FINAL REPORT OF AN AUDIT
CARRIED OUT IN
THE CZECH REPUBLIC
FROM 18 TO 27 SEPTEMBER 2012

IN ORDER TO EVALUATE THE SALMONELLA NATIONAL CONTROL PROGRAMMES IN PARTICULAR POULTRY POPULATIONS (BREEDERS, LAYING HENS, BROILERS AND TURKEYS)

In response to information provided by the Competent Authority, any factual error noted in the draft report has been corrected; any clarification appears in the form of a footnote.
Executive Summary

This report describes the outcome of an audit carried out by the Food and Veterinary Office in the Czech Republic, from 18 to 27 September 2012.

The objectives of the current audit were to evaluate the actions taken by the Czech competent authorities in order to control Salmonella, in particular concerning the implementation of the Salmonella National Control Programmes and to gather updated information on the way the competent authorities investigate food-borne outbreaks of Salmonella in humans.

The report concludes that the Salmonella National Control Programmes are implemented in all regions of the Czech Republic and cover all poultry populations. The control system is well organised and effective tools are available for the competent authority to monitor and review continuously the progress of the programmes.

As regards investigations of food borne outbreaks in humans, progress has been made in the field of Salmonella National Control Programmes implementation and in cooperation between the public health authorities and the competent authorities during the food-borne outbreak investigations as evidenced by the significant decrease of Salmonella enteritis/Salmonella typhimurium prevalence in all poultry populations and by the decrease of Salmonella incidence in humans.

However, the Food and Veterinary Office audit team still found some deficiencies mainly related to the use of a routine confirmatory sampling policy, to the sampling protocol used during Salmonella food-borne outbreak investigations and to the food chain information which is incomplete in some cases.

The report addresses to the Czech competent authorities a number of recommendations aimed at rectifying identified shortcomings and enhancing the control system in place.
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<td>Competent Authority</td>
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<td>CCA</td>
<td>Central Competent Authority</td>
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<td>EFSA</td>
<td>European Food Safety Authority</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>EUURL</td>
<td>European Union Reference Laboratory</td>
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<td>FBO</td>
<td>Food Business Operator</td>
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<td>FCI</td>
<td>Food Chain Information</td>
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<td>FVO</td>
<td>Food and Veterinary Office</td>
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<td>MIC</td>
<td>Minimum Inhibitory Concentration</td>
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<td>NRL</td>
<td>National Reference Laboratory</td>
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<td>OV</td>
<td>Official Veterinarian</td>
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<td>RASFF</td>
<td>Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed</td>
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<td>RPHC</td>
<td>Regional Public Health Centres</td>
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<td>RVA</td>
<td>Regional Veterinary Administration</td>
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<td>SE</td>
<td><em>Salmonella enteritidis</em></td>
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<td>SNCP</td>
<td><em>Salmonella</em> National Control Programme</td>
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<td>ST</td>
<td><em>Salmonella typhimurium</em></td>
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<td>SVA</td>
<td>State Veterinary Administration</td>
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1 INTRODUCTION

The audit took place in the Czech Republic from 18 to 27 September 2012 and was undertaken as part of the Food and Veterinary Office's (FVO) planned audit programme.

The audit team comprised one inspector from the FVO and one national expert. Representatives from the Competent Authority (CA) accompanied the audit team during the whole audit.

An opening meeting was held on 18 September 2012 with the Central CA (CCA). At this meeting the audit team confirmed the objectives of, and itinerary for the audit, and requested additional information required for its satisfactory completion.

2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the audit were:-

- To investigate the actions taken by the CA in order to control *Salmonella*, in particular concerning the implementation of the *Salmonella* National Control Programmes (SNCP) for breeding flocks, laying hens (*Gallus gallus*), broilers and turkeys.
- To gather updated information on the way the CA investigates, in cooperation with the authorities involved in monitoring of *Salmonellosis* in humans, food-borne outbreaks of *Salmonella*.

