

SALMONELLA IN LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION IN GB 2004

INTRODUCTION

This publication presents data on *Salmonella* reports from livestock species in Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland) collected and collated by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) during 2004 and also provides data from previous years for comparative purposes. The data in the first four chapters cover the reason for sampling and place of sampling, reports of *Salmonella* in livestock with separate sections for the main species covered, reports of *Salmonella* in livestock products and reports of *Salmonella* in animal feedingstuffs. The fifth chapter covers the antimicrobial sensitivity of *Salmonella* (England and Wales only).

Since 1993 the date of a *Salmonella* incident has been recorded as the date it was reported to an Officer of the Minister. Under the present system any *Salmonella* reports that are confirmed or identified after the publication of the annual report will be incorporated into the revised tables that appear in the following year's publication. This may cause the number of incidents and/or isolations to differ from that previously given for a particular year. The most recent version of the report should therefore always be used when comparing incidents from year to year.

Revisions in the way that data have been compiled and presented since 1993 mean that, with the exception of the tables on *Salmonella* in animal feedingstuffs, data in this report cannot be compared directly with information published prior to 1993. A more detailed comparison can be generated, if required, for any *Salmonella* serovar, phage type (in the case of *S. Enteritidis*, *S. Hadar*, *S. Pullorum*, *S. Thompson* and *S. Virchow*) or definitive phage type (in the case of *S. Typhimurium*). Requests for such data should be made to the Centre for Epidemiology and Risk Analysis (CERA), Veterinary Laboratories Agency, Weybridge who will be happy to assist with requests (s.a.kidd@vla.defra.gsi.gov.uk).

Care should be taken when comparing data from one year to another as an increase or decrease in the number of incidents and isolations does not necessarily indicate a similar change in prevalence. This is because the total number of samples examined and their distribution are not known.

STATUTORY ASPECTS OF *SALMONELLA* CONTROL IN GREAT BRITAIN

On 1 March 1989 the Zoonoses Order 1975 was revoked and replaced by the Zoonoses Order 1989. The 1989 Order added horses, deer and pigeons to the range of species from which *Salmonella* isolations are subject to reporting¹. Under the 1989 Order the responsibility for reporting the isolation of a *Salmonella* was placed on the laboratory carrying out the examination or in the case of examinations elsewhere, the person carrying out the examination. In practice, reports of *Salmonella* isolations must be made to the Senior Veterinary Investigation Officer at one of the Regional Laboratories of the Veterinary Laboratories Agency or to a Divisional Veterinary Manager in Scotland. If so required, the Department must be provided with a culture of the organism.

The requirement to test poultry for *Salmonella* on a regular basis under the Poultry Laying Flocks (Testing and Registration etc.) Order 1989 and the Poultry Breeding Flocks & Hatcheries (Registration and Testing) Order 1989, increased the number of examinations carried out from 1989 onwards. These two Orders were revoked in 1993 with the implementation of the Poultry Breeding Flocks and Hatcheries Order 1993, which brought *Salmonella* control measures in poultry into line with the European Union Directive 92/117/EEC, with the result that the level of monitoring in some poultry sectors altered. This needs to be borne in mind when examining long term data for poultry. This Order only applies to chickens in its requirement for regular monitoring of breeding flocks and hatcheries using methods laid down in the Order.

DEFINITION OF AN INCIDENT AND ISOLATION

In contrast to *Salmonella* in humans, many isolations of *Salmonella* from livestock are not associated with clinical disease, or occur on farm premises in which *Salmonella* has been isolated from a group of animals rather than an individual. Since 1993 reports of *Salmonella* from livestock have been separated into isolations and incidents. "Isolations" comprise individual reports of *Salmonella* made from samples and reported to Officers of the Minister. "Incidents" afford a truer picture of the amount of *Salmonella* in the animal population as they do not include repeat isolations of a serovar that may result from a number of samplings during the course of an investigation, or monitoring activities on a particular premises. Isolates, isolations and incidents are defined in the following way:

¹ *Salmonella* isolations from the following species must be reported to an Officer of the Minister: cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, rabbits, horses, deer, domestic fowl (chickens), turkeys, ducks, geese, guinea fowl, pheasants, partridges, pigeons and quail.

An isolate is a single culture of a particular *Salmonella*, and results from a single sample.

