EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HEALTH & CONSUMERS DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
Unit 04 - Veterinary Control Programmes

SANCO/10290/2009

Programmes for the eradication, control and monitoring of certain animal diseases and zoonoses

Control programme of Salmonella in breeding, laying and broiler flocks (*Gallus gallus)* and in flocks of turkeys *(Meleagris gallopavo)*

Approved* for 2010 by Commission Decision 2009/883/EC

Malta

* in accordance with Council Decision 2009/470/EC

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE NATIONAL SALMONELLA CONTROL PROGRAMME IN BROILER FLOCKS OF GALLUS GALLUS IN ACC. TO |COMMISSION DECISION: 90/424/EEC, 2004/450/EC

PART A

a) Aim of programme: To carry out a monitoring and control programme for Zoonotic Salmonella in broiler flocks of Gallus gallus in accordance to Council Regulation 2160/2003 and Commission Regulation 646/2007 in order to achieve a reduction of the prevalence of *Salmonella enteritidis* and *Salmonella typhimurium*. Those flocks found infected with *Salmonella typhimurium* and *Salmonella enteritidis* will be condemned and culled, in order to achieve a reduction in the prevalence of these serotypes in the national flock, as indicated in Commission Regulation 646/2007 article 1:-

" reduction of maximum percentage of flocks of broilers remaining positive of *Salmonella enteritidis* and *Salmonella typhimurium* to 1% or less by the 31st December 2011

The control programme will run for three consecutive years, having started in 2009.

A flock of broilers shall be considered positive for the presence of verifying the achievement of the Community target, where the presence of *Salmonella enteritis* and/or *Salmonella typhimurium* (other than vaccine strains) was detected in the flock at any occasion.

Positive flocks shall be counted only once per round, irrespective of the number of sampling and testing operations and only be reported in the year of the first positive sampling.

b) Relevant animal population and phases of production covered by the programme:

broilers – birds two weeks prior to slaughter

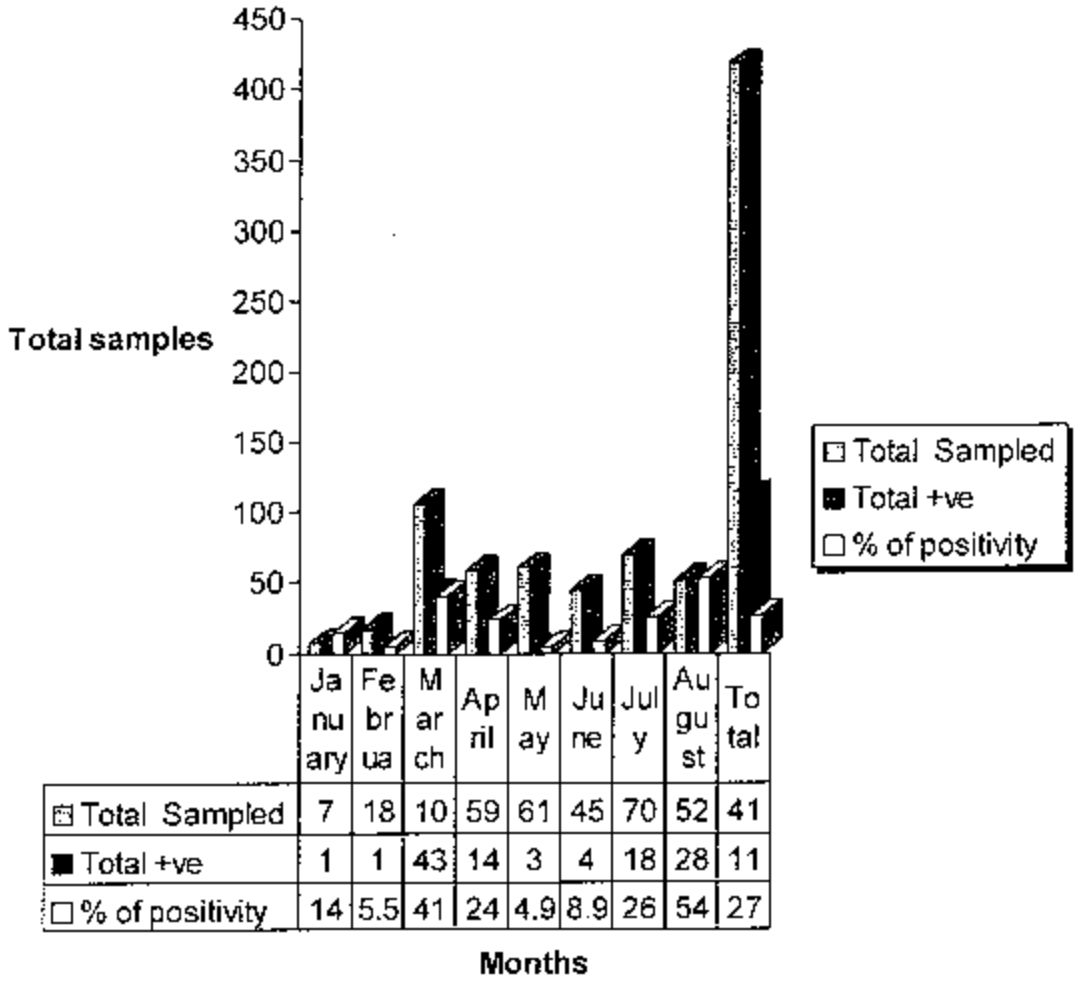
c) The control programmes have been approved by the Ministry. Human resources for laboratory testing have been recruited. Further calls for permanent posts within the laboratory are going to be issued in the coming months. Enforcement can be carried out to ensure compliance with part D of Council Regulation 2160/2003.

1.General

1.1 The control programme was based on the information available from a base line study carried out in 2004. A cross-sectional survey of poultry carcasses was carried out from January to August 2004, to determine the prevalence of Zoonotic Salmonella. The samples were taken at the slaughterhouses according to their respective throughput. The sampling scheme was designed to detect a prevalence of 50% with a confidence level of 95%.

A total of 418 samples were collected and analysed at the National Veterinary Laboratory within the Veterinary Regulation, Fisheries Conservation and Control Division.
The isolates were sent abroad to be typed at VLA Weybridge –UK.
The prevalence of salmonella spp. in the local poultry meat was of 26.8% (out of 418 samples, 112 resulted positive).
With regards to the distribution of positivity per month, it appears that August, March and July are the months were the peak positivity was registered, with 53.8%, 40.6% and 25.7% respectively.

