

SWINE FLU MUTATES AGAIN AS COMPLACENCY GROWS

There have been warnings this week from business leaders against complacency about swine flu. Although the UK's Chief Medical Officer has reduced his estimate of "worst case scenario" deaths to 19,000, employers are being warned to have contingency plans available for the next wave peak in October and November.

But the most worrying example of complacency is the complete failure of any government to take action in the industrial livestock farming breeding grounds of these zoonotic diseases, despite evidence of swine flu's ongoing mutation.

The latest news is that it has jumped species again, this time to Turkeys. Two farms in Chile are being monitored by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and tests have confirmed that the birds have been infected with the same virus that is causing the human pandemic.

Although it has caused deaths worldwide, including 70 in Britain this year, health authorities are comforting themselves that so far this virus has not proved to be as deadly as originally feared. But this news shows that it is still out there, is still active, and is still developing where it began on the world's industrial pig and poultry farms. How many deaths will occur before this threat is tackled at source?