

FSIS Releases New Data Showing Continued Reduction in *Salmonella*

Today, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) released data showing a continued downward trend in positive tests for *Salmonella*.

FSIS collects and analyzes *Salmonella* samples, in seven categories of meat and poultry products, to verify compliance with the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) requirements. The testing program is designed to track establishment performance and may not reflect nationwide prevalence of *Salmonella*. *Salmonella* testing for all classes of meat and poultry plants began in 2000.

Despite some fluctuations in individual categories, *Salmonella* rates in all classes of products have decreased to levels below the HACCP baseline prevalence estimates. Of the random regulatory samples collected and analyzed in 2003, 3.8 percent tested positive for *Salmonella*, as compared with 4.29 percent the previous year; 5.03 percent in 2001; 5.31 percent in 2000.

The HACCP rule established the categories of *Salmonella* performance standards as broilers; market hogs; cows/bulls; steer/heifer; ground beef; ground chicken; and ground turkey. Regulatory sampling results for 2003 as compared to the performance standard established in the PR/HACCP rule are as follows:

1. Broilers, 12.8 percent compared to a standard of 20 percent;
2. Market hogs, 2.5 percent compared to a standard of 8.7 percent;
3. Cows/bulls, 1.5 percent compared to a standard of 2.7 percent;
4. Steer/heifer, 0.4 percent compared to a standard of 1 percent;
5. Ground beef, 1.7 percent compared to a standard of 7.5 percent;
6. Ground chicken, 35.5 percent compared to a standard of 44.6 percent;
7. Ground turkey, 25.4 percent compared to a standard of 49.9 percent.

FSIS will be examining *Salmonella* testing data from 1998 to the present to identify plants with negative performance trends. Enforcement Investigations Analysis Officers will then conduct in-depth HACCP and sanitation verification reviews at those facilities.

For more information, visit the FSIS Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov. To view the *Salmonella* testing data online, go to <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/science/microbiology/>