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[UNLEASHING THE POWER OF GREEN]

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OEC Comments on Global Outbreak of “Swine Flu”

Columbus, OH – The deadly outbreak of influenza making headlines this week seems to have had its start in the town of Perote, Mexico, near Mexico City. Already, the “swine flu” has killed seven in Mexico and sickened more than a hundred people around the world and in eleven U.S. states, including one boy in Ohio.

Although global health authorities are still working to pinpoint the exact origin of the virus, Mexican health officials are pointing fingers toward a massive industrial swine production and processing operation in the town. The Granjas Carroll facility is a subsidiary of a major U.S.-based trans-national agribusiness corporation. The Granjas Carroll facility produces and kills about a million hogs annually and, according to media sources, has a checkered past as far as environmental compliance.

The town of Perote lies within the Mexican State of Veracruz. The local newspaper, “La Marcha,” cites chronic water pollution from the massive facility as a contributor to the building epidemic, which has now sickened some 30% of the local residents according to “Veratect,” the global bio-surveillance specialty company.

No direct connection has yet been established between particular practices at the industrial swine operation and the outbreak of disease but the demographics of the disease progression are seen as implicating the operation as a major factor.

The Ohio Environmental Council urges state, federal, and global health officials to act quickly and assertively to control the spread of this dangerous strain of influenza. We also urge Mexican food and health organizations to thoroughly review the management of the swine facility to assure that appropriate health and sanitary practices are in place.

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The mission of the Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) is to secure healthy air, land, and water for all who call Ohio home. The OEC is Ohio’s leading advocate for fresh air, clean water, and sustainable land use. The OEC has a 40-year history of innovation, pragmatism, and success. Using legislative initiatives, legal action, scientific principles, and statewide partnerships, the OEC secures a healthier environment for Ohio’s families and communities. For more information, visit www.theOEC.org.