Percentage of positivity per month

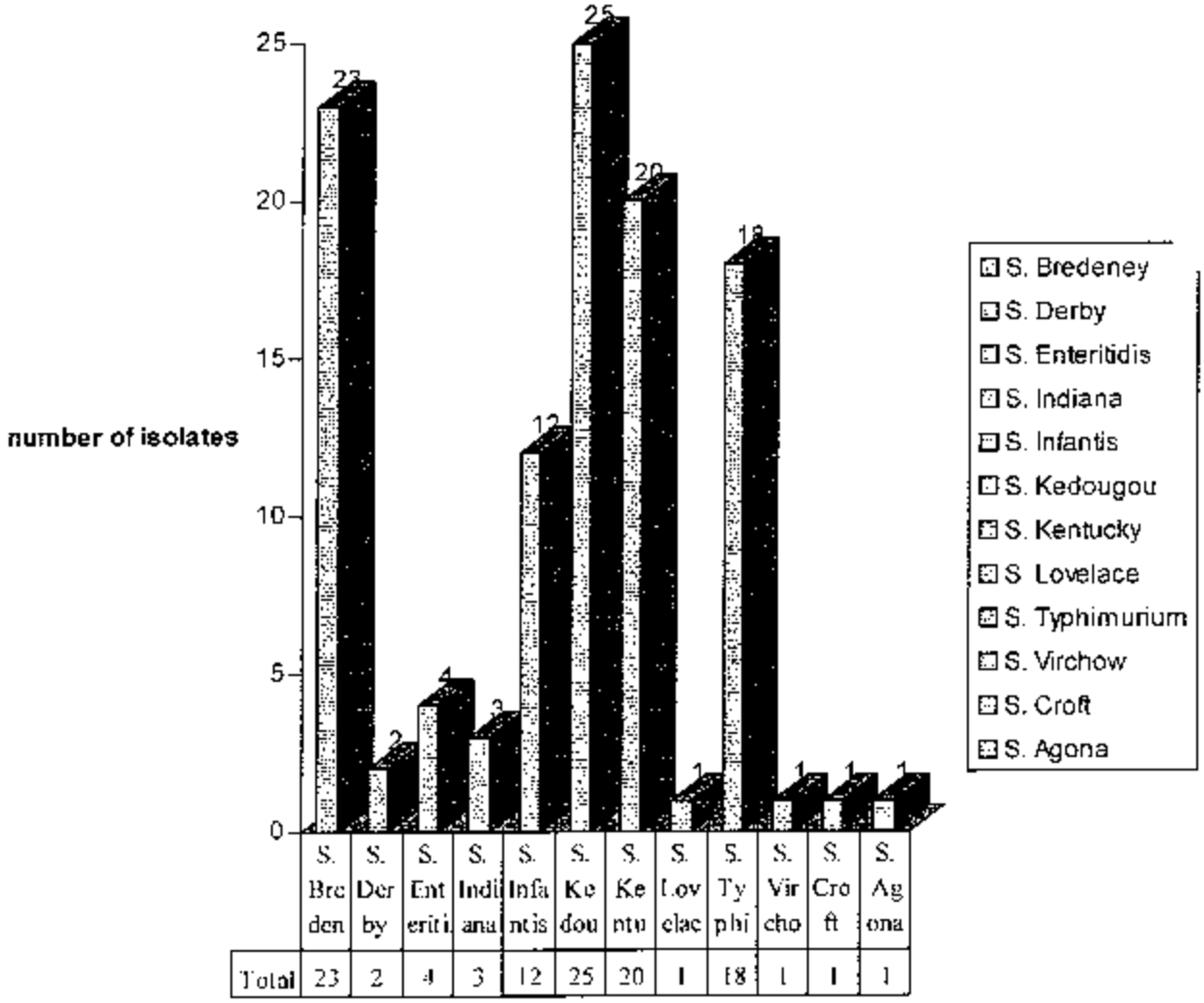


	January	Februa	March	April	May	June	July	August	Total
Total Sampled	7	18	10	59	61	45	70	52	41
Total +ve	1	1	43	14	3	4	18	28	11
% of positivity	14	5.5	41	24	4.9	8.9	26	54	27

With regards to the serovars isolated, this study has shown that with 25 isolates, Kedougou is the serovar with the highest incidence, followed by Bredeney with 23,

Kentucky with 20, Typhimurium with 18 and Infantis with 12. These serovars represent 87% of the total positivity (see table above).

salmonella serovars



	S. Bred en	S. Der by	S. Ent eriti	S. Indi ana	S. Infa ntis	S. Ke dou	S. Ke ntu	S. Lov elac	S. Ty phi	S. Vir cho	S. Cro ft	S. Ag ona
Total	23	2	4	3	12	25	20	1	18	1	1	1

Serovar	% Of Positivity
S. Agona	0.9
S. Bredeney	20.5
S. Croft	0.9
S. Derby	1.8
S. Enteritidis	3.6
S. Indiana	2.7
S. Infantis	10.7
S. Kedougou	22.3
S. Kentucky	17.9
S. Lovelace	0.9
S. Typhimurium	16.1
S. Virchow	0.9

Salmonella enteritidis represented 3.6% of the serovars isolated while *Salmonella typhimurium* 16.1%. Out of a total of 418 samples. 18 samples were infected with *Salmonella typhimurium* and 4 were infected with *Salmonella enteritidis.*
Following the information available; it was assumed, when first preparing the control programmes, that at least over 4.3% of flocks are infected with *Salmonella typhimurium*, while over 1% are infected with *Salmonella enteritidis.*

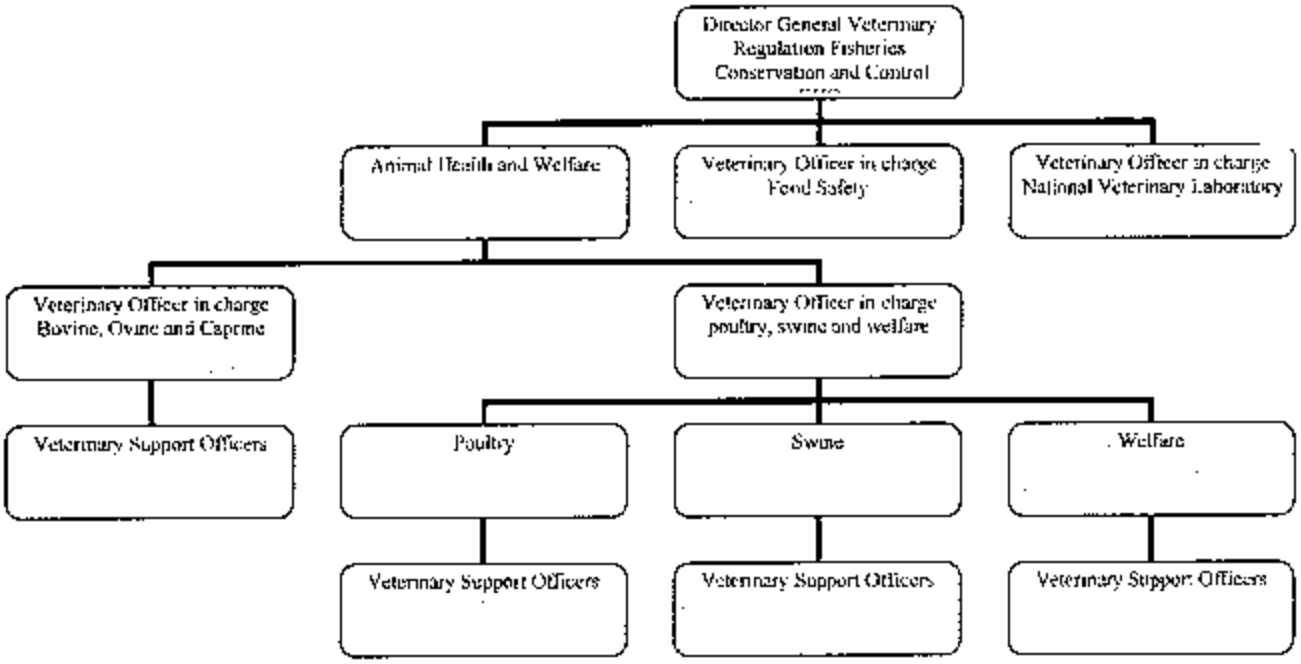
However, in 2008, Malta carried out the baseline study on broiler carcasses for Salmonella spp. and Campylobacter according to Commission Decision 2007/516/EC. A total of 367 samples were analysed and 77 were positive to Salmonella spp. isolation. Out of 94 farms from which carcasses had been collected, 42 were positive. *Salmonella typhimurium* was isolated from 10 farms, while *Salmonella enteritidis* was not isolated. *Salmonella bredney* (representing 36.3% of positives) and *Salmonella kentucky* (representing 19.4% of positives) were the most frequently isolated. These results lead us to now expect a larger number of farms positive for *Salmonella typhimurium* than what was predicted based on the 2004 study.

