## Progress Report on *Salmonella* Testing of Raw Meat and Poultry Products, 1998-2003

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) issued the Pathogen Reduction; Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Systems; Final Rule on July 25, 1996: Federal Register, Vol. 61, No. 144, pp. 38805-38989. To verify that industry Pathogen Reduction/HACCP (PR/HACCP) systems are effective in controlling the contamination of raw meat and poultry products with disease-causing bacteria, the PR/HACCP rule sets Salmonella performance standards (the maximum allowable prevalence of Salmonella) that slaughter establishments and establishments that produce raw ground products should meet. These product-specific limits on Salmonella became effective in large establishments on January 26, 1998, in small establishments on January 25, 1999, and in very small establishments on January 25, 2000. FSIS verifies that establishments are meeting the standards by having federal inspection personnel collect randomly selected product samples and send them to FSIS laboratories for Salmonella analysis, according to procedures described in Appendix E of the PR/HACCP final rule: Federal Register, Vol. 61, No. 144, pp. 38917-38928 (http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/fr/haccp\_rule.htm).

The Salmonella performance standards are based on the prevalence of Salmonella as determined from the agency's nationwide microbiological baseline studies (<a href="http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Baseline\_Data/">http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Science/Baseline\_Data/</a>) conducted before PR/HACCP was implemented. Raw products currently covered by performance standards are carcasses of cows/bulls, steers/heifers, market hogs, and broilers, and ground beef, ground chicken, and ground turkey. The performance standards are expressed in terms of the maximum number of Salmonella-positive samples that are allowed per sample set. The number of samples in a sample set varies by product, and the maximum number of positive samples allowed in a set provides an 80% probability of an establishment passing when it is operating at the standard. An initial sample set or a set that follows a passed set is designated an "A" set; other codes (such as "B", "C", and "D") represent sample sets collected from establishments that are targeted for follow-up testing following a failed set. Code "A" sample sets are collected at randomly selected establishments.

The prevalence data reported here for *Salmonella* in raw meat and poultry products have certain limitations that restrict the range of valid statistical inferences. The PR/HACCP verification testing program is strictly regulatory in nature and was designed to track establishment performance rather than to estimate nationwide prevalence of *Salmonella* in products. Therefore, different establishments may be sampled from year to year, confounding rigorous trend analyses. Furthermore, it is important to note that the prevalence estimates computed from FSIS' pre-HACCP baseline studies and surveys were nationally representative because they were weighted on the basis of the production volume of the sampled establishments. In contrast, the PR/HACCP *Salmonella* prevalences from the regulatory testing program reported here represent unweighted test results from sampled establishments.

The data reported here are from code "A" sample sets. Presenting the "A" set data provides the most direct comparison to the baseline estimates that were used to establish the performance standards. *Salmonella* prevalence estimates are based on all "A" set samples collected during the indicated year, with no consideration given as to whether a sample is part of a complete or an incomplete set. The prevalence estimate is

the number of positive samples divided by the total number of samples analyzed, expressed as a percentage. The percentages of sample sets meeting the *Salmonella* performance standards are based on "A" sets that were completed during the specified year, as defined by the collection date of the last sample in the sample set.

Last year, in the summary tables, a column was included for "size unknown" establishments. As PR/HACCP was implemented, establishments were asked to provide FSIS with "size" information (large, small, or very small). However, establishments have not been requested by the agency to update this information. In recent years, as additional establishments have applied for grants of inspection, there are some establishments with no size distinction. Again this year, to provide more complete information, FSIS has included these establishments in the "size unknown" (not reported to FSIS) category. In earlier reports, the very few "size unknown" establishments were included with the very small establishments.

During the last year (CY 2003), *Salmonella* prevalence in all product categories, for all sizes of establishments combined, was lower than in agency baseline studies and surveys conducted before PR/HACCP implementation (<u>Table 1</u> and <u>Figure 1</u>). Differences in pre- versus post-HACCP *Salmonella* prevalence may reflect changes due to HACCP implementation. During CY 2003, both increases and decreases in prevalence from the previous year for specific product categories were observed. However overall, for all sizes of establishments combined, the CY 2003 *Salmonella* prevalence for market hogs, cows/bulls, and ground beef decreased, as compared to CY 2002, with only a slight (0.1%) increase for steers/heifers.

