

To all persons in charge of breeding flocks of domestic fowl



Department of  
**Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Food**  
An Roinn  
**Talmhaíochta,  
Iascaigh agus Bia**

### **New salmonella testing requirements for breeding flocks**

Dear Sir/Madam

The purpose of this letter is to inform you about new controls on salmonella in breeding flocks of domestic fowl (*Gallus gallus*) that will come into place on **1 January 2007**. These are part of a strategy that the European Commission is putting in place throughout the EU to improve the salmonella status of all categories of poultry and pigs. Your active participation in the new control arrangements will be required. The following is a summary of the main points of concern to the operators (ie owners or people in charge) of breeding flocks.

- Sampling of adult breeding flocks must be conducted by the operator every 2 weeks at the egg producing holding. Fluff sampling at hatcheries will be discontinued.
- Samples may consist of pooled faeces or boot swabs. Details of the sampling procedure for adult flocks are set out in attached annex.
- Samples shall be sent to private laboratories on the day of collection for testing at the operator's expense. These laboratories, and the test method they are using, will have to be approved by this Department.
- The requirements for rearing flocks are unchanged i.e. they must also be sampled at the following stages: day-old chicks, four-week old birds and two weeks before moving to laying phase or laying unit.
- The results of the analysis of all samples, together with the date and place of sampling and identification details of the sampled flock, must be kept at the farm for 3 years for inspection by Department officials.
- There will also be official sampling by this Department.
- Only the following Salmonella types are in question at this stage: enteritidis, hadar, infantis, typhimurium and virchow. All other types with public health significance will be added after 3 years.
- As from 1 January 2007 hatching eggs and birds going from breeding sites to any destination outside the State will have to be tested for salmonella prior to dispatch and the results and date of test will be included in the relevant health certificate.
- Hatching eggs, day-old chicks and other birds from flocks that are positive for Salmonella enteritidis and Salmonella typhimurium must be destroyed. Meat and non-incubated eggs may be used for human consumption subject to certain measures to ensure their safety being complied with.

We will write to you again about this later in the year.

Yours sincerely

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Marie Hoban  
31 July 2006.

## Annex

### Details of sampling methods for detection of salmonella in adult breeding flocks of domestic fowl

Samples shall comprise one of the following (a), (b) or (c):

#### (a) Pooled faeces

Pooled faeces made up of separate samples of fresh faeces each weighing not less than 1 g taken at random from a number of sites in the building in which the birds are kept, or where the birds have free access to more than one building on a particular holding, from each group of buildings on the holding in which the birds are kept. Faeces may be pooled for analysis up to a minimum of two pools.

The number of sites from which separate faeces samples are to be taken in order to make a pooled sample shall be as follows:

Number of birds kept In a building	Number of faeces samples to be taken in the building or group of buildings on the holding
250-349	200
350-449	220
450-799	250
800-999	260
1000 or more	300

#### (b) Five pairs of boot swabs:

Boot swabs used shall be sufficiently absorptive to soak up moisture. Tubegauze 'socks' are also acceptable. The surface of the boot swab shall be moistened using appropriate diluent (such as 0,8 % sodium chloride, 0,1 % peptone in sterile deionised water, or sterile water). Walking around shall be done in a manner which will sample representatively all parts of the sector, including littered and slatted areas when slats are safe to walk on. All separate pens within a house shall be included in the sampling. On completion of sampling in the chosen sector, boot swabs must be removed carefully so as not to dislodge adherent material. The boot swabs may be pooled for analysis into a minimum of two pools.

#### (c) Cage flocks

In cage breeding flocks, sampling may consist of naturally mixed faeces from dropping belts, scrapers or deep pits, depending on the type of house. Two samples of at least 150 g shall be collected to be tested individually:

- (i) droppings belts beneath each tier of cages which are run regularly and discharged into an auger or conveyor system;
- (ii) droppings pit system in which deflectors beneath the cages are scraped into a deep pit beneath the house;
- (iii) droppings pit system in a step cage house when cages are offset and faeces fall directly into the pit.

In cases where there are several stacks of cages within a house pooled faeces from each stack shall be represented in the overall pooled sample. Two pooled samples shall be taken from each flock as described below.

In systems where there are belts or scrapers, these shall be run on the day of the sampling before sampling is carried out.

In systems where there are deflectors beneath cages and scrapers, pooled faeces which has lodged on the scraper after it has been run, shall be collected.

In step-cage systems where there is no belt or scraper system it is necessary to collect pooled faeces from the deep pit.

In the case of droppings belt systems pooled faecal material from the discharge ends of the belts shall be collected.