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**COMMISSION STAFF WORKING PAPER**

**SUMMARY OF THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

*Accompanying document to the*

**Commission Regulation laying down detailed rules on a Salmonella food safety criterion  
in fresh meat of fowl of Gallus gallus and turkeys**

## 1. PROBLEM DEFINITION

This proposal is part of an integrated farm to fork approach covering hygiene of feed, hygiene and targets for reduction of *Salmonella* in parent flocks and broiler flocks, hygiene in slaughter and processing and food labelling policies. Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 establishes targets for reduction of *Salmonella* in poultry along the food chain, trade restrictions on animals and food (i.e. meat) and considers a harmonised approach to sampling regimes for food businesses operators to test for *Salmonella* presence. The Framework legislation (EC) No 2160/2003 has already established the food safety criteria.

According to the Regulation, a food safety criterion requiring - the absence of *Salmonella* in 25 grams of the fresh poultry meat - should be applied from the end of 2010 in order to promote better *Salmonella* control along the food supply chain.

In order to meet this criterion, the regulation requests that detailed rules i.e. sampling schemes and analytical methods need to be set. However, there is a discrepancy between the timing in actions already taken further up the food chain in live animals and the date of application of the food safety criterion at the fresh meat stage. Too early application of the food safety criterion could be problematic for economic operators and other stakeholders. This impact assessment analyses the most proportionate way to introduce the measure without placing unnecessary burdens on businesses and Member States.

## 2. ANALYSIS OF SUBSIDIARITY

The Commission has the legal obligation to lay down detailed rules in accordance with the provisions in Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003. Food safety is largely an EU competence and food safety criteria such as this *Salmonella* criterion is an exclusive EU competence. Harmonised detailed rules on the food safety criterion are needed to guarantee correct competition and similar acceptance of food on the internal market, and to provide uniform conditions in the whole EU for import from third countries.

## 3. OBJECTIVES

The general objective of Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 is to ensure safe food for consumers and improve public health by establishing safe guards to control *Salmonella* of human health significance at critical points all along the food chain.

The general policy objective for this initiative is to ensure that the efforts being carried out further up the food chain to achieve the reduction target are not being compromised by not adequately monitoring the target at the fresh meat stage.

The specific objectives to achieve that aim include:

- Ensuring that consumers have reasonable assurance that fresh poultry meat placed on the market becomes gradually free from relevant *Salmonella*;

- Establishing harmonised detailed sampling schemes and analytical methods to ensure the functioning of the internal market and third country trade without placing unnecessary burdens on businesses and any other parties;
- Ensure consistency with other European Union objectives in particular commitments relating to sustainable production and the small business act;
- Ensure the compliance with the Commission's "from farm to fork" / "from stable to table" strategy (food safety along the food chain).
- Ensure that, where possible, the detailed rules (analytical method, sampling method, sampling frequency etc.) have been aligned with the provisions in Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005.
- Ensure the possibility for a risk-based adjustment of the sampling frequency.

#### 4. POLICY OPTIONS

Policy Option 1 – Do nothing – allow the absence of *Salmonella* in 25 grams criterion in fresh poultry meat without applying harmonised rules for its application amongst food business operators (FBOs).

Policy Option 2 – Apply the absence of *Salmonella* in 25 g criterion with harmonised sampling rules – apply the absence of *Salmonella* in 25 g criterion but set detailed rules for FBOs about how the criterion should be applied and monitored.

Policy Option 3 – Apply the absence criterion to only the 2 most significant serotypes of *Salmonella* with harmonised sampling rules as a transitional measure – apply the absence of *Salmonella* in 25 g criterion to the serotypes that pose the largest risk to public health, e.g. the serotypes that already have marketing restriction further up the food chain (*Salmonella* Typhimurium and *Salmonella* Enteritidis)

Policy Option 4 – Apply the absence criteria but to 10 g rather than 25 g, with harmonised sampling rules as a transitional measures – reduce the sensitivity of testing.

Policy Option 5 – Apply a tolerance allowing meat on the market in which *Salmonella* is present in 1 of the samples taken.

Policy Option 6 - Postpone the coming into force date until the prevalence is low – The existing process hygiene criterion would remain applicable in this option.

All options can be laid down according to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny (Article 5a §3(a) of Council Decision 1999/468/EC, as amended by Council Decision 2006/512/EC).

#### 5. ANALYSIS OF IMPACT

The likely economic, social and public health impacts of each of the options identified above both within the EU and wider were analysed and compared.

## 5.1. Economic and social impact

Slaughterhouses and processors of poultry meat will have to bear relevant costs for sampling and testing.

In addition, as contaminated food will no longer be compliant with the criterion, it will need to be removed from the market under the General Food Law.

It is likely that, the positive samples identified for the food safety criterion at the fresh meat stage will result in identifying the source and putting in place further measures on primary producers to ensure improved *Salmonella* control.

Recalling and withdrawing food may have a negative impact on consumer confidence as consumers equate recalls with unsafe food. In certain Member States recall and withdrawal may, however, result in an increase of confidence in the food safety controls of competent authorities.

Controversy exists on whether the application of the criterion in fresh meat would result in an economic advantage or disadvantage for the Member States compared to third countries. It might be easier for Member States to comply with the criterion in poultry meat produced in the EU since *Salmonella* is being reduced at farm level. Additionally, imported poultry meat is frozen, allowing storage of the batch until the result of *Salmonella* testing is known as well as long shelf-life of the product, which may result in increased chances to recall or withdraw the contaminated batches from the market. On the other hand, stakeholders' organisations claim that poultry meat intended for the EU market will be screened prior to shipment and, if *Salmonella* is found, placed on the market of the third country (having no *Salmonella* criterion for poultry meat) without losses.

