

Information Sheet
New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets
Pet Food – Pet Treat Salmonella Surveillance Program

Summary:

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Food Laboratory was recently awarded a five year grant from the FDA to expand the scope of hazards our laboratory tests for in livestock feeds, feed ingredients, pet food and pet treats. One aim is to evaluate the association of salmonellosis in pets with contaminated pet food / pet treats and to see if there is an association with human salmonellosis.

Research Strategy

- Cases of salmonellosis in cats and dogs are identified by private veterinary practitioners and the New York State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory.
- Pet food and/or pet treats from ill pets are sent to the New York State Food Laboratory for *Salmonella* testing. Samples should be associated temporally with the onset of illness.
- Since it is likely that most of the consumer samples are going to be previously opened inspectors from the Dept. of Agriculture and Markets will attempt to collect an intact sample with a similar lot code for all samples that test positive for *Salmonella*.
- *Salmonella* isolates from cats and/or dogs are sent to the New York State Food Laboratory for genetic characterization.
- All *Salmonella* isolates will be compared to the CDC PulseNet database of foodborne pathogen genetic fingerprints to see if associations of human illnesses with *Salmonella* subtypes found in cats, dogs, and/or pet food / treats exist.
- Sample testing and evaluation of *Salmonella* isolates is expected to begin in September 2011 and continue through September 2015.

The New York State Food Laboratory is uniquely positioned to perform the study above because we routinely test pet food for hazards including *Salmonella* and we are a PulseNet laboratory. We will provide a report of analysis for all samples submitted to our lab from participating veterinary clinics and an annual report summarizing the results of all testing performed in this study. We will pay for all costs associated with participating in the proposed study and can coordinate the study to protect confidentiality of pet owners and veterinary clinics if warranted.

Significance:

Salmonellosis in pets associated with contaminated pet food has been reported. However, surveillance testing of pet food for *Salmonella* appears to be lacking. The proposed study is intended to strengthen the body of evidence that pet food contaminated with *Salmonella* is not only responsible for pet illnesses but also presents risks to human health.

Benefits to enrolling:

- A laboratory report of analysis summarizing the results of testing will be sent to all participants.
- The data generated from this study will be used by FDA to develop a risk model aimed at reducing feed acquired illness in pets.

For more information contact the project coordinator, Dan Rice, at daniel.rice@agriculture.ny.gov, or 518-457-4478.