The *Salmonella* prevalence in broilers from all sizes of establishments combined increased slightly from 11.5% in CY 2002 to 12.8% in CY 2003. This overall increase for broilers was due to increases in *Salmonella* prevalence for large, small, and very small establishments in CY 2003, as compared to CY 2002. However, the CY 2003 overall level for broilers is still well below the baseline prevalence of 20.0%. Increases in *Salmonella* prevalence also were seen between CY 2002 and CY 2003 for large ground turkey and small ground chicken establishments.

Decreases in *Salmonella* prevalence were seen between CY 2002 and CY 2003 for specific product categories from specific sizes of establishments. For large establishments, the *Salmonella* prevalence in code "A" samples either decreased or remained the same in market hogs, cows/bulls, steers/heifers, ground beef, and ground chicken in CY 2003, as compared to CY 2002. The *Salmonella* prevalence decreased in small cow/bull, steer/heifer, ground beef, and ground turkey establishments, and in very small market hog, cow/bull, ground beef, and ground turkey establishments.

The results of six years of testing show that the majority of completed code "A" sample sets met the *Salmonella* performance standard (<u>Table 2</u> and Figure 2). There were relatively small changes from CY 2002 to CY 2003 in the overall percentages (all sizes of establishments) of code "A" sample sets meeting the performance standards. Slight decreases were noted in the percentage of passed "A" sets from large and small broiler establishments, and from small market hog and ground chicken establishments in CY 2003, as compared to CY 2002. For all other product/establishment-size categories tested, the percentage of sets passing either increased or remained the same.

The Agency now has four years of data since regulatory testing covered all sizes of establishments beginning in 2000. The agency recognizes there have been some year-to-year variations in the number of samples taken in each of the product categories. To ensure that reductions noted in the overall yearly rate of *Salmonella* across the seven product categories was not attributable to sampling variations, the Agency weighted the four years of data (2000 - 2003) by the proportion of samples collected for each category in 2000. These weighted results continue to show a steady decrease in the percentage of product samples testing positive for *Salmonella* in each year of HACCP verification testing.

While the regulatory prevalence of *Salmonella* across all seven product categories continued to decrease in 2003, FSIS is concerned that the percentage of positive Salmonella tests (all sizes of establishments combined) increased slightly in all three poultry categories.

The Agency will be examining Salmonella set data from 1998 to the present in order to clearly identify those plants displaying negative performance trends. Enforcement Investigations Analysis Officers (EIAO) will then conduct in-depth HACCP and sanitation verification reviews at those facilities to help ensure that this one-year increase does not continue.

Achieving a reduction in pathogens reduces the risk of illness. However, all segments of the food-production chain and consumers should continue to properly handle, cook, and store all meat, poultry, and other food products in order to guard against foodborne disease.

## For More Information:

- Media (202) 720-9113
- Congressional (202) 720-9113
- Constituent (202) 720-9113
- Consumer inquiries Call USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854). The TTY number is 1-800-256-7072.
- Technical inquires Dr. Walter Hill, Office of Public Health and Science, Microbiology Division, (202) 690-6369.
- FSIS Web Site: http://www.fsis.usda.gov

## SALMONELLA DATA CLARIFICATION

In this *Progress Report on Salmonella Testing of Raw Meat and Poultry Products, 1998-2003*, a reference was made to a steady decrease in positive samples for each year of HACCP verification testing even when four years of data were weighted against the proportion of samples in each of seven categories in 2000. The calculations were made using the proportions from the 2001 data, rather than 2000. FSIS regrets any confusion this error may have caused.

