

Whole-of-Government Talking Points – *Salmonella* Enteritidis linked to eggs

ISSUE: *Salmonella* Enteritidis (SE) linked to eggs

Lead agency: State agencies remain the leads for events within their borders – that is, New South Wales, as the home jurisdiction for the majority of implicated egg farms. Any enquiries regarding the recall of eggs in Victoria can be directed to Victoria.

Talking Points

- State and territory food regulators, health authorities and agriculture departments in Australia are investigating a strain of *Salmonella* (*Salmonella* Enteritidis) linked to human illness and egg production.
 - Detections of this strain have been found on six chicken (egg layer) farms and/or grading facilities in New South Wales, and one in Victoria.

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- Authorities are working closely with peak industry bodies, including Australian Eggs and the Australian Chicken Meat Federation on the ongoing investigation.
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has coordinated a number of associated food recalls
 - Consumer level recall (affecting NSW and ACT) [FSANZ2019/23] from Southern Highlands Organic Eggs/Synergy Produce Pty Ltd in NSW
 - Consumer level recall (affecting NSW) [FSANZ2019/18] for eggs from Ash and Sons in NSW
 - Consumer level recall (NSW, VIC TAS, SA and ACT) [FSANZ2019/15] for eggs, from Bridgewater Farms Poultry in Victoria
 - Trade level (affecting VIC and NSW) [FSANZ2019/14]
 - Consumer level recall [FSANZ2018/69] of Glendenning Farm eggs in NSW was undertaken in September 2018.
- A consumer level recall involves the recovery of the food product from all points in the production and distribution chain including product in the possession of consumers.
- A trade level recall involves removing the product from distribution centres and wholesalers.
- The consumption of raw or undercooked eggs is a risk for contracting salmonellosis. Cooking the eggs fully will kill the *Salmonella* bacteria.

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Response – health and on farm

- In all states there are divided responsibilities for eggs and traceability between agriculture, health and food portfolios.
- There are multiple coordinated responses to this outbreak given the health and on farm nature of the issue.

Health

- The National Food Incident Response Protocol was triggered by NSW on 19 March 2019 due to detections of *Salmonella* Enteritidis on a farm in Victoria. FSANZ is coordinating the issue under the National Food Incident Response Protocol.
- This protocol defines the roles and responsibilities of key government stakeholders in a food incident. At this stage, the primary objective of the use of the incident protocol is to share information between jurisdictions.
- A consumer level recall (affecting NSW and ACT) [FSANZ2019/23] from Southern Highlands Organic Eggs/Synergy Produce Pty Ltd in NSW was issued on 6 April 2019.
- A trade (VIC) and consumer (NSW, VIC TAS, SA and ACT) level recall [FSANZ2019/15] was issued for eggs from Bridgewater Farms Poultry in Victoria on 20 March 2019.
- A trade level recall (affecting NSW and VIC)[FSANZ2019/14] was issued for eggs from Ash and Sons in NSW on 20 March 2019 later extended to a separate consumer level recall (affecting NSW) [FSANZ2019/18] on 27 March 2019.
- These follow a consumer level recall [FSANZ2018/69] of Glendenning Farm eggs in NSW in September 2018.

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- In early 2019, the NSW Food Authority placed a Prohibition Order on the businesses that produced the eggs associated with NSW cases; preventing the businesses from selling eggs while the contamination was investigated. It also released advice to consumers on the batches of eggs that were affected (1 February 2019).

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On farm (through jurisdictional authorities)

- As the lead in New South Wales, New South Wales agencies will continue to assess and manage the situation in New South Wales, including any incident-specific considerations such as animal welfare implications and potential biosecurity breaches. Victorian agencies are similarly managing the situation in Victoria.
 - Agencies in New South Wales and Victoria are working closely with each other, as well as those from other jurisdictions and the Commonwealth, and industry bodies such as Australian Eggs and Australian Chicken Meat Federation.
- The Animal Health Committee continue to discuss the SE situation in relation to animal health and biosecurity, and national approaches.
- Authorities are being guided by the *Salmonella* Enteritidis Response Plan developed by [Australian Eggs Limited](#). This outlines response measures, such as on-farm quarantine and destruction of flocks (depopulation).
- NSW and Victoria are working with respective affected producers to manage the incidents.
 - In early 2019, the NSW Department of Primary Industries issued a biosecurity direction on the farm to restrict movement of livestock, eggs, manure and disposables and order the disinfection and decontamination of equipment.
 - Biosecurity measures have been implemented on the Victorian farm while investigations continue.

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If asked:

Have affected eggs been exported?

- There is no known export of affected eggs.
- The department is working with State authorities to ensure that no affected eggs have ended up in the export supply chain.

Background

- *Salmonella* Enteritidis is a strain of *Salmonella* which has the potential to infect the reproductive tract of poultry and contaminate the internal contents of eggs.
- *Salmonella* Enteritidis differs from other strains of *salmonella* in that the infection can be inside the egg, rather than contaminating only the outside of the egg. As such clean eggs rather than just dirty or cracked eggs can be of concern.

