

What is **Salmonella**?

- *Salmonella* is a bacterium that can cause an illness called salmonellosis in humans. In the European Union (EU), over 100,000 human cases are reported each year. EFSA has estimated that the overall economic burden of human salmonellosis could be as high as EUR 3 billion a year.
- *Salmonella* is commonly found in the intestines of healthy birds and mammals. In foods, it is most frequently found in eggs and raw meat from pigs, turkeys and chickens. It can spread to humans through contaminated foods.
- Usual symptoms of human salmonellosis include fever, diarrhoea and abdominal cramps. If it infects the bloodstream it can be life-threatening. Safe handling of raw meat and other raw food ingredients, thorough cooking and good kitchen hygiene can prevent or reduce the risk posed by contaminated food. ■

How EFSA supports the EU's fight against **Salmonella**

The European Food Safety Authority provides independent scientific support and advice through the collection and analysis of data on the prevalence of *Salmonella* in animals and foods as well as by assessing the food safety risks posed by the bacterium for human health and advising on possible control and mitigation options. EFSA's findings are used by risk managers in the EU and the Member States to help inform policy, and to support the setting of possible reduction targets for *Salmonella* in the food chain.

EU-wide surveys on prevalence of *Salmonella*

To ascertain the original situation, EFSA produces EU-wide baseline survey reports on the prevalence of *Salmonella* in food and food-producing animals, including chickens, turkeys and pigs, and on the risk factors that contribute to the prevalence of *Salmonella* in animal populations and in food. The findings are used by risk assessors such as EFSA's Panel on Biological Hazards to provide risk estimates and also by risk managers to define possible control options and/or reduction targets.

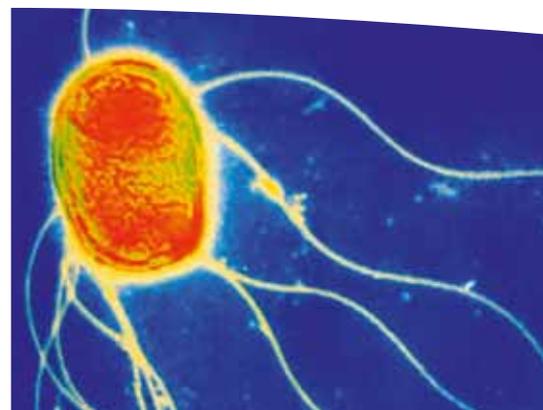
Risk assessments and recommendations

EFSA's Panel on Biological Hazards evaluates the food safety risks of *Salmonella* and provides scientific advice on control options at the request of risk managers or on its own initiative. EFSA also assesses the impact of setting new EU-wide reduction targets for *Salmonella* in various animals. This work helps the European Commission and the Member States to monitor the situation and consider possible reviews of reduction targets set for *Salmonella* in the food chain.

EFSA is assisted in its work by the Scientific Panel on Biological Hazards composed of 21 independent experts on biological hazards in the food chain and by the Task Force on Zoonoses Data Collection: a pan-European network of national representatives of EU Member States, other reporting countries, as well as the World Health Organisation (WHO) and World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

Annual monitoring of *Salmonella* in animals and food to measure progress

EU-wide data on the presence of *Salmonella* in the food chain as well as the prevalence of animal and human infection are collected and analysed in annual EU Summary Reports prepared by EFSA and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). >>>



Salmonella enteritidis bacterium - © Sciencephotolibrary

- > Over 100,000 human cases of *Salmonella* are reported each year in the European Union.
- > A coordinated approach by all EU actors on zoonotic diseases have helped reduce human cases of salmonellosis by almost one-half in the EU over five years.
- > EFSA plays an important role in protecting consumers from this public health threat by providing independent scientific support and advice on the human health and food safety-related aspects of *Salmonella* and by monitoring progress.
- > EFSA's work has also supported the risk management measures which have led to a significant EU-wide reduction of *Salmonella* in chickens.

WHAT ARE ZOONOSES?

Zoonoses are infections or diseases that can be transmitted directly or indirectly between animals and humans, for instance by consuming contaminated foodstuffs or through contact with infected animals.

Food-borne zoonoses are a significant and widespread public health threat. Research indicates that between one third and one half of all human infectious diseases have a zoonotic origin, that is, are transmitted from animals, directly or indirectly.

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 The monitoring data are used with other information to evaluate progress made by the Member States in meeting the reduction targets set for *Salmonella* in the EU. ■



Joint EU efforts have **significantly reduced** human salmonellosis

To protect consumers from *Salmonella*, the EU has adopted an integrated approach to food safety from the farm to the fork. The approach consists of both risk assessment and risk management measures involving all key actors: EU Member States, European Commission, European Parliament, EFSA and ECDC. The approach is supported by timely and effective risk communication activities.

EFSA plays an important role in protecting consumers from this public health threat by providing independent scientific support and advice on human health and food safety-related aspects of *Salmonella* and by monitoring progress.

Joint EU measures helped reduce human *Salmonella* cases by almost one-half over a five-year period from 2004 to 2009. EFSA provided scientific advice on the impact of setting reduction targets for *Salmonella* in poultry (breeding hens, laying hens and broilers) and analysed the progress made in the EU in meeting the targets. EFSA has also provided scientific advice on setting possible reduction targets for the bacteria in poultry meat as well as risk assessments on *Salmonella* in pigs. ■

EFSA is **working together** with key EU actors to **reduce *Salmonella*** in laying hens

EFSA collected data and analysed the results of a baseline survey on *Salmonella* in laying hens in 2006. The results showed that the most important *Salmonella* types causing diseases in humans were found in 20% of the holdings surveyed.



European and national risk managers set a target to reduce these *Salmonella* types in laying hens to 2% in all EU Member States.

Member States took steps to reduce *Salmonella* in laying hens in order to meet the annual reduction targets. For the annual reporting on zoonoses, Member States began submitting data on the occurrence of *Salmonella* in laying hens to EFSA.



EFSA analysed the data collected from the Member States on *Salmonella* in laying hens concluding that 17 Member States had met the reduction target in 2009.

Member States continued their work to meet the targets. After consulting EFSA, the Commission sets future targets for the reduction programme.



Diagram: EU actors dealing with zoonoses

Committed to ensuring that Europe's food is safe