



The voice of the Canadian pet industry

La voix de l'industrie des animaux de compagnie au Canada

## **PIJAC CANADA BULLETIN**

### **November 6, 2009 - H1N1 Confirmed in Canadian Ferret and American Cat**

Yesterday, PIJAC Canada received notice that the first confirmed case of H1N1 in a ferret was reported to the Nova Scotia Veterinary Medical Association. The ferret was brought to a Halifax clinic presenting flu like symptoms. As the owner had been diagnosed with H1N1, the ferret was tested and results showed a strong positive for H1N1. This was a human to animal transmission and the ferret is currently undergoing treatment. This is the first known case in Canada, but others have surfaced in the United States over the last few weeks.

In addition, the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) put out a press release yesterday stating that there has been one confirmed case of a cat in Iowa contracting the H1N1 virus from the owners. The cat and owners have since recovered and there are no indications that the cat passed the virus on to other animals or people. Previously, only ferrets, poultry and swine had contracted the virus. As stated by the AVMA, this turn of events is not unusual as viruses can pass between people and animals. [Click here](#) for a link to the press release.

#### **Information for Retailers and Distributors**

Following standard flu prevention protocols when handling livestock will help to reduce the spread of the virus within the animal population. This includes;

- hand-washing with soap and water
- using alcohol-based hand cleaners
- disinfecting commonly used surfaces such as door knobs daily
- disinfecting cages, water and food dishes etc, daily
- wearing gloves and when handling livestock

Other precautions to consider would be to limit or restrict the amount of contact the public has with the animals and staff exhibiting flu-like symptoms should not handle livestock.

#### **Information for Pet Owners**

As news of these animal-related infections begins to circulate among pet owners, businesses should expect to receive questions and requests for advice from

clients. Remember that it is not uncommon for pets to contract influenza. At this point there have been no reported cases of transmission of the virus from animal to human. Should a pet begin to show signs of illness consult a veterinarian.

If a person suspects they may be becoming ill or is exhibiting flu-like symptoms and is a pet owner, they can approach the situation the same way they would with their human family members.

- Limiting contact – specifically, refraining from touching an animal's face
- Covering the face when coughing or sneezing
- Hand-washing with soap and water
- Using alcohol-based hand cleaners

The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association has posted an information sheet on their website for pet owners. [Click here](#) for a link to that page.

Taking steps to help protect the animals in your care will help to minimize the chance of infection. PIJAC Canada will continue to deliver updated information to the membership as it becomes available. Questions can be directed to Jacynthe Lacroix, Member Services Coordinator at [memberservices@pijaccanada.com](mailto:memberservices@pijaccanada.com).