In Malta, Salmonella is the most frequently isolated source of food borne cases in humans, even though the current trend is showing a rise in Campylobacter. *Salmonella enteritidis* followed by *Salmonella typhimurium* are the serovars responsible for the highest number of food poisoning cases in humans, both in sporadic and outbreak episodes. The majority of outbreaks occur in summer. This is probably influenced by the average high ambient temperatures of 35 ° C that enables optimal growth and also due to the high concentration of social events in that period.

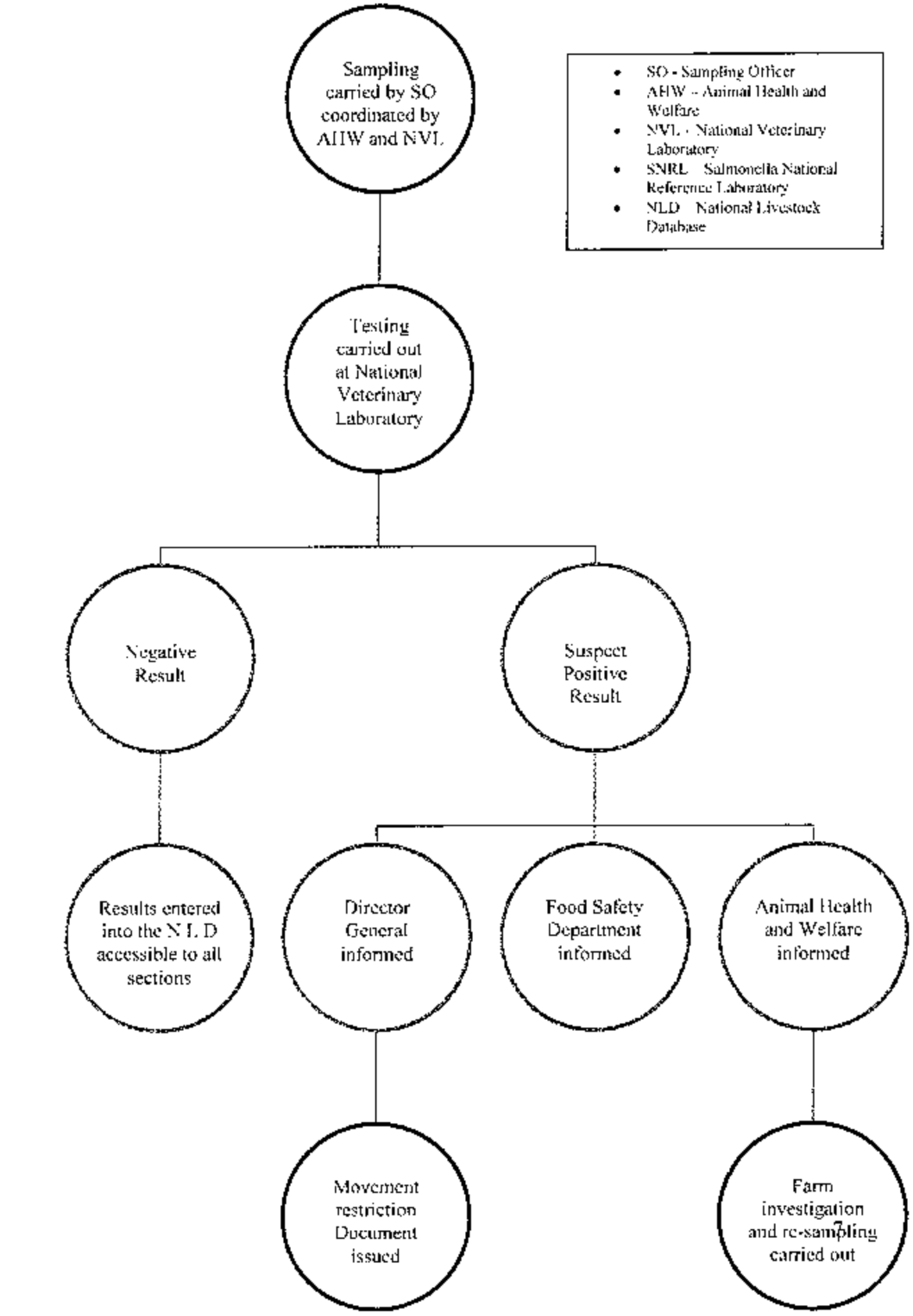
1.2 Structure and organization of the competent authority

