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**Exhibitors warned about virus that could affect their show swine**

By Mary Hightower

U of A System Division of Agriculture

**Fast facts**

* Veterinarians urging swine exhibitors to keep their pigs safe
* Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea doesn’t affect humans or safety of pork

(207 words)

(Newsrooms – file art of youth showing swine: <https://flic.kr/p/YE7jjn>)

LITTLE ROCK — Youth who show swine are being warned about Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea virus, or PED, that may affect their pigs.

“Because PED is caused by a very contagious virus, the disease can get out of hand quickly,” said Heidi Ward, DVM, extension veterinarian for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. “The fact that the current cases involve show animals is no surprise because these animals are often under stress from traveling.”

She said the “current cold temperatures add an extra layer to the environmental stress that can lead to disease susceptibility.”

Ward noted that Oklahoma is now requiring a certificate of veterinary inspection, or CVI, within 72 hours before arriving at a show.

“Communication between states about disease outbreaks is a vital part of biosecurity,” she said. “By getting the word out now and observing restrictions, we can stop the virus from spreading. We do not want traveling show swine to bring this disease into Arkansas and our show circuits!”

Those who show swine are urged to keep healthy swine away from those that are sick and quarantine swine that have been at shows. While adult pigs may have mild to severe diarrhea from the virus, the diarrhea is nearly always fatal to baby pigs.

Ward emphasized that this virus doesn’t affect any other species and that pork is safe for consumption.

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The Division of Agriculture is one of 20 entities within the University of Arkansas System. It has offices in all 75 counties in Arkansas and faculty on five system campuses.

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