Australian egg industry

- The gross value of egg production was \$819.6 million in 2017 FY.
- Major supermarket grocery chains sold 229.658 million dozen in 2017 FY which was around half the total egg production in the 2018 FY of 515.7 million dozen.

Export impacts

- There is no known export of affected eggs, and no evidence of any commercial supply of eggs from affected farms in NSW, into jurisdictions other than Victoria. The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources has worked with State authorities to ensure that no eggs have ended up in the export supply chain.
- The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources has confirmed that the establishments affected in NSW are outside of the export supply chain for eggs and has implemented controls to ensure that no affected eggs from these establishments enter the export supply chain.
- The Victorian layer farm is still under investigation, so while there is no evidence that product has entered the export supply chain at this time, the investigation is still underway.
- Currently Singapore and Korea require attestations confirming that any eggs they import have not been sourced from farms that have had SE in the last 3 months, and the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources is implementing the relevant measures to ensure that this is enforced when applying for export certification.
- To ensure freedom from SE, NSW Department of Primary Industries coordinates the National *Salmonella* Enteritidis Monitoring & Accreditation Program (NSEMAP), which includes all Australian states. The NSEMAP is available for all Australian commercial egg producers exporting eggs to overseas markets but is not mandatory. Where an importing country requires certification as free from SE, the NSEMAP can provide the relevant assurances. NSEMAP freedom and accreditation guidelines can be found [here](#).

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- Under the *Salmonella* Enteritidis Incident Response Plan (Australian Eggs), birds and other potentially infectious material on SE infected properties (such as manure, eggs, packaging) are to be quarantined and destroyed. In NSW these actions are currently underway.
- The top nine export market for eggs from Australia have been identified as Hong Kong, Singapore, Sri Lanka, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Republic of Korea, Nauru.
- Exports of Fresh shell eggs by country of destination by value (2018 FY)
 - Hong Kong- \$934,184
 - Singapore- \$465,129
 - Sri Lanka- \$214,774
 - New Zealand- \$199,293
 - New Caledonia- \$112,613
 - Vanuatu- \$92,564
 - Republic of Korea- \$78,090

Illness

- Symptoms are usually limited to mild gastroenteritis, with patients usually recovering within a week. But the illness can lead to systemic illness such as septicaemia and other longer-term conditions.
- Severe cases of diarrhoea can lead to significant dehydration which may require hospitalisation and medical intervention such as intravenous fluid replacement.
- Although uncommon, long-term effects may occur include reactive arthritis.
- This strain can be passed from person to person, however, this is more likely to occur in young children due to poor hand hygiene.




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Timeline

	<p>§ 45/ 47B/ 47E/ 47G</p>
September 2018	<p><i>Salmonella</i> Enteritidis outbreak first detected on a NSW egg farm.</p> <p>Consumer level recall (FSANZ2018/69) of Glendenning Farms eggs undertaken in response to laboratory evidence of <i>S</i> Enteritidis contamination.</p> <p>NSW Department of Primary Industries issues a biosecurity direction on the farm to restrict movement of livestock, eggs, manure and disposables and order the disinfection and decontamination of equipment.</p>
January 2019	<p>NSW Food Authority placed a Prohibition Order on another business, that produced the eggs related to NSW cases; preventing the business from selling eggs while the contamination was investigated. Biosecurity directions were also issued to this farm.</p>
February 2019	<p>NSW Food Authority also released advice to consumers on the batches of eggs that were affected.</p>
Wednesday 13 March 2019	<p>Four other farms have positive detections of <i>Salmonella</i> Enteritidis with most recent notification on this day.</p>
Monday 18 March 2019	<p>Confirmed <i>Salmonella</i> Enteritidis detection at largest Victorian egg laying farm.</p>
Tuesday 19 March 2019	<p>National Food Incident Response Protocol (NFIRP) was triggered due to further detections on farm in Victoria.</p> <p>§ 45/ 47B/ 47E/ 47G</p>
Wednesday 20 March 2019	<p>NFIRP teleconference held.</p> <p>FSANZ 2019/14 – Trade level recall (NSW and VIC (updated as of</p>

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	<p>22/03/2019)) of free range eggs from Ash and Sons farm in NSW.</p> <p>FSANZ 2019/15 – Trade (VIC) and Consumer (NSW, VIC TAS, SA and ACT) level recall for eggs from Bridgewater Farms Poultry in VIC.</p> <p>Media issued by FSANZ, Tas Health, Vic and NSW.</p>
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Wednesday 27 March	<p>FSANZ 2019/18 – Consumer (NSW) level recall for eggs from Ash and Sons farm in NSW. [Associated with a grading facility].</p>
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Saturday 6 April	<p>FSANZ2019/23] – Consumer (NSW and ACT) level recall for eggs graded at Southern Highlands Organic Eggs/Synergy Product Pty Ltd in NSW.</p>