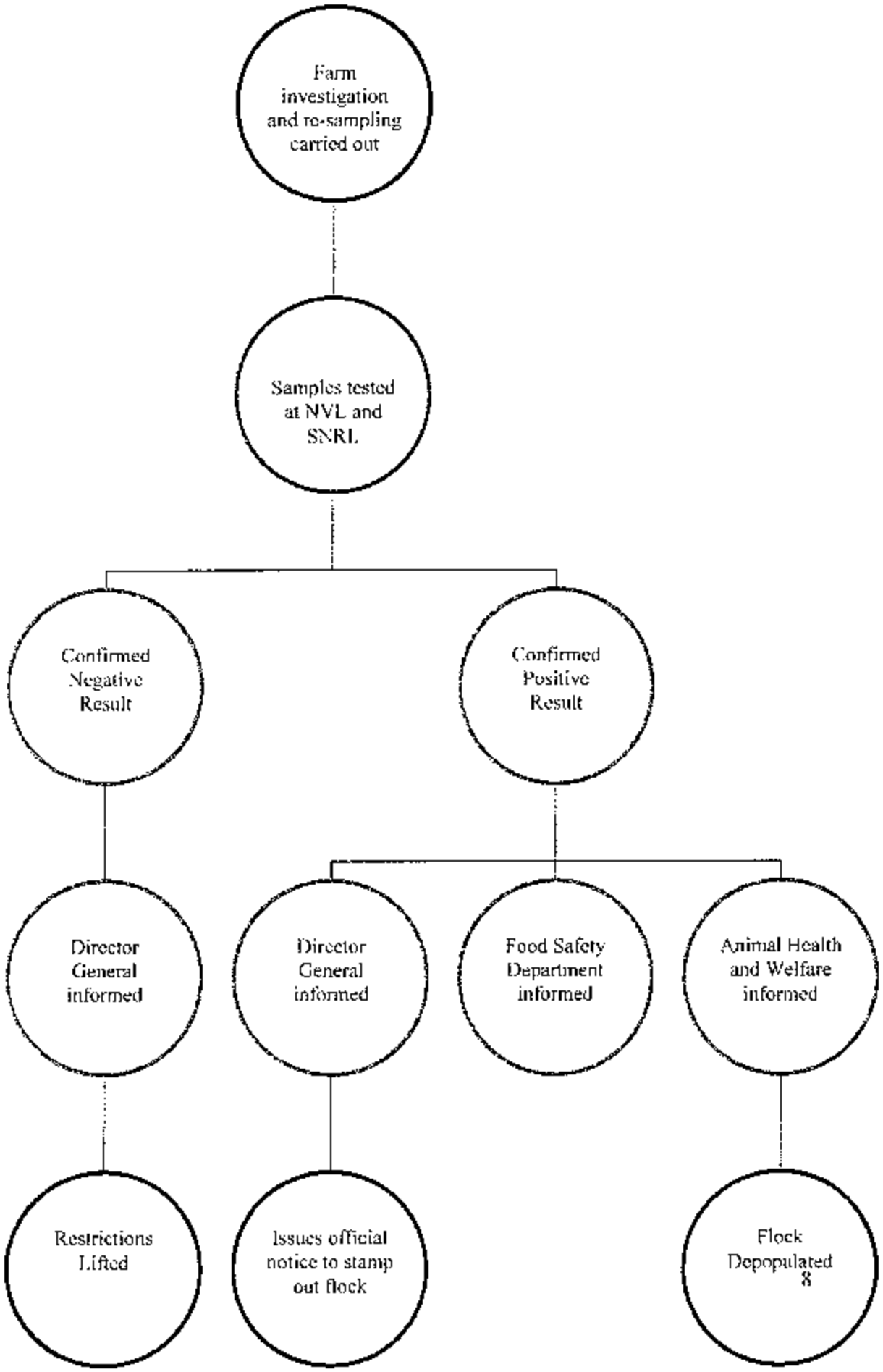
The competent authority for the implementation of the Salmonella National Control programme in broilers of Gallus gallus is the Veterinary Regulation, Fisheries Conservation and Control Division (VRFCCD), which falls under the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs. The VRFCCD is the competent authority responsible for drawing up the national control programmes under Council Regulation 2160/2003, organizing, executing, collecting and reporting of all data.

Organogram



Information Flow Diagram




Farm investigation and re-sampling carried out
Samples tested at NVL and SNRL
Confirmed Negative Result
Confirmed Positive Result
Director General informed
Director General informed
Food Safety Department informed
Animal Health and Welfare informed
Restrictions Lifted
Issues official notice to stamp out flock
Flock Depopulated

1.3 Laboratories:
The National Veterinary Laboratory of the VRFCCD will be responsible for the analysis of the samples collected under the framework of this programme. The laboratory, to date, is not accredited, however quality assurance systems will be in accordance to the requirements of current EN/ISO standards. The National Reference Laboratory does not yet organize ring trials, however through the NRL, the national veterinary laboratory will be participating in ring trails organized by reference laboratories for which the NRL also participates.
The sampling scheme to be carried out by the operator will be conducted also by the competent authority as detailed in point 1.5 and therefore no private laboratories will be involved in analysis that fall under this control programme.

1.4 Examination of samples
Samples will be collected by VRFCCD staff and kept refrigerated until receipt at the laboratory, which will be within 24 hours from collection. The samples will be examined within 48 hours from receipt and kept refrigerated until such time.
Boot swabs taken from one same house will be pooled together.
Analysis of the boot swabs and environmental samples will be carried out in accordance to Commission Regulation 646/2007. The method of analysis used is that recommended by the Community Reference Laboratory for Salmonella, being the current version of draft Annex D of ISO 6579 (2002): "Detection of Salmonella spp. in animal faeces and in samples of primary production". Modified semi-solid Rappaport-Vassiliadis medium (MSRV) will be used as a single selective medium. Serotyping will be carried following the Kaufmann-White scheme.

1.5 Official controls
At feed -level
The raw materials used are normally of EU certified origin (see point 2.2.)
Official sampling for Salmonella testing on feeds has been set up. An approximate of fifteen samples from the different types of feed produced locally will be analysed from the feedmills every semester. These will be tested for Salmonella spp and antimicrobial-residue.

At flock-level

- Taking into consideration the structure of the poultry industry and the epidemiological situation, the competent authority would be carrying out sampling of all broiler flocks registered and operational once annually, between 2 3 weeks of age, irrespective of the farm capacity.
  The number of the boot/sock swabs to be taken depends on the capacity of the farm. This would substitute one of the sampling under the responsibility of the operator.

- The competent authority will be also taking over the sampling delegated to the food business operator, as laid down in Commission Regulation 646/2007, in consideration of the limited capacity of the farms and that there are no private laboratories approved for salmonella microbiological testing in Malta.

- In case of suspicion of *Salmonella enteritidis or Salmonella typhimurium* , as result of an epidemiological investigation of food-borne outbreaks in accordance to Article 8 of Directive 2003/99/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council.

- In the above mentioned situation or in any other case considered appropriate, birds from the same flock under control, will be taken to verify antibiotic residue analysis on muscle, to acertain that the birds are not affected by the use of antimicrobials.

Sampling scheme;
The birds are kept in enclosed houses. with the exception of two farms that have a cage system. There are no free-range farms on the Maltese Islands. On any one farm there could be more than one house, however the houses are in very close proximity. All farms operate an all in-all out system and have the same management.
Farms usually manage to rear 4 5 cycles per year. The age of slaughter of the broilers can vary depending on the market demand, however on average the animals are slaughtered between 5 – 6 weeks.

Targeted age-group	Samples to be taken
Broilers: 2 weeks prior to slaughter (i.e between 2-3 weeks of age)	Boot/sock swabs*

*The number of the boot/sock swabs to be taken depends on the capacity of the farm.

Distribution of sampling:-
(i) Six pairs of boot/sock swabs will be taken on the one farm having a holding capacity of over 50,000 (three houses will be sampled).
(ii) Four pairs of boot / sock swabs (i.e. two houses will be sampled) will be taken on those farms having a holding capacity ranging from under 50,000 to 10,000.
(iii) Only 2 boot swabs will be taken on all other farms from one house on the farm per production cycle.

