

Zoonoses in Europe: distribution and trends - the EFSA-ECDC Community Summary Report 2008

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On 28 January 2010 the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) launched their annual report on zoonoses and food-borne outbreaks for 2008. The report provides a comprehensive overview of zoonotic infections and disease outbreaks caused by consuming contaminated food. The number of reported human cases of the three most reported zoonotic infections, was lower in 2008 compared to 2007.

Campylobacteriosis was the most commonly reported zoonosis in the European Union (EU) for the last five years followed by salmonellosis and yersiniosis. The declining trend of salmonellosis continued, most likely as a result of the intensified control of *Salmonella* in animal populations, particularly in poultry, and better hygiene throughout the food chain.

The number of confirmed cases of listeriosis decreased by 11% in 2008 (1,381) compared to 2007 (1,554) in the EU. Foodstuffs that are considered the main source for human listeriosis in the EU include ready-to-eat (RTE) products (fish and meat), soft cheeses, salads and sandwiches. An EFSA-ECDC collaborative survey on *Listeria* in RTE products and in clinical cases of human listeriosis started in January 2010, the results of which will contribute to a better understanding about listeriosis in the EU.

Q-fever increased by 172% in 2008 (1,594) compared with 2007 (585). This was mainly due to several outbreaks in people entering areas with infected sheep and goats mainly in the Netherlands. In-depth investigations have been carried out in affected countries and it is suspected that the occurrence of Q-fever in humans and animals may be seriously underreported in Europe.

A total of 3,159 confirmed cases of Shiga-toxin/verotoxin producing *E. coli* (STEC/VTEC) were reported in 2008, representing an 8.7% increase from 2007 (2,905 cases). In animals VTEC was mainly isolated from cattle and, in lower proportion from small ruminants such

as sheep and goats. In food, VTEC was detected in a considerable proportion of cow milk samples.

The 2008 annual Community Summary Report describes the five-year trends, distribution and 2008 figures for zoonotic infections and agents in humans, animals and foodstuffs in the 27 EU Member States, the European Economic Area and Switzerland [1]. Information aimed at protecting human health is collected and analysed according to the Zoonoses Directive 2003/99/EC [2]. Assisted by the Zoonoses Collaboration Centre (ZCC) in Copenhagen, Denmark, EFSA and ECDC jointly analysed the data. The results of this report highlight the importance of close collaboration between public health specialists and veterinarians and the need for robust surveillance systems in order to detect trends in zoonoses in Europe.

The full version with data per country and annexes are available on EFSA's and ECDC's websites.

References

1. European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). The Community Summary Report on trends and sources of zoonoses, zoonotic agents and food-borne outbreaks in the European Union in 2008 Stockholm, Parma; 2010. Available from: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/scdocs/scdoc/1496.htm>
2. Directive 2003/99/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 November 2003 on the monitoring of zoonoses and zoonotic agents, amending Council Decision 90/424/EC and repealing Council Directive 92/117/EC (OJ L 325, 12.12.2003 p. 31).