

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MICROBIOLOGICAL SAFETY OF FOOD

**MICROBIOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF RAW SHELL EGGS AND THEIR USE
IN CATERING PREMISES**

Attached for the information of Members is a report of a LACORS/HPA Co-ordinated Food Liaison Group study on the microbiological examination of raw shell eggs and their use in catering premises.

The report will be presented by Dr Christine Little, from the Environmental Surveillance Unit of HPA's Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre, who will be able to respond to any questions Members may have on the report.

**Secretariat
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LACORS/Health Protection Agency Co-ordinated Food Liaison Group
Studies: Microbiological Examination of Raw Shell Eggs and their Use in
Catering Premises

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On behalf of the Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services and the
Health Protection Agency.

Summary

This study was prompted by epidemiological investigations of the unusual number of *Salmonella* Enteritidis outbreaks associated with the use of eggs in catering premises in England and Wales during 2002. The aims of the study, carried out between April and May 2003, were to establish the rate of *Salmonella* spp. contamination in raw shell eggs from catering premises, investigate any correlation between the origin and type of eggs and the presence of particular sero / phage types of *Salmonella*, and to examine the use of raw shell eggs in catering premises in the UK. A total of 34,116 (5,686 pooled samples of six) eggs were collected from 2,104 catering premises, most of which were UK eggs (88%). *Salmonella* spp. were isolated from 17 (0.3%) pools of eggs. Of these, 15 were *S. Enteritidis* which were further characterised to Phage Types (PT) as follows: PT6 (0.1%), PT4 (0.07%), PT12 (0.04%), PT1 (0.04%) and PT14b (0.02%). *S. Livingstone* and *S. Typhimurium* DT7 ASSuT were also isolated. The rate of *Salmonella* contamination in UK produced eggs appears to have decreased significantly since 1995/1996. This trend is reflected in the decrease of *S. Enteritidis* and, in particular, *S. Enteritidis* PT4. The impact of the Food Standards Agency's advice, 'Eggs – What caterers need to know' issued in January 2003 is discussed.