, both the ones Smithfield operates and those operated by others, as secure and environmentally sound as possible, Mr. Pope wrote in his letter. "For this reason, Smithfield takes extraordinary measures to maintain rigorous biosecurity procedures at all of our operations worldwide," he added. Mr. Pope relayed he was proud of the farms the company's joint venture, G.C.M., operates in Mexico. "Not only are those facilities state-of-the-art, but G.C.M. designed, built and has continually upgraded its operations with the environment in mind," he continued. "As part of this commitment to continuous improvement, G.C.M. is currently testing composting at some of its Mexican farms and has voluntarily introduced biogas digesters to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases." G.C.M. has also been well recognized for its commitment to the surrounding communities through its C.S.R. (corporate social responsibilities) programs, he continued. "As a result of these efforts, G.C.M. earned the Mexican Center for Philanthropy's (C.E.M.E.F.I.) prestigious social responsibility award, or Empresa Socialmente Responsable (E.S.R.), for three consecutive years," Mr. Pope conveyed. "This is even more impressive as G.C.M. was the first animal production company in Mexico to ever receive the E.S.R. award.