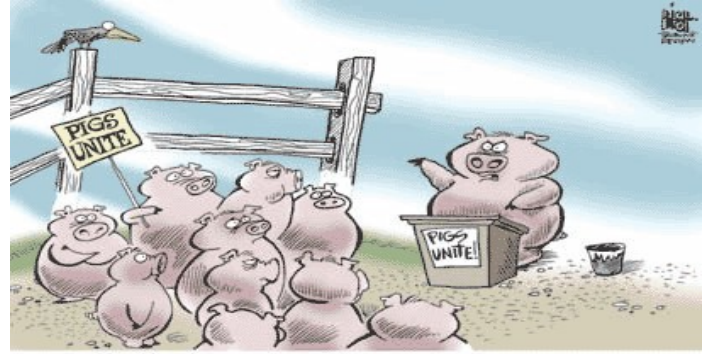


# FACTORY FARMS AND FREE TRADE MAKE US SICK!

## The Free Trade-Factory Farm Connection

Since the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994, Mexico has seen a major shift towards factory farm agriculture. NAFTA directly contributed to the increase in factory farms by eliminating tariffs on US agricultural exports, allowing the US to sell its factory farm exports in Mexico at prices below those offered by local family farmers, driving family farmers out of business.

The elimination of Mexico's import tariffs on US agricultural commodities allowed US agribusiness to flood Mexico with US government subsidized, feed crop. This made it affordable to outsource factory farms to Mexico, as they were now able to access the same low-cost feed available in the US while also taking advantage of Mexico's lower wages and more lax environmental and safety regulations to minimize costs. As US imports on Mexican products agricultural commodities were also eliminated, the products of these factory farms could then be exported back to the US. In effect, efforts to regulate or ban factory farms by animal advocates, environmentalists, and public health advocates are made virtually irrelevant, because corporations now need only to shift production south of the border.



THE TURKEYS HAVE BIRD FLU. THE COWS HAVE MAD COW DISEASE. I'M TELLING YOU, BOYS... UNLESS WE WANT TO SEE MORE HAM SERVED ON THANKSGIVING, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GET OUR OWN DISEASE!

## NAFTA + Factory Farming = Swine Flu

According to the Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production (IFAP), "one of the most serious unintended consequences of industrial food animal production is the growing public health threat of these types of facilities. In addition to the contribution of IFAP to the major threat of antimicrobial resistance, IFAP facilities can be harmful to workers, neighbors, and even those living far from the facilities through air and water pollution, and via the spread of disease. Workers in and neighbors of IFAP facilities experience high levels of respiratory problems, including asthma. In addition, workers can serve as a bridging population, transmitting animal-borne diseases to a wider population. A lack of appropriate treatment of enormous amounts of waste may result in contamination of nearby waters with harmful levels of nutrients and toxins, as well as bacteria, fungi, and viruses, all of which can affect the health of people both near and far from IFAP facilities."

According to Laura Carlsen of the Center for International Policy (CIP) Americas Program, "For years scientists have known that pigs incubate and mutate viruses and many have warned that "factory farms" where large numbers are kept in close quarters create a perfect breeding ground for the rapid evolution of disease. The massive use of antibiotics means that viruses seek mutations resistant to the medicines. In the past, few cases of swine flu passing to human transmission were reported but it has long been known that it is possible. This virus posed a particular risk because of



On factory farms, hogs live under constant conditions of intensive confinement.

Under these conditions, the rise of disease epidemics are inevitable.

its contagion from human to human."

Breaking out first in Mexico in mid March '09, the virus, H1N1, spread to hundreds of cases within days, but was not discovered until early April '09. By late April, 152 deaths had been connected to the disease. The World Health Organization has declared that as many as 23,000 people may have been infected in Mexico, and H1N1 has spread to the U.S. and beyond, to at least 35 other countries. The far-and-wide transmission of the disease has alarmed the world, with the U.S. even declaring a state of emergency concerning the outbreak. In the panic, countries have mandated the slaughter of thousands of pigs, blamed for the incubation of the disease. Indeed, the new, lethal strain of so-called 'Swine Flu' apparently developed in hog farms, where unsanitary conditions and copious anti-bodies breed tough, resistant, highly infectious diseases.

The swine flu epidemic is believed to have started at the Smithfield owned Carroll Ranches hog farm in Veracruz, Mexico. According to Al Giordano of Narco News, "In 1985, Smithfield Foods received what was, at the time, the most expensive fine in history - \$12.6 million - for violating the US Clean Water Act at its pig facilities near the Pagan River in Smithfield, Virginia, a tributary that flows into the Chesapeake Bay. The company, according to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) dumped hog waste into the river. It was a case in which US environmental law succeeded in forcing a polluter, Smithfield Foods, to construct a sewage treatment plant at that facility after decades of using the river as a mega-toilet. But "free trade" opened a path for Smithfield Foods to simply move its harmful practices next door into Mexico so that it could evade the tougher US regulators.



