

Swine Flu coming back after 57 years

UNIVERSITY PARK---Your regular annual flu shot won't protect you against the new deadly strain of swine influenza that could become epidemic next fall, warns Dr. John J. Docherty, assistant professor of microbiology at The Pennsylvania State University.

Explaining that flu vaccines are very specific, Dr. Docherty says "they stimulate your immune system to produce antibodies that can attack only one kind of virus."

Although you may have been vaccinated against the A/Victoria flu virus that hit earlier this year, you'll still need a dose of the swine virus vaccine to be protected against the potential epidemic this fall.

Dr. Docherty cautions that anyone allergic to eggs will probably be allergic to the swine vaccine which is produced by growing the virus in fertile eggs. Some of the egg protein unavoidably gets into the vaccine and can cause a reaction in susceptible individuals.

Those with an allergy need not go unprotected. Dr. Docherty explains that an alternative to the vaccine, called amatadine (trade name Symmetrel) exists.

"It is not as effective as the vaccine," he says, "but may prevent the disease if administered properly."

Despite its name, the swine flu began as a human virus in France during World War I. Returning doughboys brought the virus back with them to their farms where it was transferred to pigs. The virus was eventually identified in the animals and was dubbed the "swine" virus. Today, at least half the pigs in the United States are immune to the disease, it is reported.

As far as the new swine flu strain is concerned, Dr. Docherty says, "you need not fear pork products. If you get the flu, you'll probably get it from another human being. However, in rural areas it may be possible to contract the disease from infected live pigs."

So far, the only outbreak of swine flu to be reported has

been at Ft. Dix, N.J. One person died.

Unfortunately, no one can predict whether the outbreak will begin, spread and reach epidemic proportions, although most previous flu outbreaks have followed that pattern and this is the basis for concern of the medical community in this country, Dr. Docherty said.

During the last epidemic of swine flu in 1918-19, an estimated 20 million persons died around the world, including 548,000 Americans.

Dr. Docherty points out that many of the antibiotics and other drugs available today to treat flu complications, such as pneumonia, were not available during the 1918-19 epidemic. Thanks to modern medicine, those complications don't pose as great a danger today.

Nevertheless, he urges the public to "be cautious" and notes that probably every American under the age of 50 is susceptible to the virus and even those over that age who might have been exposed to the swine influenza cannot be sure that they are fully protected.

DROP-OUT?

Continued from Page 3

financial base and social education, while you can still adapt, takes quite a bit of thought, and some courage.

The sermon, then, is to get off the conveyor belt of the factory of higher education and about LIFE, while you are flexible enough to do it. It is to become pragmatic about the world you live in before the degree and the accompanying swelled head, which leads to, "What, with my education you expect me to clean johns?"

Fancy the thought. Since the schools aren't changing and the world is spinning away from them faster and faster, don't get caught in the tailwinds.

All we have to do now is find the courage.

Dr. Michael Santulli recently donated \$500 to the campus library as a memorium to his father. The money has been used to frame art reproductions.

VSC lends a helping hand

Are you transferring to University Park this coming Fall term? Are you concerned about finding a constructive way to make new friends and do something worthwhile within the State College community? You as the transfer student should seriously consider what the Volunteer Service Center at the University Park campus has to offer you.

Nancy comforts an old woman who is confined to a wheelchair at a nursing home near State College. Rich brings a smile to the face of a male patient at Hollidaysburg State Hospital. Chris is a friend and confidant to an inmate at a state correctional facility, and Linda hugs a six year old who is having trouble with her reading exercises. All these students have something in common. They are dedicated to helping others, they are learning about themselves, their career interests and major, they are getting involved in their community, and they are all volunteers through the Volunteer Service Center. Sound interesting? There are many people--like you--who are volunteering. Butch helps out with the physical therapy unit at Laurelton State School and Hospital, Joe is a big buddy to a little boy whose dad has left the family, and Sally is coaching a high school freshman in German I. Thanks to the services provided by the Volunteer Service Center, a lot of people are smiling in the State College community. People are realizing that students are not lazy, but they are dedicated and unselfish, and interested in making a more intimate contact with the community.

The center is located in 203 HUB at the University Park campus, and is open daily from 8:00 until 5:00. Students interested in volunteering or finding out more about what volunteering is all about are welcome to stop at the center any time. If they like, someone on the staff there would be more than happy to speak with them about opportunities that are available.

Continued on Page 6.