The collection of samples, transport, detection and typing are as already indicated in points 1.3 and 1.4.

At slaughterhouse level:
Official controls for salmonella monitoring at slaughterhouse level are not yet in place. A risk assessment has been carried out and the following plan is being proposed.
Considering that the four slaughterhouses have similar capacity;
five carcass samples will be tested from one slaughter house per month. Each month a different slaughterhouse will be targeted, therefore covering the four slaughterhouses three times a year.
The samples will be taken at random within the month. These samples will be tested at the National Veterinary Laboratory. Requirements E as in Annex II of Regulation 2160/2003 EC for fresh meat will be followed.

The operators carry out regular controls on the cuts they produce once a month which include also isolation for Salmonella spp. These samples are analysed at a private laboratory.

1.6 Measures taken with regards to animals and products in which Salmonella spp. is detected.

Council Regulation 2160/2003, Commission Regulation 1117/2006 and Commission Regulation 646/2007 are directly applicable. Only those poultry flocks and their products found to be infected with *Salmonella enteritidis* and/or *Salmonella typhimurium,* will be considered unfit for human consumption and will be withheld and destroyed in accordance to articles 6 to 11 of CAP. 437, Veterinary Services Act.

(i) In cases were other Salmonella spp. are isolated action will be taken for those serovars of public health importance as recommended by the EFSA and the Commission. However even those serovars frequently isolated locally will be addressed. If there is a change in the local trend of the most frequently isolated serovars, during the three-year period of the programme; this will be taken into consideration. Requirements E as in Annex II of Regulation 2160/2003 EC concerning fresh meat will be followed.

Action taken when other Salmonella spp. of public health importance are isolated:-

- The official veterinarian i/c of poultry and/ or veterinary support officer/s from the poultry section of Animal Health will carry out an investigation on the farm.
- They would also be responsible for re-sampling when the case arises.
- Re-analysis would be run in parallel with the Public Health Laboratory (National Reference Laboratory for Salmonella).

In case there is reconfirmation of the targeted serovars the following actions are taken:-

- Eradication will not be mandatory, however it may be considered in certain cases.
- Biosecurity measures will be strengthened to ensure that the infection does not spread to other holdings; such as, no movement of live animals from farm, external disinfection of vehicles transporting products out of farm and proper disinfection of equipment used.
- After all infected flock has been slaughtered; operations on the farm will be temporarily suspended, following an order of the CVO. Thorough cleaning and disinfection procedures will be carried out. Repopulation will be permitted only once two consecutive environmental sampling batches taken at a distance of two weeks have resulted negative to Salmonella spp. isolation.

(ii) If a positive case of isolation of *Salmonella enteritidis* or *Salmonella typhimurium* is confirmed (refer to point Part B.3) then the flock will be considered as unfit for human consumption and condemned.

- Even in cases that there are different houses on the holding, all the holding will be considered infected.
- The infected flock would be slaughtered on farm and the carcasses disposed of as described in detail in points 4.4.4 and 4.4.6.
- There are no measures to treat salmonella – infected products. Such products would have to be destroyed by incineration.

There is one public incinerator which falls under the administration of the Waste Serv Ltd, which falls under the Ministry of Resources and Rural Affairs. Recalled products have to be transported in leak-proof containers provided for by the Waste-Serv Ltd and then the products will be destroyed through incineration.

No vaccination programme against *Salmonella enteritidis* with either live or dead vaccines are carried out on the national flock .

1.7 National legislation relevant to the implementation of the programme.

The Veterinary Service Act, Chapter 437, art 5.1, states that "the Minister may prescribe rules concerning the prevention and control of diseases". See attached Annex 2 for the full list of EC legislation transposed.
Council and Commission regulations are directly applicable.

1.8 Financial assistance provided to food and feed businesses in the context of the programme.

The Veterinary Service Act, Chapter 437, art 18.1 regards financial contribution in connection with national schemes for the eradication of particular diseases.
"Collection of information on Zoonosis and Zoonotic Agent Rules" - LN 78/2005 art 8.1. regulates financial contribution for zoonotic control programmes.
The financial contribution would only be calculated and confirmed at the closure of the eradication procedures. However an estimate of the costings would be as follows:
Birds will be calculated at 3 euro per bird.
Incineration would cost 750 euro per ton.
Transport of products or carcasses would cost approximately 60 euro per ton.
Culling of flocks is estimated at 300 Euro per ton (1000 birds = 1ton).
Feeds will be calculated at current market prices; about 350 euro per ton.

2. Concerning food and feed businesses covered by the programme.

2.1 Structure of the production of the given species and products thereof
There are no parent stock flocks on the Islands of Mata and Gozo.
There are two registered hatcheries on the Island of Malta.
Hatching Regulations LN48 of 1997, lays down the provisions that regulate the national hatchery establishments.
Hatching eggs are imported from EU member states, primarily from France, Italy, Netherlands and Belgium. All consignments are imported with the official Intra Trade Certificate issued according to Council Directive 539/90. In 2008, a total of 4,117,310 broiler hatching eggs were imported.
The hatcheries are obliged to the report to the VFRCCD, as competent authority, the number of hatching eggs imported, submitting a copy of import/trade documents. The competent authority then prints out a "hatch report" which is passed on to the hatchery. This form is returned to the competent authority once the particular batch of eggs have been hatched and sold. This hatch report includes a list of farms which are the destination of chicks sold.
A movement document is issued by the competent authority and given to the farmer. This document follows the flock up to the slaughterhouse, where the slaughterhouse fills in the number of birds slaughtered. The movement document is then returned to the competent authority to authorize the granting of monetary subsidies.

- Broiler Farms

Total Number of registered farms	Malta	Gozo
130	101	29

- Holding capacity of Farms

Capacity	No. of farms
Over 50,000	1
20,000 - 49,999	7
10,000 – 19,999	20
5,000 – 9,999	33
2,000 – 4,999	46
1,000 1999	13
Less than 1,000	10

The majority of farms have a small capacity.

- Local Slaughterhouses
There are four slaughterhouses functioning. All are situated on the island of Malta. Two are situated in the north (Nos.50 / 53) while two are situated in the south (Nos.58 / 63).
In 2008; 3,118,910 broilers were slaughtered. The average live weight is 2.24kgs per broiler.
Poultry are slaughtered after 8pm in the south while the slaughterhouses in the north work during the very early morning hours. The slaughterhouses operate on a five-day week.