In order to achieve these objectives the audit team evaluated the organisation of the CA and its capacity for implementing the relevant European Union (EU) requirements.

The table below lists the sites visited and the meetings held in order to achieve the above objectives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competent authority</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Opening and closing meeting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional CA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Laboratories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>National Reference</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>This laboratory also analyses own-check samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratory (NRL)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official laboratory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>This laboratory also analyses own-check samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary production</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breeding farms</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>One rearing holding and two adult breeding holdings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laying hen farms</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broiler farms</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey farms</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>One fattening holding was visited¹</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

³LEGAL BASIS

The audit was carried out in agreement with the Czech Authorities and under the general provisions of EU legislation and, in particular:


¹ a documentary check was carried out in a breeding holding which was not visited by the team
of 29 April 2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules;


4 BACKGROUND

This was the first audit in the Czech Republic covering SNCPs for the various poultry populations. In 2008 the FVO carried out an audit in the Czech Republic in order to evaluate the systems in place to control the Salmonella risk in the table egg sector (DG(SANCO)2008-7628). The final report of that audit concluded that although within the EU, the Czech Republic had the highest Salmonella incidence in humans and the highest prevalence of Salmonella enteritidis or typhimurium (SE/ST) in laying hen flocks, in practice, there were no procedures in place for collaboration between the authorities involved in monitoring of Salmonellosis in humans and the CA involved in monitoring of Salmonella in poultry. More information on that audit can be found on the following website: http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/rep_details_en.cfm?rep_id=2054.

In the Czech Republic there are in total 77 breeding hen holdings (adult), 71 holdings of laying hens (adult), 334 broiler holdings, one breeding turkey holding (adult) and 60 turkey fattener holdings subject to SNCPs.

There have been no Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) notifications linked to table eggs or poultry meat from the Czech Republic during the past three years.

5 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 COMPETENT AUTHORITY

Legal requirements

Article 3(1) of Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council requires Member States to designate a competent authority or competent authorities for the purpose of this Regulation and notify the Commission thereof.

Audit findings

In the Czech Republic the State Veterinary Administration (SVA) under the Ministry of Agriculture as the CCA is responsible to carry out tasks related to the SNCPs, namely drafting SNCPs, organisation of training, collecting and compiling data and preparation of reports on implementation of the SNCPs for the European Commission and European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). The SVA is responsible for the coordination of activities of the 14 Regional Veterinary Administrations (RVAs). The SNCPs are being implemented by RVAs. RVAs are also responsible for official sampling, for verification of Food Business Operator (FBO) sampling and for imposing measures in case of positive Salmonella analyses results.

A more detailed description of the CA can be found in the country profile for the Czech Republic on the following website: http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/controlsystems_en.cfm?co_id=CZ

“Methodology of Animal Health Control and Ordered Vaccination” (hereinafter referred to as the Methodology), approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and published in the Czech Official Journal
is the legal basis both for official services and for the FBOs to implement the SNCPs. The requirements of Regulations (EC) Nos 2160/2003, 584/2008 and Regulations (EU) Nos 200/2010, 517/2011, 200/2012 and detailed rules of the programmes are contained in this Methodology.

Training

The CCA informed the audit team that SVA organises regular meetings (from two to four times per year) for RVAs on animal health issues which include training and information related to SNCPs. In addition to these meetings, SVA organised special meetings on issues related specifically to SNCPs. The audit team noted that such meetings were held every year when implementation of the individual SNCPs started but now they are organised as needed (the last meeting was in August 2012). Information provided during these central level training events is disseminated for Official Veterinarians (OVs) involved in the programme at RVA level. The audit team also noted that information presented at meetings is available on the intranet of the CCA.

A representative of the CCA participated in training courses on zoonoses under the European Commission's Better Training for Safer Food programme.

The audit team was informed that RVAs are responsible for training private veterinarians and farmers (or others) carrying out own-check sampling within the framework of SNCPs. A certificate is issued by the RVA after the training. Copies of these certificates were available for the audit team.

