

Letter to the editor: *Salmonella* Stanley outbreaks – a prompt to reevaluate existing food regulations

B Springer¹, F Allerberger (franz.allerberger@ages.at)¹, C. Kornschober¹

1. Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety (AGES), National Reference Centre for Salmonella, Graz, Austria

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To the editor:

In a recent *Eurosurveillance* issue, Kinross et al. [1] describe a cross-border outbreak of *Salmonella* Stanley in the European Union, which could be traced back to a contamination in the turkey production chain. The aetiological clone is mono-resistant to nalidixic acid and characterised by a novel pulsed-field gel electrophoresis (PFGE) type. We agree with Kinross et al. that the exchange of molecular data has to be improved to speed up outbreak investigations. However, although control measures were adequate to contain the multi-state outbreak, they were not sufficient to eradicate the new clone, seeing as two outbreaks that occurred in Germany 12 months and Austria 16 months later [2] were caused by kebab contaminated with the newly described *Salmonella* Stanley outbreak clone. Rather, there is a considerable risk that the clone will become endemic in the turkey or poultry production chain in Europe.

In an editorial on this outbreak report, Hugas and Beloeil from the European Food Safety Agency conclude: *If sufficient information becomes available to reliably identify particular strains of public health significance, the inclusion of such strains as part of the EU-wide targets should be considered* [3]. In Austria we are already observing rising infection rates with *Salmonella* Stanley, with nine documented human infections in 2010 versus 101 documented infections in 2013. Moreover, the problem of antibiotic resistance inherent to the *Salmonella* Stanley outbreak clone was not addressed in this editorial. During the recent outbreak in Austria, we isolated three strains from infected humans that had developed resistance even against third generation cephalosporins and gentamicin. All strains harboured a CTX-M-15 extended-spectrum beta-lactamase, rendering standard therapy regimens ineffective. To prevent further evolution and spread of *Salmonella* Stanley, countries must undertake every effort to eradicate this outbreak clone in the poultry production chain in Europe now.

Although European regulations have contributed substantially to reducing *Salmonella* infections, the

recent *Salmonella* Stanley outbreaks should be seen as an opportunity to re-evaluate existing regulations in view of efficient risk management and consistency. According to Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 [4], food shall not be placed on the market if it is unsafe. Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005 [5] further specifies that *Salmonella* has to be absent in minced meat and meat preparations made from poultry meat. However, in 2011, Regulation 1086/2011 [6] set a food safety criterion for fresh poultry meat that unfortunately only covers *Salmonella* Enteritidis and *Salmonella* Typhimurium, leaving food inspectors in the difficult situation that safety criteria for meat preparations differ from those for raw meat. Further, in our opinion, Regulation 1086/2011 weakened the stricter standards originally intended by part E of Annex II to Regulation No 2160/2003 [7] specifying that fresh poultry meat may not be placed on the market for human consumption when contaminated with *Salmonella*.

Along with harmonisation and refinement of food safety criteria, inclusion of *Salmonella* Stanley in the community targets for the reduction of the prevalence of zoonoses and zoonotic agents should be implemented to efficiently support control measures.

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