Table 1

Prevalence \* of Salmonella in the PR/HACCP Verification Testing Program
By Calendar Year, 1998 - 2003

"A" Sets

		CY 2003											
		Lar	ge	Sma	11	Very S	Small	Size Unk	nown	All Sizes			
Product		# Samp	% Pos	# Samp	% Pos	# Samp	% Pos	# Samp %	Pos	# Samp	% Pos		
	Prevalence (%)									! :			
Broilers	20.0	4,730	12.2%	1,672	14.5%	66	16.7%	0		   6,468	12.8%		
Market Hog	8.7	-	2.5%	-	4.2%		2.0%			5,924	2.5%		
Cows/Bulls Steer/Heif	2.7 1.0		0.0% 0.2%		1.2%	_	2.4%	-		2,599 4,480	1.5% 0.4%		
Grd Beef	7.5	-		13,677		14,228	1.2%	-	9.3%		1.7%		
Grd Chick Grd Turkey	44.6 49.9		3.8% 29.9%		45.6% 10.5%	1	24.3% 7.4%	_		296 1,004	35.5% 25.4%		

		CY 2002											
		Lar	ge	Sma	all	Very S	mall	Size Unk	nown	All Sizes			
Product	Baseline Prevalence (%)	# Samp	% Pos	# Samp	% Pos	# Samp	% Pos	# Samp 9	k Pos	# Samp	% Pos		
Broilers	20.0	6,247	10.9%	2,673	13.2%	263	8.4%	0		9,183	11.5%		
Market Hog	8.7	1,639	2.5%	1,717	3.9%	4,015	3.2%	108	0.9%	7,479	3.2%		
Cows/Bulls	2.7	547	0.5%	2,506	1.4%	1,361	2.5%	0		4,414	1.7%		
Steer/Heif	1.0	1,775	0.2%	1,045	0.9%	1,735	0.1%	17	0.0%	4,572	0.3%		
Grd Beef	7.5	740	2.8%	16,979	3.2%	13,187	1.7%	27	0.0%	30,933	2.6%		
Grd Chick	44.6	106	23.6%	323	31.0%	0		0		429	29.1%		
Grd Turkey	49.9	746	17.4%	289	18.3%	40	22.5%	0		1,075	17.9%		

			CY 2001										
		Laı	rge	Sma	all	Very S	mall	All Sizes					
Product	Baseline Prevalence (%)	# Samp	% Pos	# Samp	% Pos	# Samp	% Pos	# Samp	% Pos				
Broilers	20.0	5,879	9.7%	2,684	13.0%	392	37.2%	8,955	11.9%				
Market Hog	8.7	1,419	1.6%	1,385	3.5%	5,286	4.4%	8,090	3.8%				
Cows/Bulls	2.7	72	0.0%	1,045	1.3%	1,059	3.7%	2,176	2.4%				
Steer/Heif	1.0	58	0.0%	411	0.2%	1,226	0.8%	1,695	0.6%				
Grd Beef	7.5	691	3.6%	11,749	3.5%	11,803	2.1%	24,243	2.8%				
Grd Chick	44.6	90	26.7%	131	16.8%	41	12.2%	262	19.5%				
Grd Turkey	49.9	313	25.2%	144	27.1%	63	28.6%	520	26.2%				

			CY 2000										
		Lar	ge	Sma	all	Very S	Small	All Sizes					
Product	Baseline Prevalence (%)	# Samp	% Pos	# Samp	% Pos	# Samp	% Pos	# Samp	% Pos				
Broilers	20.0	7,175	7.5%	2,821	13.0%	61	18.0%	10,057	9.1%				
Market Hog	8.7	1,919	4.1%	2,144	7.7%	1,107	7.2%	5,170	6.2%				
Cows/Bulls	2.7	173	0.6%	1,593	2.1%	229	3.5%	1,995	2.2%				
Steer/Heif	1.0	222	0.0%	693	0.6%	177	0.0%	1,092	0.4%				
Grd Beef	7.5	1,373	5.4%	21,065	3.4%	10,406	2.7%	32,844	3.3%				
Grd Chick	44.6	169	12.4%	233	15.0%	12	8.3%	414	13.8%				
Grd Turkey	49.9	1,173	26.5%	377	23.3%	1	0.0%	1,551	25.7%				