All information related to SNCPs (e.g. sampling schemes, registered vaccines, list of laboratories, sample submission forms, etc.) is publicly available on the SVA's website.

The audit team noted that OVs, private veterinarians and farmers encountered during the audit had adequate knowledge of the implementation of SNCPs.

Internal audit

The audit team was informed that in 2011 two RVAs were audited by the Department of Internal Audit and Control of the CCA with the participation of an expert from the SVA's Department of Animal Health and Animal Welfare Protection covering SNCPs in all poultry populations. In 2012 three RVAs were subject to internal audit and this audit specifically covered the SNCP implementation in broilers. In this case no expert was present from the Department of Animal Health and Animal Welfare Protection but a special checklist was prepared by an SVA expert and used by the internal audit team. Reports of these audits were available for the FVO audit team. The FVO was informed by the CA that no major non-compliances relating to SNCPs were detected during these audits.

Conclusions

The CA responsible for official controls within the scope of this audit is clearly designated in compliance with EU requirements.

5.2 Controls at farm level

Legal requirements

Article 3 of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council requires Member States to carry out regularly, on a risk basis and with appropriate frequency controls on feed or food businesses.

Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 sets out the general hygiene provisions for FBOs involved

2 Legal acts quoted in this report refer, where applicable, to the last amended version. Full references to the acts quoted in this report are given in the Annex to this report.
in primary production.
Chapter I of Annex II to Council Directive 2009/158/EC requires at least one inspection per year per holding by an official veterinarian in order to be approved by the CA for the purposes of intra-EU trade in poultry or hatching eggs.

**Audit findings**

All farms visited by the audit team were adequately registered in the Central Database for Poultry Farms (operated by the Czech-Moravian Breeders Corporation) which is fully operational and accessible to SVA. The audit team was informed by the CA that such registration is required for all holdings with more than 100 breeding hens/breeding turkeys, for all laying hen holdings placing table eggs on the market and for all holdings with more than 500 fattening turkeys or broilers.

In addition to the registration of the farm each flock of poultry has a unique identification number assigned by the farmer in accordance with the national legislation. For the creation of a flock identification number, a web-based tool (identification number generator) is publicly available on the SVA's website. The flock identification number is used within the SNCPs (e.g. indicated in sample submission forms, in Food Chain Information, etc.) and contains information related to production systems in broiler and laying hen flocks (e.g. population density in broilers, cages/barns/free-range systems in laying hens, etc.). The audit team noted that in general, the flock identification numbers were correctly assigned.

The audit team noted that Decree No 296/2003 on animal health and protection lays down mandatory biosecurity requirements for all poultry holdings within the SNCPs. Appropriate biosecurity measures to prevent the introduction of *Salmonella* were in place in all farms visited. FBOs’ flock records were kept and available for the audit team.

The audit team noted that all farms visited were subject to regular official controls by the RVA at a frequency of at least once a year in the case of breeding and laying hen holdings. In the case of broilers or fattening turkeys, official controls are carried out on 10% of the holdings annually. In addition, official control of a holding is carried out in case of *Salmonella* positive results or on the occasion of a special SVA order. A standard checklist prepared by the SVA is used during routine inspections, which includes sections for verifying biosecurity measures and implementation of an FBO’s sampling plan.

**Feed control**

The audit team was informed by the CA that, based on a SVA plan, RVAs are responsible for taking feed samples for *Salmonella* analyses in establishments producing compound feedingstuffs (including feed for pigs and poultry). The number of samples to be taken is based on the previous year’s feed production of the company. The audit team noted that in 2010 152, in 2011 78 feed samples were taken and analysed for *Salmonella*. Since all these samples tested negative, the SVA considered *Salmonella* as low risk in the feed chain and did not plan any official sampling or analyses of feed for *Salmonella* for 2012.