- Capacity of slaughterhouses

Slaughterhouse ID	Daily capacity heads/ hour	Annual turnout for 2008 / kg livewgt
No.50	1100	1,996,216
No.53	900	2,356,257
No.58	1100	1,055,285
No.63	1000	1,567,465

2.2 Structure of the production of feed.

There are six feed mills. These feed mills import and produce the majority of feed supplied to local farms. An average of 200,000 tons of all types of animal feed is produced per year. The two larger feed mills import premixes from approved EU countries (predominantly UK). These are mixed with other ingredients such as cereals and soya imported from EU and Non-EU countries. The other four smaller feed mills import concentrates which are then mixed with other ingredients such as cereals.
A small number of farms carry out home mixing using concentrates to obtain a mash.
Legal notice 374/2000 regulates the responsibility of feed mills. An official letter will be sent to all feed mills and farms carrying out home mixing, whereby they will be held responsible for testing their final products. The feed mills will be requested to submit a plan for the following year by November; to the competent authority stating their

sampling programme with supporting information. The competent authority will have twenty (20) working days to send in any remarks. The feedmill will be obliged by law to transmit their results quarterly to the competent authority: unless *Salmonella enteritidis* or *Salmonella typhimurium* are isolated. In such cases, the feedmill is to report within three working days to the competent authority. Recall of infected products or any other appropriate action would be taken following an investigation and retesting carried out by the competent authority. Those broiler farms carrying out home mixing will be obliged to conduct microbiological analysis for Salmonella in the same way as the feed mills. They will also be required to submit a sampling plan to the competent authority with all supporting information. The same obligations for reporting applicable to the feed mills will also apply incases of *Salmonella typhimurium* or *Salmonella enteritidis* positive samples. The competent authority would then carry out an investigation and testing of feed and flock.
Following confirmed positive results the actions stated in point 4.4.4 would apply.

2.3 Relevant guidelines for good animal husbandry practices or other guidelines on biosecurity measures.

Detailed guidelines for good husbandry practices and biosecurity measures on poultry farms are being finalized. General guidelines are covered in the Code of Good Agriculture Practice (Cogap).
It covers certain practices such as:

- the guidelines for storage of feed
- the quality of building material
- need for a vehicle disinfection pits
- necessity of a manure clamp

All farms producing manure have to store solid manure in an enclosed place known as the manure clamp, for six months a year (from the 15th October to 15th March). All farms are to have a leak proof cesspit, to collect foul water arising from cleaning etc. The manure clamp is to be connected to the cesspit. The water is kept for 15 days then collected by a bowser. These regulations serve to reduce the environmental pollution and the nitrate level in fields fertilised with manure. However, they also provide a tool to permit biosecurity measures to limit spread of disease.
General guidelines on good animal husbandry and biosecurity guidelines covering hygiene management, measures to be taken in cases of salmonella infection and hygiene during transport will be drawn up.
Hygiene management on farm:
The farmer has to obtain an authorization form from the competent authority (annex.2) to be able to buy the day-old chicks from the hatchery. This authorization is generated only if there is at least a nine – week time lapse from the previous authorization. In this way and average of three weeks separates the different rounds breed. After a flock has been all

slaughtered, the holdings are well - cleaned out around the perimeter. The bedding is removed and the place is swept and washed with approved disinfectants. A vast majority also whitewash with lime. Pest control (mice, rats and birds) is generally addressed through the use of nets on the windows, blocking any holes in the building structures and the use of venom. Some farms insert blocks of venom in plastic tubes which are placed around the perimeter of the holding, while others spread the venom. Some farms also use pans with foam soaked in disinfectant outside the sheds for disinfecting boots, however not all farmers change their clothing prior to entering the sheds.

Measures for preventing infections:
Most holdings have pits for the disinfection of the vehicles entering or leaving the premises. However none have separate entrances. The feed is bought fresh from the feed mills, even though there are those that also have their own silos. Due to the island's high humidity levels, farmers are not in the habit of storing large quantities of feed to avoid the formation of yeasts and moulds. Feeds are usually kept in their bags within the sheds in dark, dry corners.
The water-supply can be direct from the main government supply or from private bore holes. In the latter case, control of the water is purely voluntary, however from the information we have this is not frequently carried out unless the family use the water from the bore hole for their own personal use.
The majority of farms are small in capacity and are family-run, therefore one or two people would be responsible for the daily management of the animals. There is no legal obligation for people handling live animals to carry out medical checks. Outsiders are brought in the holding solely for the purpose of catching the birds prior to slaughter. The farmers transports the live birds to the slaughterhouses using their own personal trucks which are cleaned out by the farmer himself, however the crates are borrowed from the slaughterhouse. The cleaning and disinfection of the crates is the responsibility of the slaughterhouse.

2.4 Routine veterinary supervision on farm.
Farms are visited routinely through ante-mortem health checks carried out by private veterinarians. Prior to slaughter, most farmers, especially the larger capacity producers, request ante-mortem inspection from a private veterinarian who certifies the size of the flock, that there are no symptoms of disease as that the flock is considered fit to be slaughtered for human consumption. The veterinarian also certifies that no medicinals have been administered.

One of the largest local feed mills provides free technical support. A lot of the farmers buying their feed from this fed mill make regular use of the technical personnel. If there is any cause for suspicion, the company's veterinarian is then called out.

2.5 Registration of farms.
Legal notice 119/2005 under chapter 36 of the national legislation enforces registration of all farms having more than 20 broilers.

There is also the Special Marketing Policy Programme Maltese Agriculture (SMPPMA) which entitles only registered business operators to a refund of 0.58euro cents per broiler slaughtered.

2.6 Record keeping at Farm.

Farmers are obliged to keep detailed records. This is enforced through the filling in of the information requested on the movement. Subsidy payments depend on the said information being accurate and correct. All farms have an official register they have to fill in daily to keep very basic records like daily mortality, temperature, feed consumption and they can also make other additional notes (e.g. when they meet unexpected high mortality). In this register they must also keep medicinal records related to every individual batch of broilers that has to be filled in by their private veterinarian. Any medical prescriptions have to be attached to this register. This book is presented to the official veterinarian at the slaughterhouse.

2.7 Documents to accompany animals when dispatched.
Documents to accompany animals when dispatched :

(i) Document accompanying birds from hatchery to holding:

The farmer has to obtain an authorization form from the competent authority to be able to buy the day-old chicks from the hatchery.

(ii) Documents accompanying birds from holding to slaughterhouse.

On the information held in the hatch report, a movement document is issued by the competent authority and given to the farmer. This document follows the flock up to the slaughterhouse, where the slaughterhouse fills in the number of birds slaughtered. The movement document is then returned to the competent authority to authorize the granting of monetary subsidies.

The farmer can also bring the certificate issued by a private veterinarian who would have carried out an ante-mortem inspection on farm prior to the flock leaving the holding. If the farmer does not present an ant-mortem inspection, therefore the official veterinarian carries out the ante-mortem at the slaughterhouse.

The farmer is also obliged to present the farm register especially if an ante mortem is not carried out by a private veterinarian on farm.