The criterion may facilitate export to third countries requesting the absence of *Salmonella*.

Competent authorities need to carry out inspections for the verification of the implementation of the provisions, including testing. Currently, between 20,000 and 28,000 official samples are taken in the EU each year in fresh poultry meat and a need to increase this sample size for official controls is not considered.

## 5.2. Public health benefit

The approach laid down in Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003 is to create an incentive, encouraging the control of *Salmonella* at previous stages of the food chain (targets to reduce *Salmonella* in flocks, increased hygiene in slaughter and processing). The criterion will, therefore, result in a gradual reduction of *Salmonella* in poultry meat and consequently decreased exposure to consumers via it.

According to the EFSA/ECDC 2008 zoonoses monitoring report, the decreasing trend in the notification rate of salmonellosis cases in humans continues. However, salmonellosis still remained the second most commonly reported zoonotic disease in the EU. There were a total of 131,468 reported cases of human salmonellosis in the EU 27. EFSA recently estimated the total cost of all *Salmonella* infections between 0.2 and 3 billion Euro per year. *Salmonella* Enteritidis and *Salmonella* Typhimurium

are responsible for about 80% of all human cases. 4 to 10% of human salmonellosis can be attributed to poultry meat.

### 5.3. Comparison of options

A comparison of the costs of different options is in Table A while a comparison of options with regard to the achievement of objectives is in Table B.

Table A: overall comparison of costs (mio €)

Option	Sample regime	Overall change in cost of sampling		Additional cost (100 € per FBO)	Cost of recall/ withdrawal (considering detection rates)	Total additional costs
		FBO	CA			
1	Lower limit	-3.4	0	0.55	8	<b>6.4</b>
	Upper limit	59.8	0	0.55	64	<b>125.6</b>
2	weekly 5 samples	2.6	0	0.55	33	<b>58.9</b>
3		24.0	0	0.55	4.9	<b>34.3</b>
4		27.6	0	0.55	13.2	<b>39.1</b>
5		124-246	0	0.55	9.4	<b>135-257</b>
6		0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>

FBO = food business operator

CA = competent authority

Such comparison and other aspects such as legal ones result in the ranking presented in Table C.

Table C: Ranking of options.

Option	Limitation of costs	Harmonisation of trade	Public health impact	Legal aspects	Analytical aspects
3	++	++	+	++	+
4	++	++	+	+	-
2	-	++	++	++	++
6	+++	++	-	-	Not relevant
5	-	-	-	+	-
1	-/+	-	-/+	-	-/+

### 5.4. Preferred option.

Option 3 limiting the criterion to *S. Enteritidis* and *S. Typhimurium* is proposed.

This option provides the best balance between costs and public health benefits. All options establishing harmonised rules for the food safety criterion, with the exception of the postponement of date of coming into force, are expected to place adequate

pressure on the poultry production chain to ensure that *Salmonella* controls are improved. As a more strict application of the criterion (e.g. more samples or more *Salmonella* strains) is unlikely to bring significantly higher public health benefits but may place large additional burdens on the supply chain.

## **6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Monitoring of *Salmonella* in poultry meat is mandatory in accordance with the provisions in Directive 2003/99/EC.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) collects data on human salmonellosis in accordance with Decision 2000/96/EC.

The results from all the above monitoring and the evaluation of the results are evaluated and published annually in a common report on zoonoses monitoring of EFSA and ECDC.

Other indicators that will be monitored are the trends in the consumption of poultry meat, the prices of poultry meat, the trade within the EU of poultry and poultry meat, the import and export of poultry meat. These indicators are monitored and published by Eurostat.

Table B: Achievement of objectives

Objectives Options	Ensure that consumers have reasonable assurance that fresh poultry meat placed on the market is free from relevant <i>Salmonella</i>	Establishing a harmonised sampling scheme to ensure the functioning of the internal market and third country trade without placing unnecessary burdens on businesses	Ensure consistency with other European Union objectives in particular commitments relating to sustainable production and the small business act	Ensure the compliance with the Commission's "farm to fork" strategy
<b>Policy Option 1 – Do nothing</b>	No harmonised rules, completely dependent of Member States initiatives	Major disruption of internal market and third country trade expected	Completely dependent on MS initiatives. It may be expected that Member States will take into account sustainable production and small business act	Not ensured (no measures for meat on the market)
<b>Policy Option 2 – Apply the absence criterion</b>	Mostly achieved	Achieved	May not be ensured (important economic impact)	Ensured
<b>Policy Option 3 – Apply the absence criterion to the 2 most significant serotypes of <i>Salmonella</i></b>	Largely achieved. Meat with other serotypes will not be taken from the market but measures taken at previous stages will reduce all serotypes.	Achieved	Ensured	Ensured
<b>Policy Option 4 – Apply the absence criteria but to 10 grams rather than 25 grams</b>	Largely achieved. The lower detection rate will still be a trigger to encourage measures taken at previous stages and reducing exposure to all serotypes.	Achieved	Ensured	Ensured
<b>Policy Option 5 – Tolerance (n = 19, c = 1)</b>	Not achieved	Not achieved.	Achieved	Not ensured
<b>Policy Option 6 – Postponement of date</b>	Not achieved	No harmonisation or disruption of trade.	Achieved unless the increased risk of outbreaks result in loss of consumer's confidence	Not ensured (no measures for meat on the market)