**Cleaning and disinfection**

The audit team noted that after depopulation of a positive flock an effective cleaning and disinfection is carried out by the FBO. Poultry houses cannot be repopulated unless the effectiveness of the cleaning and disinfection has been confirmed by negative environmental sampling results. To evaluate the effectiveness of these procedures at least six samples (swabs) are taken from the environment by an OV in the case of breeding/laying flocks and by the FBO in the case of broilers/fattening turkeys. Evidence of this sampling was provided for the audit team.

**Epidemiological surveys in the framework of the SNCPs**
In all positive cases reviewed by the audit team epidemiological surveys had been carried out to identify the possible source of contamination. These surveys included a review of biosecurity measures and taking of samples from feed and in some cases from water as laid down in the Methodology. However, the CA had not identified the possible source of *Salmonella* contamination in any of the cases reviewed by the audit team.

According to the information provided by the CA, for outbreaks in the various poultry populations, the feed and water samples taken were as follows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>breeding flocks</th>
<th>laying hens</th>
<th>broilers</th>
<th>turkeys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No SE or ST was detected from these samples.

**Conclusions**

Farms are appropriately registered, and under regular official supervision. Adequate tools to prevent *Salmonella* contamination are in place, such as effective cleaning and disinfection, controls on biosecurity conditions and on feedingstuffs.

5.3 **General issues on SNCPs**

The audit team was informed by the CA that official samples are taken by OVs from RVAs, whilst own-check samples may be taken by private veterinarians or trained farmers and farm staff. However, the audit team noted that in practice own-check samples in breeding flocks were always taken by private veterinarians.

Official and own-check samples are accompanied to the laboratory with a standard submission form which contains all the relevant information: e.g. flock identification number, type of sample, number of sample units, number of animals in the flock, information on vaccination, sample code, etc. The audit team noted that the submission form does not specifically indicate the weight of faecal samples. The CA informed the audit team that this information is contained in the sample code and verified at the laboratory (See also Chapter 5.8.).

All samples (both official and own-check) are tested in the official laboratories designated by the SVA. Test results are sent to the relevant RVA, with a copy to the poultry breeder or to the private veterinarian. In the case of positive analyses results a notification is sent to the SVA also.

The NRL collects and summarises the records of laboratory tests carried out by each laboratory participating in the SNCP. The summarised records are sent to the SVA once a month.

The RVAs enter the analyses results together with all information contained in the sample submission form into the SVA electronic information system. A new module is available since 2010 which contains all the measures taken following positive *Salmonella* results e.g. control reports, photos of biosecurity conditions, measures taken as regards the flock, etc.

This information system enables the RVAs to monitor the correct implementation of own-check sampling and official controls.

By using both information systems (laboratory and SVA electronic information system), at CCA level, the SVA is able to review and monitor the implementation and the progress of the SNCPs.
The audit team was informed by the CA that within the SNCP only vaccination against SE in laying hen flocks is mandatory. The vaccination programme for laying hen flocks prepared by the FBO must be submitted to, and approved by, the competent RVA. For other poultry populations within the SNCPs Salmonella vaccination is carried out on a voluntary basis. In such a case the FBO has to communicate the vaccination programme to the RVA but no approval is required. Information on vaccination of a flock against Salmonella is also entered into the SVA electronic information system.

Conclusions

Effective tools are available for the CA to monitor and verify continuously the implementation of the SNCPs.

5.4 SNCP FOR BREEDING HENS

Legal requirements

Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 outlines how targets shall be established for the reduction of the prevalence of zoonoses, including Salmonella. The target for breeding hens has been fixed by Commission Regulation (EU) No 200/2010. To achieve the targets, Member States have to implement a SNCP in breeding hens, including detailed sampling rules both for FBOs and for the official services. The requirements applicable until March 2010 were outlined in Regulation (EC) No 1003/2005.

Audit findings

The SNCP for breeding flocks is implemented in all regions visited and based on sampling at the holding.

Although it is not mandatory, either under the programme or under EU legislation, vaccination against Salmonella was carried out in all visited breeding flock holdings.