PART B

1. Identification of programme

Member State	Malta
Disease	Infection of animals with Zoonotic *Salmonella spp*
Animal population covered by the programme	Broiler flocks of Gallus gallus
Year of Implementation	2010
Reference of this document	MT SAL-BRO10
Contact Name	Dr Anthony Gruppetta DG Civil Abattoir Albertown, Marsa Malta Tel: +356.25905168 Fax: -367.25905182 e-mail; evo.mrac@gov.mt 2nd contact person: Dr. Susan Chircop Tel: +356.25095304 e-mail: susan.chircop@gov.mt
Date sent to the Commission	28th April 2009

2. Historical data on the epidemiological evolution of Zoonotic salmonella

In 2008, Malta carried out the baseline study on broiler carcasses for Salmonella spp. and Campylobacter according to Commission Decision 2007/516/EC. A total of 367 samples were analysed and 77 were positive to Salmonella spp. isolation. Out of 94 farms from which carcasses had been collected, 42 were positive. *Salmonella typhimurium* was isolated from 10 farms, while *Salmonella enteritidis* was not isolated. *Salmonella bredney* (representing 36.3% of positives) and *Salmonella kentucky* (representing 19.4% of positives) were the most frequently isolated. These results lead us to now expect a larger number of farms positive for *Salmonella typhimurium* than what was predicted based on the 2004 study.
The Salmonella Control program on broiler farms commenced in 2009.

3. Describtion of the submitted programme.

The main objectives of this programme is to monitor and control all broiler flocks of Gallus gallus in Malta and Gozo, in accordance to Commission Regulation 2160/2003 for Zoonotic *Salmonella spp.* Flocks found infected with *Salmonella typhimurium* and *Salmonella enteritidis* will be condemned and slaughtered, in order to achieve a reduction in the prevalence of these serotypes in the national flock, as indicated in Commission Regulation 646/2007 article 1, " reduction of maximum percentage of flocks of broilers remaining positive of *Salmonella enteritidis* and *Salmonella typhimurium* to 1% or less by the 31st December 2011

The target population would be all broiler flocks of Gallus gallus.
Malta and Gozo will be considered as one region.
All registered and functioning farms will be tested. One hundred and thirty-one (131) farms will be tested, having a total population of approximately 3.4 million.
The testing scheme would follow the programme elaborated in point 1.5:

Targeted age-group	Samples to be taken
Broilers: 2 weeks prior to slaughter (i.e between 2-3 weeks of age)	Boot/sock swabs*

*The number of the boot/sock swabs to be taken depends on the capacity of the farm.

The collection of samples, transport, detection and typing are as already indicated in points 1.3 and 1.4.

The competent authority is also responsible for the national residue plan.
However apart from this programme each farm will be tested for antibiotic-residue during the sampling for the salmonella control programme. Two chickens will be sampled annually, from the same house, where a boot / sock swab has been taken. This applies to all the farms irrespective of the holding capacity.
The six-plate test will be carried out at the National Veterinary Laboratory of the competent authority.

Definition of a positive case:

(i) In the case of primary positive isolation of *Salmonella enteritidis / Salmonella typhimurium,* the flock will be considered positive to Salmonella infection.

(ii) In the case of re-isolation of *Salmonella enteritidis* or *Salmonella typhimurium* of confirmatory tests.
Confirmation of the initial results may be carried out. Re-analysis may be taken in consideration when, there is still an adequate timeframe, a large flock

is under suspicion or when there is a case of positive antibiotic-residue analysis. In this situation, the initial results are considered as suspect until positive isolation of confirmatory tests.

(iii) In the case of a positive antibiotic residue analysis result but a negative isolation result; the holding is considered positive.

Action taken is on positive flocks is described in point 4.4.4

Definition of a suspect case: primary isolation of *Salmonella enteritidis or Salmonella typhimurium*.

When *Salmonella enteritidis* or *Salmonella typhimurium* are isolated from faecal or environmental samples or there is a positive antibiotic - residue analysis but there is no isolation of Salmonella spp. ; re-sampling may be considered.

Most holdings have less than 10,000 birds (103 farms out of a total of 131). The broilers are slaughtered at approximately five weeks, therefore in most cases it would not be financially viable to retest the flock. However for the few larger holdings on the Island the occasion may arise that re-sampling would be considered and / or requested by the operator. In such a situation, all houses would be included in the re-sampling scheme, a larger number of samples would be taken and samples would also be taken for antibiotic-residue analysis.

In the case of a positive initial result for antibiotic-residue, samples would be taken after an appropriate time frame for both antibiotic-residue analysis and salmonella spp. isolation.

The microbiological analysis would be run in parallel with the National Reference laboratory.

- the senior veterinary officer (SVO) in charge of the lab would report suspect positives to the animal health section and CVO.
- An official restriction on the farm is issued by the CVO to prevent movement of animals to and from the farm.
- SVO will co-ordinate with the Public Health Laboratory for parallel analysis of suspect samples.
- The official veterinarian i/c poultry together with veterinary support officer/s from the poultry section of animal health will carry out an investigation on the farm and conduct a census.
- The OV or Assistant OV would also be responsible for re-sampling; in which case analysis would be run in parallel with the Public Health Laboratory (National Reference Laboratory for Salmonella).
- No poultry animals or carcasses, animal feed, material or waste may leave the holding without a written authorisation issued by an official veterinarian.
- Persons not directly involved in taking care of the animals are not permitted to enter buildings where infected flocks are kept.
- Appropriate means of disinfection, using a disinfectant officially approved as effective against Salmonella spp., is to be used at the entrances and exits of the building housing poultry and of the holding itself.

- Vehicles and equipment used for transport of animals or products have to be cleaned and disinfected with an officially approved disinfectant effective against Salmonella spp. immediately after the movement.

Negative diagnosis if re-sampling is considered.
On primary isolation of *Salmonella enteritidis* or *Salmonella typhimurium*, as described above, even though restrictions are issued on the holding, re-sampling may be considered.
(i) If Salmonella infection with *Salmonella enteritidis* or *Salmonella typhimurium* is not confirmed on re-analysis and the result for antibiotic-residue analysis is negative, the CVO would consider the initial result as a false positive and withdraw the restrictions placed on the farm. The flock would then be considered as fit for human consumption.

Malta is not taking into consideration vaccination as a preventive measure or treatment of products coming from infected flocks.

4. Measures of the submitted programme

4.1 Summary of measures under the programme

Duration of the programme:

First year 2009 last year: 2011

- Control/Eradication
- Testing
- Killing of animals tested positive
- Extended slaughter or killing

- Monitoring

4.2 The central authority in charge of supervising and coordinating is the Veterinary Regulation Fisheries conservation and Control Division (VRFFCD).

The National Veterinary Laboratory:
(i) Senior veterinary officer will be responsible for:

- appropriate training of personnel responsible for collecting the samples

- in charge of supervising that the programme is adhered to and that the samples are collected according to the programme.
- all necessary material needed for sampling eg. boot swabs, sterile bags, etc are available.
- ensure that samples are analysed in accordance to time frame and methodology as laid down in the programme
- reporting suspect positives / confirmed to the animal health section and CVO
- co-ordinate with the Public Health Laboratory parallel analysis of suspect samples
- inform Director for the Department of Safety of the Food Chain of any infected flocks.
- collecting/ filing all relevant data and reporting results.

