

The Community Summary Report on trends and sources of zoonoses and zoonotic agents in the European Union in 2007

Adopted on 20 January 2009

SUMMARY

Zoonoses are infections and diseases that are transmissible from animals to humans. The infection can be acquired directly from animals, or through the ingestion of contaminated foodstuffs. The severity of these diseases in humans can vary from mild symptoms to life-threatening conditions.

In order to prevent zoonoses from occurring, it is important to identify which animals and foodstuffs are the main sources of infections. For this purpose and to follow the developments on food safety in the European Union, information aimed at protecting human health is collected and analysed from all European Union Member States.

In 2007, 27 Member States submitted information on the occurrence of zoonoses and zoonotic agents to the European Commission and the European Food Safety Authority. Further information on zoonoses cases in humans was acquired from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. In addition, four countries that were not EU Member States provided information on zoonoses for the report. Assisted by its Zoonoses Collaboration Centre, the European Food Safety Authority and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control jointly analysed all data, the results of which are published in this annual Community Summary Report, which covers ten diseases.

In 2007, campylobacteriosis was again the most frequently reported zoonotic disease in humans in the European Union with 200,507 reported confirmed cases and most Member States reporting an increased number of cases. Salmonellosis was still the second most commonly recorded zoonosis accounting for 151,995 confirmed human cases. However, the incidence of salmonellosis continues to decrease in the European Union with a statistically significant trend over the last four years.

In foodstuffs, the highest proportion of *Campylobacter* positive samples was once again reported for fresh poultry meat, where on average 26% of samples were found positive. *Campylobacter* was also commonly detected from live poultry, pigs and cattle. The reported proportions of *Campylobacter* positive samples remained at high levels and no overall decrease was apparent.

Salmonella was most often found in fresh poultry and pig meat where proportions of positive samples, on average 5.5% and 1.1%, were detected respectively. Some Member States reported 0.8% of table eggs positive with *Salmonella*, while dairy products, vegetables and fruit were rarely found to contain the bacterium. In animal populations, *Salmonella* was most frequently detected in poultry flocks. 2007 was the first year when Member States implemented the new *Salmonella* control programmes in poultry (*Gallus gallus*) breeding flocks on a mandatory basis and already 15 Member States reported prevalence below the *Salmonella* reduction target of 1% laid down by Community legislation.

The number of listeriosis cases in humans remained at the same level as in 2006 with 1,554 confirmed cases recorded in 2007. A high fatality rate of 20% was reported among the cases, especially affecting the elderly. *Listeria* bacteria were seldom detected above the legal safety limit from ready-to-eat foods but findings over this limit were most often found in smoked fish and other ready-to-eat fishery products followed by ready-to-eat meat products and cheeses.

At European Union level, the occurrence of bovine brucellosis remained largely unchanged compared to 2006, while that of bovine tuberculosis and sheep/goat brucellosis seemed to slightly decrease. In humans, 542 confirmed brucellosis cases were reported but the notification rate is decreasing.

Three cases of rabies were reported in humans in 2007 and in all of them the infection was acquired outside Europe. Rabies was still found in domestic and wildlife animals in the Baltic and some Eastern European Member States. However, in 2007 three Member States reported a marked decrease in the numbers of animal cases.

A total of 2,905 confirmed VTEC infections were recorded in the European Union in 2007. Among animals and foodstuffs, VTEC was most often reported in cattle and bovine meat. The bacterium was very rarely recovered from vegetables.

In 2007, the number of reported yersiniosis cases in humans was 8,792, and the bacterium was reported from pigs and pig meat. Two parasitic zoonoses, trichinellosis and echinococcosis, caused 779 and 834 human cases each in European Union Member States. In animals, these parasites were mainly detected in wildlife.