The audit team noted that, in breeding holdings visited, both own-check and official sampling were carried out in compliance with EU legislation regarding the sampling frequency and the sampling protocol applied.

Under the SNCP for breeders, a flock is considered positive when SE/ST has been isolated during an official control. In this case all measures laid down in Annex II Part C to Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 are taken.

In the case of detection of SE/ST in own-check samples, the CA carries out routine official confirmatory sampling in order to exclude initial false positive results by using a sampling protocol laid down in point 4(b) of Annex II Part D to Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 (five faecal and two dust samples). In addition, five birds are taken to verify the absence of the use of antimicrobials. The audit team noted that, until the confirmatory sampling results become available, official restrictive measures are imposed on the flock by the RVA (e.g. hatching eggs cannot be transported to the hatchery and ban on movement of animals). Official samples are also taken from feed and, if the OV considers it necessary, from water in order to identify the possible source of contamination. If the presence of SE/ST is not confirmed, the measures are lifted and the flock is considered as a negative flock. The audit team noted that, where the initial positive results were confirmed, all the measures applied against the flock were in compliance with Annex II Part C to Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003. In addition to these measures all other breeding flocks on the holding were sampled, which exceeds EU requirements.

According to the information provided by the CA, in 2011 confirmatory sampling was carried out in
six breeding flocks of which three tested positive for SE/ST.

Conclusions

The situation for the breeding hen population is overall satisfactory. However, the routine confirmatory sampling policy is not fully in compliance with point 2.2.2.2 (c) of Annex to Regulation (EU) No 200/2010 which stipulates that sampling may be repeated in exceptional cases where the CA has reason to question the results of the testing (false positive or false negative results).

5.5 SNCP FOR LAYING HENS

Legal requirements


Introduction

An EU-wide Salmonella baseline study, under Commission Decision 2004/665/EC, was conducted in commercial large-scale laying hen holdings with at least 1,000 laying hens in the flock. The study was carried out in all MS and coordinated by EFSA. The sampling of holdings took place between October 2004 and September 2005. The aim of the study was to estimate the prevalence of Salmonella in holdings at global EU-level as well as for each Member State specifically.

Audit findings

The baseline study organised by EFSA indicated for the Czech Republic a combined prevalence figure of 62.5% for SE and ST in laying hen flocks. This prevalence figure has significantly decreased to 2.3% in 2010 according to the annual EU Summary Report on Zoonoses, Zoonotic Agents and Food-borne Outbreaks. The CCA attributed this reduction primarily to compulsory vaccination, improvement in biosecurity conditions and training provided to farmers.

The audit team noted that the SNCP for laying flocks is implemented in all regions visited. In the files reviewed by the audit team the vaccination programme was approved by the RVA as required by the SNCP. According to the data provided by the CA in 2010 just under 16 million doses and in 2011 over 11 million doses of vaccine (against SE) were administered to layers.

The audit team noted that in laying hen holdings visited both own-check and official sampling were carried out in compliance with EU legislation as regards sampling frequency and sampling protocol used. When the audit team reviewed sampling records in the electronic database, they found only one instance where not all own-check sampling was entered. At the final meeting the CA stated that this planned own-check sampling had not occurred as scheduled. As a result of this irregularity the CA stated that they had ordered additional official sampling and imposed fines.

Under the SNCP for laying hens, a flock is considered positive when SE/ST has been isolated during an official control. In this case all measures laid down in Annex II Part D to Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 are taken and all other flocks on the holding are sampled as laid down in point 2.1 (d) of Annex to Regulation (EU) No 517/2011. The audit team noted that in the cases reviewed these measures were correctly applied.

The audit team was informed by the CA in the case of detection of SE/ST in own-check samples, the CA carries out routine official confirmatory sampling in order to exclude initial false positive results by using a sampling protocol laid down in point 4(b) of Annex II Part D to Regulation (EC)
No 2160/2003 (five faecal and two dust samples). In addition five birds are taken to verify the absence of the use of antimicrobials. The audit team was also informed by the CA that until the confirmatory sampling results become available official restrictive measures are imposed by the RVA (i.e. ban on marketing of eggs as Class A eggs). Official samples are also taken from feed and, if the OV considers it necessary, from water in order to identify the possible source of contamination. If the presence of SE/ST is not confirmed, the measures are lifted and the flock is considered as a negative flock.