An isolation is defined as the report of the first isolate of a given *Salmonella* (defined by serovar, and/or phage type, if available) from the same group of animals on a given occasion. If two submissions from the same group of animals on different dates give the same serovar, this is reported as two isolations.

An incident comprises the first isolation and all subsequent isolations of the same serovar or serovar and phage/definitive type combination of a particular *Salmonella* from an animal, group of animals or their environment on a single premises, within a defined time period (usually 30 days).

The first such report of any particular serovar or serovar and phage/definitive type combination of *Salmonella* from a particular animal, group of animals or their environment will therefore be recorded as one incident and one isolation. Further reports of the same *Salmonella* from the same group during the incident investigation will be recorded as further isolations, but not as further incidents unless the isolation is from an epidemiologically distinct group of animals. Examples of this would include a distinct group of the same species on a separate part of the same premises. Reports of a different serovar or phage/definitive type of *Salmonella* from the same animals will be recorded as a new incident. Thus two reports of *S. Typhimurium*, one of DT104 and another of DT193, from the same group of animals would count as one incident and one isolation of *S. Typhimurium* DT104 and one incident and one isolation of *S. Typhimurium* DT193, whilst two reports of *S. Typhimurium* DT12 from the same group of animals would count as one incident but two isolations.

The concept of an "incident" is clearly inappropriate when referring to isolations from animal feedingstuffs or human foodstuffs of animal origin, so data for these are only reported in terms of isolations of *Salmonella*. With this in mind the tables reporting the reason for sampling and the place from which the sample originated have been divided to indicate the number of incidents for samples taken at premises other than slaughterhouses, and the number of isolations for samples taken at slaughterhouses or human food premises.

SEROTYPING AND PHAGE TYPING METHODS

Salmonella isolated from animals and feed is biochemically confirmed and serotyped by micro, tube and slide agglutination tests. Each culture is tested for the presence of somatic and flagella antigens by mixing with specific *Salmonella* antisera. Where homologous antiserum and antigen

react, clumps of bacteria form as visible agglutination. Serovars are derived by reference to the Kauffmann White Scheme. *Salmonella* Typhimurium, *S. Enteritidis*, *S. Hadar*, *S. Thompson*, *S. Virchow* and *S. Pullorum* are phage typed according to the Health Protection Agency phage typing schemes. Cultures are seeded onto special agar plates and a specific set of phages applied to the culture. After incubation the degree and pattern of lysis is read and a phage type or definitive type (for *S. Typhimurium*) attributed to the culture (Anderson and others 1977, Ward and others 1987).

Some phage types are 'related variants' although they are still reported as distinct types, eg. PTs 4 and 7 of *S. Enteritidis* and DT12, DT104, DT104b and U302 of *S. Typhimurium*.

NOMENCLATURE

The nomenclature used throughout this publication follows that devised by Le Minor and Popoff which divides the bacterial species *Salmonella enterica* into six subspecies: *enterica*, *salamae*, *arizonae*, *diarizonae*, *houtenae* and *indica*.

The method of naming serovars of subspecies *enterica* differs from that used for the other five subspecies in that the familiar serovar names are assigned to subspecies *enterica* whilst the other subspecies are designated by antigenic structure.

For example, following this method the serovar originally referred to as *S. typhimurium* is now known as *S. enterica* subspecies *enterica* serovar Typhimurium which may be shortened to *S. Typhimurium* and the naming of serovars of subspecies *diarizonae* is, for example, *S. enterica* subspecies *diarizonae* serovar 61:k:1,5,7 (or *S. 61:k:1,5,7*). For further details of this nomenclature see: Le Minor, L., Popoff, M.Y. (1987).

The serovar formally known as *Salmonella* Java has now been reclassified, on the basis of genetic similarity studies, as *S. Paratyphi* B variant (var.) Java. It is a group B *Salmonella* and has the same antigenic structure as *S. Paratyphi* B (O = 4, 12: H = b : 1.2). *S. Paratyphi* B var. Java and *S. Paratyphi* B are differentiated by the dextro-tartrate test, in which *S. Paratyphi* B var. Java produces a positive acid reaction, whereas *S. Paratyphi* B is negative.

FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE EPIDEMIC 2001

On 20th February 2001, Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) caused by the O1 Pan Asia strain of virus was confirmed in Great Britain. A Controlled Area Order was imposed across the whole of the country on 23rd February 2001, which prohibited the movement of livestock except under official control and banned livestock markets. During the subsequent epidemic 2,026 outbreaks were confirmed by laboratory testing and/or clinical diagnosis. The final confirmed outbreak was on 30th September 2001.

FMD was controlled by the slaughter of infected animals and animals that were judged to be dangerous contacts. More than three million adult sheep, 500,000 cattle and 140,000 pigs were killed, from more than nine thousand holdings. Approximately two million additional animals were slaughtered under the Livestock Welfare Disposal Scheme, bringing the total to more than 6 million adult animals, plus 3-4 million youngstock, mainly lambs (MLC estimate, 2001). On the basis that no cases of FMD had occurred for three months and extensive statistically based serological surveys, every administrative area in Great Britain had achieved FMD free status by 14th January 2002 – three and a half months after the last outbreak was confirmed. The European Commission recognised Great Britain's FMD-free status through Commission Decision 2002/153/EC of 20th February 2002 which repealed requirements to provide FMD related certification for intra-community trade.

Further information about the 2001 FMD epidemic can be found on the Defra website www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/fmd/cases/index.htm.

The FMD epidemic impacted upon surveillance for *Salmonella* in two distinct ways. Firstly, the epidemic caused significant disruption to normal farming practice with unpredictable consequences for the incidence of *Salmonella* infection. Secondly, surveillance activities were constrained. VLA laboratories were unable to accept samples from infected areas and cattle, sheep or pig carcasses from any areas between late February and October 2001. Field visits were halted from late February 2001 but essential visits were later permitted providing strict Agency procedures were followed.

The peculiar circumstances of the FMD epidemic preclude any meaningful comparison of the *Salmonella* data for 2001 with other years. Therefore, these data have been visually highlighted in all tables and graphs that present information on an annual basis to emphasise the unusual nature of the 2001 data compared to other years.

Farms where all livestock were slaughtered due to FMD were able to

re-stock during 2002. Livestock may have been purchased from multiple sources and these re-stocked herds would tend to contain a preponderance of younger animals. These factors may have altered the risk of *Salmonella* infection entering a herd and of the subsequent transmission of infection within the herd.

NEW SALMONELLA DATABASE

In January 2003 the new VLA integrated *Salmonella* recording and reporting system went live. *Salmonella* data and test results are entered into the VLA networked FarmFile database, which contains baseline data for all VLA submissions. Data entry has been de-centralised in England and Wales and is now entered at the Regional Laboratory receiving the submission. The VLA Sample Manager and Laboratory Information Management IT systems have been extended to incorporate the results of tests carried out on *Salmonella* isolates (group, serovar, phage type and antimicrobial resistance testing). The new system has replaced both the *Salmonella* incident recording system (ZO2 database) and the antimicrobial sensitivity database (Sentest). Automatic e-mail alerts are sent to relevant personnel when a *Salmonella* of potential public health importance is isolated, and the VLA Regional Laboratories and Government Veterinary Advisers have the ability to view data directly.

The new database was developed with the aim of facilitating the linkage of related data, to reduce the paper flow involved in reporting isolations and to avoid duplication of data recording and consequently reduce the potential for errors. The overall objectives were to improve the quality and timeliness of the information obtained from *Salmonella* cases, to make the data more accessible to those involved with deciding and implementing control policies, and to allow enhanced epidemiological analysis of the data.

Under the previous data recording systems an isolation was flagged as a new incident by the Nominated Officer dealing with the report, however the new *Salmonella* database automatically designates new incidents using a series of pre-defined criteria which are matched against those reported for previous isolations in the database. The criteria interrogated are: date (within 30 days of the previous isolation), serovar (and phage type if available), animal species, flock type (poultry) and the location from which the sample was taken. If the Nominated Officer indicates that the automatically-designated incident reference is not correct, for example, if he/she is aware that an isolation made more than 30 days after a previous isolation of the same serotype is, in fact, part of an ongoing incident, or that two isolations were made from different epidemiological groups, a 'manual over-ride' function can be used to ensure that the incident is identified

correctly on the database. This report therefore includes incidents as defined by the Nominated Officer, for submissions received until 31st December 2002 and incidents generated automatically, for submissions received from 1st January 2003 onwards.