			CY 1999										
		Lar	ge	Sma	all	Very Small	All Si	zes					
Product	Baseline Prevalence (%)	# Samp	% Pos	# Samp	% Pos	# Samp % Pos	# Samp	% Pos					
Broilers	20.0	4,530	9.3%	2,238	15.6%	0	6,768	11.4%					
Market Hog	8.7	973	1.8%	950	18.0%	0	1,923	9.8%					
Cows/Bulls	2.7	116	0.9%	1,405	2.3%	0	1,521	2.2%					
Steer/Heif	1.0	272	0.4%	510	0.2%	0	782	0.3%					
Grd Beef	7.5	765	6.7%	15,610	4.2%	0	16,375	4.3%					
Grd Chick	44.6	125	15.2%	172	16.9%	0	297	16.2%					
Grd Turkey	49.9	759	33.1%	291	27.8%	0	1,050	31.6%					

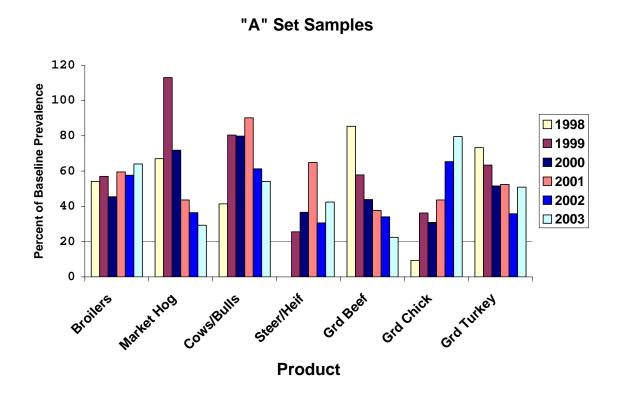
			CY 1998										
		La	rge	Sma	all	Very Small	All Si	zes					
Product	Baseline Prevalence (%)	# Samp	% Pos	# Samp	% Pos	  # Samp % Pos   	# Samp	% Pos					
Broilers	20.0	5,645	10.8%	14	7.1%	0	5,659	10.8%					
Market Hog	8.7	1,390	5.8%	0		0	1,390	5.8%					
Cows/Bulls	2.7	58	0.0%	121	1.7%	0	179	1.1%					
Steer/Heif	1.0	214	0.0%	0		0	214	0.0%					
Grd Beef	7.5	1,125	4.9%	171	16.4%	0	1,296	6.4%					
Grd Chick	44.6	24	4.2%	0		. 0	24	4.2%					
Grd Turkey	49.9	591	36.5%	0		<u> </u>	591	36.5%					

			All Years 1998 - 2003										
		Lar	ge	Sma	all	Very Small		Size Unknown		All Sizes			
Product	Baseline Prevalence (%)	# Samp	% Pos	# Samp	% Pos	# Samp	% Pos	# Samp 9	k Pos	# Samp	% Pos		
Broilers	20.0	34,206	9.9%	12,102	13.7%	782	24.3%	0		47,090	11.2%		
Market Hog	8.7	8,763	3.2%	7,382	6.8%	13,723	3.7%	108	0.9%	29,976	4.3%		
Cows/Bulls	2.7	1,276	0.4%	8,038	1.7%	3,570	2.9%	0		12,884	1.9%		
Steer/Heif	1.0	3,648	0.2%	3,995	0.6%	5,175	0.4%	17	0.0%	12,835	0.4%		
Grd Beef	7.5	5,800	4.4%	79,251	3.3%	49,624	1.9%	113	7.1%	134,788	2.8%		
Grd Chick	44.6	567	16.2%	1,065	26.3%	90	16.7%	0		1,722	22.5%		
Grd Turkey	49.9	4,367	28.0%	1,225	22.4%	199	17.1%	0		5,791	26.4%		

<sup>\*</sup> Prevalence estimates include all samples collected during the indicated calendar year.