If the initial positive results are confirmed measures applied against the flock are taken in accordance with Annex II Part D to Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 and in addition, all other laying flocks on the holding are sampled.

According to the information provided by the CA in 2011, confirmatory sampling was carried out in ten laying flocks of which four tested positive for SE/ST.

**Conclusions**

The situation for the laying hen sector is overall satisfactory. However, the routine confirmatory sampling policy performed without any specific reason to doubt the validity of the initial test results is not fully in line with the relevant EU legislation.

**5.6 SNCP FOR BROILERS**

**Legal requirements**


**Audit findings**

The CCA informed the audit team that the EU target for the reduction of *Salmonella* prevalence in broiler flocks was not met in 2011 and therefore they decided that, in 2012, official sampling must be carried out in all broiler holdings and that all flocks present at the time of an official visit must be sampled (which goes beyond EU requirements).

The audit team noted that in broiler holdings visited, both own-check and official sampling were carried out in compliance with EU legislation regarding sampling frequency and sampling protocol used. The audit team reviewed cases when SE was detected during official sampling and noted that adequate follow-up measures had been taken both by the FBO and by the OV. After the depopulation of the house the FBO carried out thorough cleaning and disinfection and took swab samples to verify its effectiveness. The OV verified biosecurity conditions of the holding and the measures taken by the FBO. Feed samples were taken for *Salmonella* analysis as well.

The audit team was informed by the CA that if a broiler flock tests positive it will be slaughtered at the end of the slaughter day in the slaughterhouse. In one case the audit team was also presented with negative test results of neck skin samples taken at the slaughterhouse after slaughtering a *Salmonella* positive broiler flock.

The audit team noted that in all cases when a flock tested positive for SE/ST this information was included in the Food Chain Information (FCI). Although in one of the cases reviewed the negative test results were included in the FCI, the audit team was informed by the CA that in case of negative test results or in the case of detection of serovars other than SE/ST, the FBO is not obliged to include this information in the FCI. This is not fully in compliance with the provisions of point 4.2 of Annex to Regulation (EU) No 200/2012 which stipulates that the results of the tests shall be considered relevant FCI as provided for in Section III of Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 853/2004.
Conclusions

The SNCP for broilers is being implemented overall in compliance with EU requirements. However, there are some instances of incomplete FCI accompanying the flocks to slaughter.

5.7 SNCP for Turkeys

Legal requirements


Audit findings

Breeding turkeys

The audit team was informed by the CA that there are only two breeding turkey holdings (one rearing and one adult) in the Czech Republic. There is no hatchery for breeding turkeys and all eggs are exported for hatching purposes. Therefore, the SNCP is based on sampling at the holding.

The audit team did not visit breeding turkey farms; only documentary check was carried out. Based on this review the audit team noted that in all but one breeding flock both own-check and official sampling were carried out in compliance with EU legislation as regards the sampling frequency and sampling protocol used.

The single exception was when in one of the rearing flocks, no own-check samples were taken at the age of four weeks. The CA explained to the audit team that the FBO planned to discontinue keeping breeding flocks and this flock was to be slaughtered after the fattening period. However, the FBO later decided to keep this flock as a breeding flock and own-check samples were taken at a later stage of the production cycle.

Fattening turkeys

The audit team was informed by the CA that all day old turkeys for fattening are imported for all 60 turkey fattening holdings. The audit team noted that in the fattening turkey holding visited own-check sampling was carried out in compliance with EU legislation as regards the sampling frequency and sampling protocol used.

The audit team was informed by the CA that all flocks on 10% of holdings with at least 500 birds are chosen for official sampling. The RVA decides which holdings will be sampled in the given year taking into account the results of previous official controls. The audit team noted that the 10% target for official sampling of holdings was achieved in 2011.

