

It is for a different strain

IN response to the question raised by S. Param of Ipoh ("Take care in vaccine trials" — NST, June 11), it is worth noting that the H1N1 vaccine that will be used in the trial on pigs is of a different strain than that of the novel H1N1 influenza A that is currently causing outbreaks among humans worldwide.

The vaccine is for H1N1 influenza virus that causes a disease called swine influenza, which generally only affects pigs.

The statement made by the director-general of the Department of Veterinary Services was in reference to the percentage of pigs detected with antibodies against swine influenza virus and not the novel H1N1 influenza A virus.

As far as we know, the pig population in Malaysia is free from the novel H1N1 strain.

In fact, worldwide, only a single pig herd in Canada has been reported to have contracted the novel H1N1 strain of the virus and this was due to contact with a Mexican carpenter working in the farm who was having flu-like symptoms. This herd, as a precautionary measure, was effectively destroyed.

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