

PAPER FOR INFORMATION

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MICROBIOLOGICAL SAFETY
OF FOOD (ACMSF)**

EPIDEMIOLOGY OF FOODBORNE INFECTIONS GROUP (EFIG)

1. The last meeting of this group was held on 24 September 2003.

Review of animal data for 2002 and the first half of 2003

2. The 2002 *Salmonella* figures had now been published by VLA and could be viewed on their website. The relative frequency of *S. Enteritidis* in 2002 (1.1%) was similar to 2001 (1.2%). The frequency of reports of *S. Typhimurium* had fallen to 13.8% of all reports in 2002. There had been an increase in *S. Typhimurium* U302 in cattle and first isolates of DT193a and DT2 in cattle, U288 in pigs and U308a in turkeys. The number of *S. Dublin* incidents in cattle had increased by over 80%.
3. In 2003 there had been a small increase in reports of *S. Enteritidis* in chickens. Further information on this was being gathered and VLA would provide an update on patterns of *S. Enteritidis* submissions in chickens, including information on the type of flock involved.
4. Surveillance for West Nile Virus in wild birds had resulted in a number of *Salmonella* isolations, a number of which involved *S. Typhimurium*.
5. The Zoonosis Action Plan (ZAP) scheme in pigs was now well underway and the first scores under the scheme covered the period April to June. The 1% of farms with the highest incidence of *Salmonella* antibody positive animals would receive a veterinary advisory visit.
6. The repeat of the abattoir survey of zoonotic organisms in cattle, sheep and pigs, discussed at the previous meeting, was underway.
7. Very few reports of human VTEC outbreaks had been received asking VLA to carry out farm investigations. It was unclear whether this was due to a real decrease in the number of outbreaks. When this procedure was first adopted, there had been around 25 visits a year but VLA had only been involved in two investigations this year.

Review of human data

8. The group considered data from 2002 and the first quarter of 2003. The increase in non-PT4 *S. Enteritidis* in England & Wales noted in the previous report had continued. The incidence of *Salmonella* Typhimurium, including *S. Typhimurium* DT 104, had continued to decrease and was now at its lowest for over 30 years. *S. Enteritidis* remained the most commonly isolated *Salmonella* serotype, followed by *S. Typhimurium*, *S. Virchow* and *S. Hadar*. The downward trend in *Campylobacter* reports had continued, with a decrease of almost 20% since 1998. VTEC O157 reports had also continued to decrease in England, Wales and Northern Ireland but had remained stable in Scotland over a four-year period.
9. There had been a further upsurge in outbreaks of *S. Enteritidis* in England and Wales, since the beginning of June. In that period there had been 31 outbreaks involving around 900 people with over 500 laboratory-confirmed cases. 80% of the outbreaks had involved non-PT4 *S. Enteritidis*. The outbreaks included another large national outbreak of *S. Enteritidis* PT14b, involving 215 cases and including 6 local outbreaks. A case control study was being undertaken but the response rate to date had been poor. The HPA Public Health Investigation of eggs from premises associated with outbreaks had resumed. To date, around 3000 eggs had been tested with a rate of just over 3% positive for *Salmonella*, although some of these isolates were not *S. Enteritidis*.
10. A national outbreak of *S. Typhimurium* U277, involving 80 cases with dates of onset of illness between 4 April and 27 August, had been reported. The pattern of infection suggested a continuing source but a low incidence of cases. A cases control study had been attempted but the response rate had been poor.
11. A national outbreak of *S. Bareilly*, involving 154 cases in England, Wales and Scotland with dates of onset of illness between 29 July and 19 August, had been reported. The pattern of infection suggested a point source but one that was nationally distributed. This strain had not been isolated recently from animals in the UK.
12. There had been an increase in the incidence of *Listeria* in the North East and Humberside involving two different AFLP types of *L. monocytogenes* 4b. There was also a suggestion of a background national increase.

Other items

13. The rest of the meeting provided members with an opportunity to discuss possible agenda items for future meetings and membership of the group.

**Judith Hilton
20 November 2003**