The audit team noted similar findings as for broiler flocks: namely, in case of negative Salmonella test results or in the case of detection of serovars other than SE/ST, the FBO is not obliged under the SNCP to include this information in the FCI. However, it is mandatory under the provisions of Section III of Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 which stipulates that the relevant FCI is to cover, in particular; the results, if they are relevant to the protection of public health, of any analysis carried out on samples taken from the animals or other samples taken to diagnose diseases that may affect the safety of meat, including samples taken in the framework of the monitoring and control of zoonoses.

Conclusions

The SNCP for breeding and fattening turkeys is being implemented generally in compliance with EU requirements. However, there are some weaknesses regarding incomplete FCI.
5.8 Laboratories

Legal requirements

Article 33 of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 lays down the responsibilities and tasks of the NRLs designated by the Member States.

Article 12 (2) of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 requires CAs to only designate official laboratories that fulfil certain quality standards.

Additionally, Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 lays down requirements for laboratories participating in SNCPs, including the need to apply quality assurance systems and to participate in collaborative testing.

The relevant regulations for the different poultry populations lay down rules for the detection method (ISO 6579 Annex D) and serotyping method (Kaufmann-White scheme) to be used in the context of SNCPs.

Audit findings

There are three laboratories designated by the CA to perform analyses within the framework of SNCPs in addition to the Salmonella NRL. All designated laboratories, including the NRL, perform analyses on both official and own-check samples. However, official samples taken during confirmatory sampling are only analysed at the NRL.

The team visited the NRL and one other official laboratory involved in the SNCPs.

All laboratories are accredited to ISO 17025 by the Czech Accreditation Institute, the national accreditation body, and use the reference method for Salmonella analyses. In addition to detection, each laboratory performs serotyping. The Accreditation Institute audits each laboratory annually. The FVO audit team was informed by representatives in both visited laboratories that no major non-compliances had been detected during any of these audits.

The audit team noted that the NRL regularly participates in proficiency tests organised by the EU Reference Laboratory (EURL) for Salmonella detection and serotyping, with satisfactory results.

The NRL is responsible for organising proficiency tests for Salmonella detection and serotyping on a regular basis. The audit team noted that the last proficiency test on Salmonella detection was organised in April 2012 and on serotyping in April 2011. All designated laboratories within the SNCP had satisfactory results in these tests. The audit team was informed by the NRL that in the case of unsatisfactory results in proficiency tests they would follow up the case and would provide the required assistance to the laboratory concerned.

Both laboratories visited had adequate equipment and knowledgeable staff. The audit team saw evidence that staff regularly participate in training. The audit team was informed that the NRL organises meetings with the other laboratories involved in the SNCPs at least once a year where among other topics individual proficiency test results are discussed.

The laboratory staff provided the audit team with copies of procedures for rejecting non-compliant samples taken within the framework of the SNCPs. This is an important role of the laboratory within the SNCP since the sample submission forms do not contain for example the weight of faecal sample as it was pointed out in Chapter 5.3 of this report. The audit team saw evidence that the laboratory verified the correctness of the sampling protocol used and that non-compliant samples were not tested. However according to a laboratory representative, the laboratories receive very few non-compliant samples each year thanks to the training provided to the farmers and to private veterinarians.
Conclusions

Laboratories involved in the SNCPs are in compliance with the requirements laid down in Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003.

5.9 Salmonella food-borne outbreak investigations

Legal requirements

Article 8 of Directive 2003/99/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the monitoring of zoonoses and zoonotic agents outlines different rules for the CA epidemiological investigation of food-borne outbreaks (including cooperation with other authorities involved). When this investigation succeeds in tracing back the source of a Salmonella outbreak due to eggs to the farm of origin, Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 lays down certain measures to be taken at that farm.

Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 indicates that adequate co-operation and co-ordination will be ensured between the different CAs involved in official controls.