Figure 1

Comparison of Product Salmonella Prevalences in the PR/HACCP Verification
Testing Program and Baseline Prevalences \*



<sup>\*</sup> Bars represent PR/HACCP Salmonella prevalences divided by baseline Salmonella prevalences.

Table 2

Percent of Sample Sets Meeting the Salmonella Performance Standards \*

By Calendar Year, 1998 - 2003

		CY 2003											
		Laı	Large		all	Very Small		Size Unl	known	All Sizes			
Product	Baseline Prevalence (%)		% Pass	# Sets	% Pass	# Sets	% Pass	# Sets '	% Pass	# Sets	% Pass		
Broilers Market Hog	20.0 8.7		88.3% 100.0%		81.8% 87.5%	_		0	į	127 109			
Cows/Bulls	2.7		100.0%		91.7%			_	į	45			
Steer/Heif	1.0		100.0%	-	100.0%	_		_	ا م	40			
Grd Beef Grd Chick	7.5 44.6		95.2% 100.0%		97.7% 66.7%			0	0.0%	546 4			
Grd Turkey	49.9	11	100.0%	3	100.0%	2	100.0%	0		16	100.0%		

		CY 2002											
		Laı	rge	Sma	all	Very Small		Size Unknown	All si	zes			
Product	Baseline	# Sets	% Pass	# Sets	% Pass	# Sets	% Pass	# Sets % Pass	# Sets	% Pass			
	Prevalence							i					
	(%)							 					
Broilers	20.0	124	90.3%	54	87.0%	8	62.5%	0	186	88.2%			
Market Hog	8.7	30	100.0%	33	100.0%	95	93.7%	1 100.0%	159	96.2%			
Cows/Bulls	2.7	9	88.9%	42	85.7%	17	76.5%	0	68	83.8%			
Steer/Heif	1.0	18	100.0%	11	90.9%	13	76.9%	0 I	42	90.5%			
Grd Beef	7.5	14	92.9%	354	92.7%	262	97.7%	2 100.0%	632	94.8%			
Grd Chick	44.6	2	100.0%	6	83.3%	0	)	0	8	87.5%			
Grd Turkey	49.9	14	100.0%	4	100.0%	0	1	0	18	100.0%			

			CY 2001										
		La	rge	Sma	all	Very	Small	All Sizes					
Product	Baseline Prevalence (%)	# Sets	% Pass	# Sets	% Pass	# Sets	% Pass	# Sets	% Pass				
Broilers	20.0	117	94.0%	49	89.8%	4	25.0%	170	91.2%				
Market Hog	8.7	25	96.0%	23	91.3%	49	77.6%	97	85.6%				
Cows/Bulls	2.7	2	100.0%	15	93.3%	17	76.5%	34	85.3%				
Steer/Heif	1.0	1	100.0%	8	100.0%	4	100.0%	13	100.0%				
Grd Beef	7.5	13	92.3%	200	94.0%	213	97.2%	426	95.5%				
Grd Chick	44.6	1	100.0%	4	100.0%	1	100.0%	6	100.0%				
Grd Turkey	49.9	9	88.9%	6	100.0%	1	100.0%	16	93.8%				

			CY 2000										
		La	rge	Sma	all	Very S	mall	All Sizes					
Product	Baseline Prevalence (%)		% Pass	# Sets	% Pass	# Sets	% Pass	# Sets	% Pass				
Broilers	20.0	137	96.4%	53	79.2%	0		190	91.6%				
Market Hog	8.7	32	93.8%	34	70.6%	0		66	81.8%				
Cows/Bulls	2.7	2	100.0%	30	83.3%	0		32	84.4%				
Steer/Heif	1.0	3	100.0%	8	87.5%	0		11	90.9%				
Grd Beef	7.5	27	81.5%	344	91.9%	75	90.7%	446	91.0%				
Grd Chick	44.6	3	100.0%	2	100.0%	0		5	100.0%				
Grd Turkey	49.9	15	93.3%	2	50.0%	0		17	88.2%				

