

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MICROBIOLOGICAL SAFETY OF FOOD**INFORMATION PAPER*****Campylobacter* Retail Survey**

1. The *Campylobacter* Retail Survey forms an integral part of the Food Standards Agency's *Campylobacter* Campaign. Members will receive a presentation on the results of the Survey to date and the wider context of the Campaign.
2. Tackling *Campylobacter* is the FSA's top priority in the fight against food poisoning. We want people to have the clearest possible information on the food they buy and how they can safeguard themselves at home through good hygienic practices. The Agency has been working in partnership with industry on *Campylobacter* exploring a range of interventions targeted at different points in the food chain to reduce contamination levels.
3. The ACT (Acting on *Campylobacter* Together) Board replaced the Joint Working Group on *Campylobacter* in late 2014. Its aim is to rapidly implement and share the best workable and available technologies and techniques in the food production process and supply chain in order to achieve a continuing reduction in *Campylobacter* from farm to fork and a reduction in foodborne cases of campylobacteriosis. Membership of the Board is Director Level representatives of producers, retailers, the NFU, FSA and Defra, allowing for influence within, and decisions to be taken on behalf of, their respective organisations. Biosecurity is high on their agenda and they are overseeing important studies on the effect of not thinning flocks with preliminary results expected in the autumn. The next ACT Board meeting at the end of June will focus on optimising interventions during processing.
4. The FSA has adopted a whole food chain approach to tackling *Campylobacter*:
 - On-farm: we have funded *Campylobacter* testing for independent farmers to raise awareness of the issue, helped with improved biosecurity measures, and with trials on the effects of thinning of flocks;
 - Processing: we have used our enforcement staff on the ground in slaughterhouses to raise awareness and to help Food Business Operators to optimise their existing processes; we have helped with the development of process intervention such as SonoSteam and Rapid Surface Chilling;
 - Retail: we have run a year long survey of *Campylobacter* contamination on chickens and their packaging at retail, publishing results quarterly. We will continue with a second year's survey starting this summer.
 - Caterers: we have been working to further educate the catering industry about the risks of *Campylobacter* from poultry, by producing a poster and circulating

this to every Local Authority throughout the UK to be handed out on their routine visits to catering establishments. We have also encouraged best practice and inclusion of *Campylobacter* information in the syllabus of food hygiene training materials by meeting and sharing resources with relevant training bodies.

- Consumers: we have run successful consumer advice campaigns, e.g. Food Safety Week including the 'Do Not Wash Raw Chicken' message, and the 'Chicken Challenge', advising consumers how best to handle and prepare raw chicken in the home.
5. The FSA is planning a Programme Review of the FSA's *Campylobacter* research in early 2016. The review will help to determine if the individual projects achieved their objectives and what contributions they have, or will, make to the overall *Campylobacter* reduction programme. The review will include a workshop, which will allow contractors to present the latest findings of their projects.
 6. The Committee is invited to note the results of the Retail Survey and the developments and progress made in tackling *Campylobacter* contamination on fresh chickens.

Secretariat
June 2015