Audit findings

The audit team was informed and saw evidence that in 2009 the “Common Methodology on handover information on occurrence of communicable diseases between Regional Public Health Centres (RPHC) and RVAs” was adopted. This document provides detailed rules on the co-operation in case of food-borne outbreaks between the two authorities involved (e.g. means of communication, information to be notified, list of diseases to be notified, list of contact persons, etc.).

In addition to this “Common Methodology” at least twice a year an inter-ministerial "Workshop on Zoonoses Programmes" is organised with the participation of experts from both authorities. The audit team was informed by the CA that at least once a year a representative from SVA participates in the internal meetings of RPHC and vice-versa.

The audit team was presented with two cases of Salmonella outbreak by representatives of RPHCs. In one case the outbreak was suspected to be linked to poultry meat and in the other case to eggs. Although in both cases epidemiological investigation was carried there was no conclusive evidence that the outbreaks were due to the suspected food.

The audit team was informed that in both cases the RPHC contacted RVA, however documented evidence of this was only available in one of the cases.

The audit team noted that in the documented case appropriate measures were taken by the CAs in order to identify the source of infection. Once the origin of the suspected eggs was identified by the RPHC, this information was communicated to RVA. The RVA then performed official sampling in the laying hen holding. However, the audit team noted that only four samples of eggs were tested for Salmonella. This is not in compliance with the provisions of point 2.1 (c) of Annex to Regulation (EU) No 517/2011 which foresees a more sensitive sampling protocol to be used.

The audit team also noted that in the case of Salmonella positive laying hen flocks the RVA routinely sent notification to the responsible RPHC on the veterinary measures taken for the flock concerned.

Conclusion

Since the 2008 FVO table eggs audit, corrective actions have been made by the CAs in order to improve cooperation during food-borne outbreak investigations. However, there are still some weaknesses regarding the sampling protocol used during such investigations.
6 Overall Conclusions

The SNCPs are implemented in all regions of the Czech Republic and cover all poultry populations. The control system is well organised and effective tools are available for the CA to monitor and review continuously the progress of the programmes. As regards investigations of food borne outbreaks in humans, progress has been made in the field of SNCP implementation and in cooperation between the public health authorities and the CAs during the food-borne outbreak investigations as evidenced by the significant decrease of SE/ST prevalence in all poultry populations and by the decrease of \textit{Salmonella} incidence in humans.

However, the FVO audit team still found some deficiencies mainly related to the use of a routine confirmatory sampling policy, to the sampling protocol used during \textit{Salmonella} food-borne outbreak investigations and to the FCI which is incomplete in some cases.

7 Closing Meeting

During the closing meeting held in Prague on 27 September 2012, the audit team presented the findings and preliminary conclusions of the audit to the CAs.

During this meeting, the CCA acknowledged the FVO’s findings and added that according to national rules financial compensation for farmers (e.g. in the case of culled flock) must be based on positive official sampling results and that the relevant EU legislation does not clearly define the rules on confirmatory sampling.

8 Recommendations

The CCA should provide Commission services with guarantees and an action plan, including a timetable for its completion, within twenty five working days of receipt of the report in order to address all the deficiencies identified and in particular, the following recommendations:

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<td>1.</td>
<td>The CCA should ensure that the monitoring and sampling programme applied in breeding flocks complies fully with the requirements of Regulations (EC) No 2160/2003 and (EU) No 200/2010, in particular regarding confirmatory sampling.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The CCA should ensure that the monitoring and sampling programme applied in laying flocks is fully compliant with the requirements of Regulations (EC) No 2160/2003 and (EU) No 517/2011, in particular regarding sampling protocol used during food-borne outbreak investigations and regarding confirmatory sampling policy.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>The CCA should ensure that the content of the FCI complies fully with the requirements of Section III of Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 and point 4.2 of Annex to Regulation (EU) No 200/2012, in particular results of any analysis carried</td>
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<td>out within the framework of SNCPs is included.</td>
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The competent authority's response to the recommendations can be found at:

## Legal References

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