

FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY: INFORMATION RELEASED UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

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Request

In relation to the increased number of cases of Salmonella Typhimurium linked to sheep and lamb meat in recent months (as announced by cross government departments on 19th Oct 2018) I am interested in knowing:

1, A summary of the (general and specific) official control actions taken by the FSA (and FBOs under FSA instruction) in slaughterhouses and cutting plants linked to the contaminated meat.

For example, actions to reduce contamination of carcasses during processing, or action taken to reject contaminated livestock arriving at the facilities.

2, The total number of slaughterhouses and cutting plants contaminated meat has been detected at / traced to.

3, The number and nature of breaches / non-compliances that have been identified in relation to this salmonella outbreak at meat plants / slaughterhouses involved.

4, The volume of meat declared unfit for human consumption and diverted from the human food chain as a result of this salmonella incident.

5, The number of meat samples tested for salmonella in addition to that usually tested for under standard operating protocols, as a result of this salmonella outbreak.

Response

1. Food Business Operators (FBOs) do not act under Food Standards Agency (FSA) instruction but have to act in compliance with the Commission Regulations (EC) 2073/2005. The FSA verifies that they do and takes enforcement action where there is a breach of the Regulations. The FSA has verified that the controls on cleansing and disinfection, (C&D) at the abattoirs supplied by the farms affected to date have been in place. The FSA has also verified that abattoirs supplied by one specific farm called Farm P have introduced additional environmental testing and are testing their carcasses in compliance with Regulation 2073/2005.

No animals have been moved off farms under restrictions. Animal Plant and Health Agency are the lead agency for farms. The FSA does not have the details of 'on farm'

situations. All abattoirs should comply with Regulation 2073/2005. According to this Regulation, salmonella is a process hygiene criteria, therefore any corrective actions should be undertaken by the FBO and involve improving the cleansing and disinfection procedures. This is not a Food Safety criteria.

For further information see Commission Regulation 2073/2005 Chapter 2 Annex I (2) (2.1) Page 15 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2005:338:0001:0026:EN:PDF>

2. The outbreak strain has been detected at or traced to 12 slaughterhouses.
3. There has been one breach by a farmer who breached legal requirements to place salmonella on the Food Chain Information, (FCI) which is required for all animals submitted for slaughter. The FCI is a legal requirement and does enable the slaughterhouse operator to organise slaughter operations to manage risks that may exist as a result of diseases and/or conditions declared on the FCI. The official veterinarian will also determine if additional / more detailed inspections are required. At the same time there was a breach by the abattoir accepting these animals as they were not compliant with all the measures required by the FSA to ensure the hygiene of the product. As a result, the FSA took action to formally detain 150 ovine carcasses and dispose of all the offal and fleeces as by-products.
4. The offal and fleeces of 150 ovine carcasses. The 150 carcasses are detained; the decision whether these carcasses will be disposed of or released for human consumption, subject to specific additional controls is yet to be determined.
5. The FSA with support from a local authority and Public Health England have carried out verification sampling at slaughterhouses which may have been contaminated by the outbreak strain. Over 800 samples have been taken to check for the salmonella outbreak strain in the environment. Whilst doing so a small number of carcass samples were also taken (21).