



1st International Symposium on Swine Influenza, Zagreb, 23rd-25th September 2026
ESFLU
European Swine
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FROM SCIENCE TO POLICIES

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Abstract Book

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11. UNDERSTANDING SERBIAN PIG FARMERS' PERCEPTIONS FOR EFFECTIVE SWINE INFLUENZA PREVENTION AND CONTROL

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Introduction and Objectives

Farmers' perceptions influence their willingness to invest in animal health prevention and control measures. Understanding these perceptions will help design effective tailored messaging to enhance disease control, zoonotic transmission prevention, and strengthen national pandemic preparedness. The aim of this study was to understand perceptions of Serbian pig farmers related to swine influenza.

Materials and Methods

Data were collected using a specifically designed questionnaire with two sections: 21 questions on farm characteristics, demographics, knowledge, perceptions and awareness of animal-related public health issues with focus on swine influenza virus (SIV), and 9 questions on biosecurity practices. In total, 28 small-scale farms across 6 villages in the Vojvodina region were visited.

Results and Discussion

Among the interviewed farmers, 60.7% knew that diseases can be transmitted from pigs to humans but none identified SIV as zoonotic disease. In total 67.9% were familiar with biosecurity, however, 96.4% had contact with or raised other livestock, most of which were in contact with pigs. African swine fever, diarrhoea, and pneumonia were the main concerns, while none considered SIV a problem on their farm. The potential clinical and economic impact of SIV was the main concern (75%), but most farmers were not concerned about its zoonotic transmission. Motivation to vaccinate against SIV was lacking, mainly due to lack of belief in vaccines, insufficient knowledge of SIV vaccines, and perceived absence of disease. Only 55.6% believed they could prevent zoonotic transmission, while most considered authorities rather than farmers responsible. Farm size emerged as a stronger predictor of knowledge and awareness than years of experience: farmers with larger herds (≥ 200 pigs) were significantly more likely to recognize zoonotic diseases (83% vs 44%, $p=.034$) and reported higher familiarity with the One Health concept ($p=.003$).

Conclusion

Authorities should support farmers' willingness to prevent swine influenza, particularly on smaller farms where knowledge gaps are most pronounced, and increase awareness of its public health risks. Training programmes should be tailored to farm scale, prioritizing smaller operations.