This is a farm? The swine flu epidemic is believed to have originated at Smithfield's Carroll Ranches in Veracruz, Mexico.

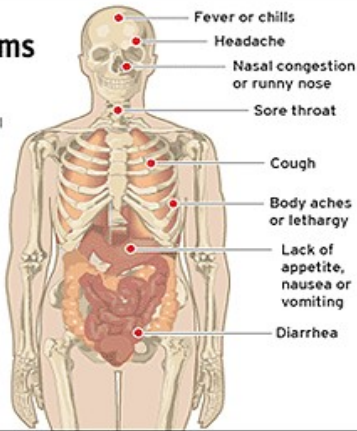
"The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) came into effect on January 1, 1994. That very same year Smithfield Foods opened the "Carroll Ranches" in the Mexican state of Veracruz through a new subsidiary corporation,

"Agroindustrias de México." Unlike what law enforcers forced upon Smithfield Foods in the US, the new Mexican facility - processing 800,000 pigs into bacon and other products per year - does not have a sewage treatment plant."

The Mexican daily La Jornada reports, "Clouds of flies emanate from the rusty lagoons where the Carroll Ranches business tosses the fecal wastes of its pig farms, and the open-air contamination is already generating an epidemic of respiratory infections in the town of La Gloria, in the Perote Valley, according to Town Administrator Bertha Crisóstomo López."

## Swine flu symptoms

Symptoms of the swine flu are very similar to those of seasonal influenza. If you feel ill, stay home from work and school because an infected person can shed the virus 24 hours before symptoms start, and up to seven days later. If you exhibit symptoms and believe you may have swine flu, call your physician before making a trip to see him or her, then follow advice on how to proceed.



SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

MSNBC.com

## Three More Toxic Trade Agreements

Recognizing that US voters are fed up with NAFTA, in 2008 Candidate Obama shrewdly ran on a campaign promise to renegotiate NAFTA. Yet since taking office he has reversed his position and now is sending NAFTA-style trade agreements with South Korea, Colombia, and Panama to Congress for ratification in Congress. Like NAFTA, these agreements will force these three nations to accept untariffed agricultural exports from the US and requires them to lower their food safety standards on US imports.

The first of these agreements likely to reach a vote in Congress will be the South Korea – US Free Trade Agreement, which by allowing low-priced US industrial farm exports to flood the South Korean market is expected to increase consumption Korea's consumption of pork by 9%, chicken by 6.1 %, cheese by 13.1, and butter by 14.1%.

South Korea has recently completed of a culling effort designed to limit the spread of hoof and mouth disease and bird flu. Outrageously, over 9 million animals – pigs, birds, and cattle - have been killed with many buried alive, even though the problem can be addressed through vaccination. To stay competitive with foreign exports to South Korea has increasingly shifted away from traditional family farm agriculture towards corporate agribusiness using intensive confinement factory farms. Factory farming and the related practice of long distance live animal transport are directly linked to the spread of infectious disease in livestock. Untariffed US agricultural exports to South Korea will likely hasten the shift towards intensification of agriculture, making more livestock disease and more inhumane culls inevitable.

The US-Panama Free Trade Agreement will allow factory farmed U.S. poultry, pork, and beef will flood markets, taking the place of the locally raised farm animals. Rural Panamanians' primary meat source is domestic poultry, but urban civilians eat primarily factory-farmed poultry. The National Agricultural Organization of Panama explains the imbalance of U.S.-Panamanian markets, stating, "The FTA proposal will be like stabbing the national farming sector, since it would allow the entrance of subsidized agricultural products to compete with up to 80 percent of the national market. Competition between two considerably different economies is impossible." The attack on the national farming sector will increase urbanization and consumption and production of factory-farmed meat with lower sanitation standards. Meanwhile, intellectual property rules written into the agreement will make drug access more expensive and unavailable, increasing risk of outbreaks like swine flu.

Under the US-Colombia Free Trade Agreement, the United States will export 26,000 tons of low-priced, duty-free chicken parts to Colombia – chicken parts that are either unpopular in the US or are of insufficient quality to be sold in the US.. Unable to compete with these prices, Colombian family farms will either go under or transition to factory farming and the use of hormones to remain competitive..



*Pigs buried alive as part of a culling effort to stop the spread of hoof and mouth disease in South Korea.*

## WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Call, email, and fax your Senators and Representatives this week and urge them to VOTE NO on the South Korea, Colombia, and Panama Free Trade Agreements. You can find your elected officials' names and contact info at <http://www.congressmerge.com/onlinedb/>. Let them know that we need higher regulatory standards to keep food safe, not NAFTA style free trade agreements that lower standards and replace family farms with toxic factory farm agriculture. Ask them to let you know how they intend to vote and keep contacting them until they tell you. Contact Global Justice for Animals and the Environment and let us know how they respond.

**Global Justice for Animals and the Environment**

Phone: (718) 880-7979 Email: [info@freetradekillsanimals.org](mailto:info@freetradekillsanimals.org) Web: <http://freetradekillsanimals.org>