

**Testimony for the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee of the
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Salmonella Outbreak
September 22, 2010**

Good Morning. Thank you Chairman Stupak, Ranking Member Burgess, Chairman Waxman, and Committee members. I am honored to be here today to speak to you about my experience with the Salmonella poisoning that I got from the recent Wright Co. and Hillandale Farms Egg Recall.

My name is Sarah Lewis, I am 30 years old and I am a mom a wife and a proud Daughter of a small business owner that abides by all of our state and local regulations. I have two beautiful girls - Hailey 7 and Kyndall 4 - and I have wonderful husband who served our country proudly as a marine: Chris Lewis.

Not only did this experience affect me - it has affected my whole family! My sister Stacey also got salmonella poisoning from the eggs. The night we ate the custard tart was at my sister's college graduation banquet. My whole family was there - my husband and kids, my mom and dad, my grandma, my aunt, my sister and her boyfriend. We were all there celebrating this amazing achievement for my sister, not even suspecting that that night would change our lives for a very long time! My sister and I look back at that night and say - what if our grandma or one of my daughters had eaten the tarts we received? They probably would have died. Knowing how sick we were scares the heck out of us now.

The night after the college banquet I started to have very severe abdominal cramping and overall did not feel well. My husband said -Sarah just go lay down you don't look so good. During the night I woke vomiting and had diarrhea so bad I was beyond embarrassed to have to ask my husband for help. My mom who lives next door came over and took one look at me and knew something was terribly wrong. And if you knew me, you'd know that all I wanted to do was stay home and just try to feel better.

The next day my Mom took me to urgent care where I was told that they would give me a shot to help me stop throwing up and if I was able to keep down water in 20 minutes, I could go home. Well, 21 minutes later I was being admitted into the hospital for what would turn out to be my first of two long hospital stays. When I was admitted the 1st time I spent almost 12 hours in the ER because I was so sick they did not want to move me. They thought I was going to need emergency bowel surgery because the CT scan showed bowels that were so inflamed and sick! I was put in ICU. I was so sick and dehydrated and in so much pain I could not see straight. While in ICU I started to have severe tachycardia and was then moved to a critical care Heart Unit for 3 days. During this time I had to go through things I never want to talk about again I was so mortified!

When I was discharged I was so excited. This also meant I would be able to go to my daughters' preschool graduation that night. That may seem like a very small thing but to me it meant the world. I thought - great I can start the healing process and get back to being a mom a wife and a daughter.

Boy was I wrong. Approximately 2 1/2 weeks later I was still sick as a dog. I called my doctor and when I got to his office he took one look at me and

said you have to go back to the hospital. If you can for one moment imagine 2 little girls' faces when I had to tell them mommy was going back into the hospital! It was the hardest thing I think I have ever had to do, they were devastated as any 7 and 4 year olds would be.

When I got readmitted I was so dehydrated I had to get a picc line inserted into my arterial vein in my right bicep - talk about traumatic. I was so scared that I was about to have a line inserted into my heart! I proceeded to spend 5 more days in the hospital with my girls crying and screaming every time they had to leave me! I truly do not know what I would have done without my family and friends during this time, without them I do not think I could have gotten through this. When I got released for the 2nd time I was sure I was on the mend.

Wrong again. I developed a severe infection that they call *C. difficile* Colitis from all the antibiotics and from being in the hospital. *C. diff* causes severe diarrhea and cramping - as though I did not already have that. I had to be on antibiotics every 6 hours for 14 days again! And during all this I found out that my salmonella poisoning was still present and raging. This was just devastating to my family and me.

I still have severe cramping diarrhea, fevers, and also the stress and fear that my salmonella is still in my body. Every day when I have to leave for work or go to simply the grocery store my youngest daughter still cries thinking Mommy has to go back to the hospital and it just breaks my heart. Throughout this whole time I was still trying to figure what has caused my Salmonella poisoning then one morning my dad was reading the newspaper and he saw an article about how my sister Stacey and I were part of the egg recall.

As start reading about the egg companies that caused this my stomach turned. My family owns a retail butcher shop - freedom meat lockers - and we have to go through weekly state inspections and quarterly country inspections. We have to maintain and uphold a certain standard, and we are rated the #1 butcher shop in California for cleanliness and sanitation. To think that my sister and I got sick from a company that does not care about their regulations and quality is appalling to my family and me!

I come to you today for not just my sister and me, but for every man, woman, and child who has been sickened by eggs from Wright county egg farm and other producers who did not consider the repercussions of their actions. I wish I could say "this will never happen again", but that is up to you. Please consider changing your FDA polices to more closely monitor the egg industry.

Thank you for you time and for listening for my story.
Sarah Lewis