		_				_			_							
		CY 1999														
		Large			Small				Very Small			All Sizes				
			_								:					
Product	Baseline	#	Sets	%	Pass	#	Sets	%	Pass	#	Sets	% Pass	<b> </b> #	Sets	% ]	Pass
	Prevalence												:			
	(%)												!			
													Ĺ			
Broilers	20.0		111		91.0%		40		85.0%		0		:	151	8	9.4%
Market Hog	8.7		26	1	.00.0%		12		50.0%		0		!	38	8	4.2%
Cows/Bulls	2.7		2	1	.00.0%		17		76.5%		0		ı	19	7	8.9%
Steer/Heif	1.0		3	1	.00.0%		3	1	L00.0%		0		:	6	10	0.0%
Grd Beef	7.5		21		85.7%		252		87.3%		0		!	273	8	7.2%
Grd Chick	44.6		2	1	.00.0%		3	1	L00.0%		0		ı	5	10	0.0%
Grd Turkey	49.9		18		94.4%		5		80.0%		0		:	23	9	1.3%

		CY 1998												
		La	rge	Small	Very Small	All Sizes								
Product	Baseline Prevalence (%)	# Sets	% Pass	# Sets % Pass	# Sets % Pass	# Sets % Pass								
Broilers	20.0	77	90.9%	0	<b>I</b> 0	77 90.9%								
Market Hog	8.7	16	68.8%	0	0	16 68.8%								
Cows/Bulls	2.7	1	100.0%	0	<u>l</u> 0	1 100.0%								
Steer/Heif	1.0	1	100.0%	0	<u>l</u> 0	1 100.0%								
Grd Beef	7.5	9	88.9%	0	. 0	9 88.9%								
Grd Chick	44.6	0		0	. 0	0								
Grd Turkey	49.9	7	85.7%	0	0	7 85.7%								

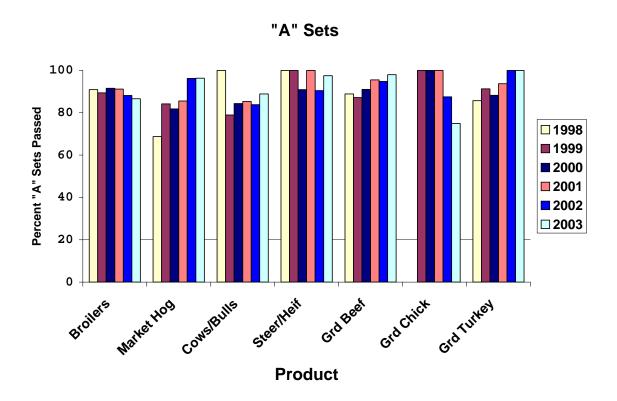
	All Years 1998 - 2003											
		Large		Sma	all	Very S	Small	Size Unknown	All Sizes			
Product	Baseline Prevalence (%)		% Pass	# Sets	% Pass	# Sets	% Pass	# Sets % Pass	# Sets	% Pass		
Broilers	20.0	660	92.1%	229	84.7%	12	50.0%	0	901	89.7%		
Market Hog	8.7	156	94.9%	126	83.3%	202	91.1%	1 100.0%	485	90.3%		
Cows/Bulls	2.7	22	95.5%	128	85.9%	49	77.6%	0	199	84.9%		
Steer/Heif	1.0	37	100.0%	40	95.0%	36	88.9%	0	113	94.7%		
Grd Beef	7.5	105	88.6%	1,411	92.6%	813	97.3%	3 66.7%	2,332	94.0%		
Grd Chick	44.6	9	100.0%	18	88.9%	1	100.0%	0	28	92.9%		
Grd Turkey	49.9	74	94.6%	20	90.0%	3	100.0%	0	97	93.8%		

<sup>\*</sup> Includes sample sets that completed during the indicated calendar year (sample sets may have started during an earlier year).

Figure 2

Overall Percentages of Sample Sets Meeting Salmonella Performance Standards \*

By Calendar Year, 1998 - 2003



<sup>\*</sup> Includes sample sets from establishments of all sizes that completed during the indicated calendar year (sets may have started during an earlier year).