Animal Health Department:

(ii) Senior veterinary support officer in charge of the poultry section will be responsible for:

- co-ordinating sampling team
- making appointments with the farmers and preparing daily sampling schedules
- collaborating with the senior veterinary officer i/c lab
- organizing on farm investigation in cases of suspect/confirmed positive results
- collaborate in census, movement restriction, eradication and disinfection measures
- collaborate in farm investigations in view of repopulation of farm
-

(iii)Assistant Veterinary Support Officers will be responsible for:

- Ensuring to follow appropriate training
- collecting and transporting samples appropriately
- deliver samples within 24hours from collection to the laboratory
- ensure that accompanying documents are filled appropriately

(iv) Veterinary officer i/c poultry

- carry out on-farm investigations in collaboration with senior veterinary support officer i/c poultry section
- co-ordinate and conduct census, movement restriction, disinfection and eradication measures
- submit on farm investigation report to the SVO i/c lab within 48hours
- co-ordinate farm investigation in view of repopulation
- responsible for recommending repopulation following positive finding after on-farm investigation

(v) Veterinary Officer responsible for by –products:

- is responsible of ensuring that biosecurity measures and provisions in Council Regulation 1174/2002 are adhered to during disposal of carcasses and products.

Animal Welfare Department

(vi) Animal welfare officer:

- responsible for ensuring that animal welfare provisions are respected during killing on farm.

Department for Safety of the Food Chain

(vii) Director is responsible for;

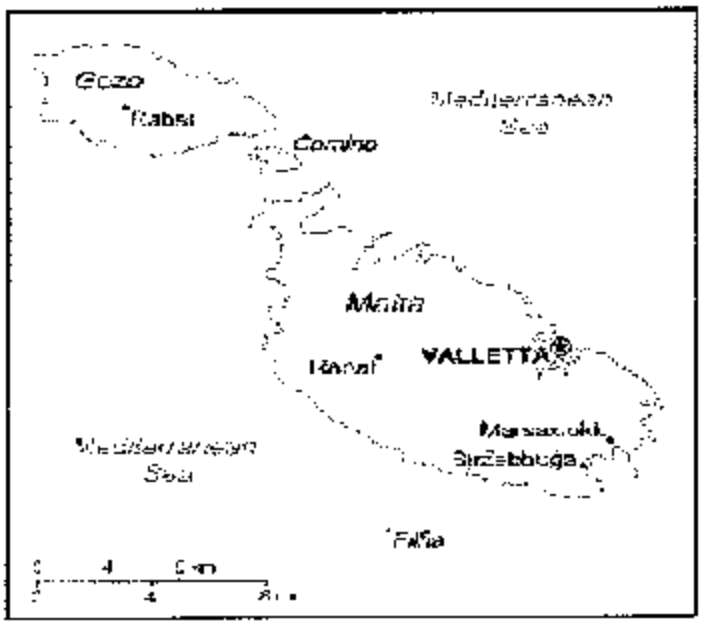
- informing the national contact person for the rapid alert system regarding confirmed infected flocks for *Salmonella enteritidis* and *Salmonella typhimurium*

Chief veterinary Officer

Following recommendations from senior veterinary officer i/c lab and veterinary officer i/c of poultry section;

- Responsible of issuing restriction movement documents
- issuing of documentation for lifting restriction measures on a farm and /or permitting repopulation.

4.3 The Islands of Malta and Gozo are covered by this programme and are considered as one region. The Veterinary regulation Fisheries Conservation and Control Division administers the whole region.



4.4 Measures implemented under the programme

4.4.1 Measures and applicable legislation as regards registration of holdings:
Legal notice 119/2005 under chapter 36 of the national legislation enforces registration of all farms having more than 20 broilers.

4.4.2 Measures and applicable legislation as regards the identification of animals:
N/A

4.4.3 Measures and applicable legislation as regards the notification of disease:
The Veterinary Services Act, Chapter 437, art 35.1(f) provides for the obligation of notification of any suspicion of zoonosis or other disease or any other phenomenon or circumstances liable to present a serious threat to animal or public health.

4.4.4. Measures and applicable legislation as regards the measures in case of a positive case:
Council Regulation 2160/2003 and Commission Regulation 646/2007 are directly applicable. Commercial poultry flocks and their products found to be infected with *Salmonella enteritidis* and *Salmonella typhimurium*, will be considered unfit for human consumption and will be withheld and destroyed in accordance to articles 6 to 11 of CAP. 437, Veterinary Services Act.

- The official veterinarian i/c poultry together with veterinary support officer/s from the poultry section of animal health will carry out an investigation on the farm and conduct a census.

- A restriction notice (legal document) signed by the CVO will be issued on the farm, preventing movement of animals to and from the farm.

- They would also be responsible for re-sampling, if the case arises as described in Part B point 3.

- Microbiological analysis would be run in parallel with the Public Health Laboratory (National Reference Laboratory for Salmonella).

- No poultry carcasses, animal feed, material or waste may leave the holding without a written authorisation issued by an official veterinarian.

- Persons not directly involved in taking care of the animals are not permitted to enter buildings where infected flocks are kept.

- Appropriate means of disinfection, using a disinfectant officially approved as effective against Salmonella spp., is to be used at the entrances and exits of the building housing poultry and of the holding itself.

- Vehicles and equipment used for transport of animals or products have to be cleaned and disinfected with an officially approved disinfectant effective against Salmonella spp. immediately after the movement.

- The owner of the infected holding or the owner's representative will be served with an official notice in writing ordering the slaughter and destruction of the flock. Valuation of the animals on the holding will normally be carried out before they are killed. The birds will, by preference, be killed by dislocation of the neck. Other methods of killing may include the use of gases such as carbon dioxide or other gases in closed trailers or containers. Carbon dioxide gas in the form of 22kg tanks is available locally. Mobile enclosed trailers or containers can be transported on site if required. Killing of the birds will be supervised by officials from the competent authority and the Official veterinarian responsible for animal welfare has to ensure that welfare provisions are respected. All personnel involved in culling are required to wear protective clothing, gloves and nose/mouth masks.

- the carcasses will be disposed of through incineration at the thermal unit run by the Waste Serv Ltd. The carcasses have to be transported in leak-proof containers supplied by Waste Serv and transported drip-proof in vehicles that must be disinfected externally before leaving the holding. Officials from the competent authority have to supervise all procedures.

- Feeds will also be considered contaminated and will be destroyed.

- Cleaning and disinfection should be started as soon as the animals have been killed and removed from the holding and must be carried out in a methodical way. Officials from the competent authority should supervise the operations. Detailed procedures would be laid down in the good animal husbandry guideline to be drafted. However, there is a first stage where an officially approved disinfectant would be sprayed and left to act for 24 hours. This will be followed by general cleaning to remove organic matter and dust. Attention should be given to areas and equipment difficult to reach. Fans, drains, slats etc should not be neglected. After thorough cleaning (steam cleaning is recommended) fumigation is carried out. Disinfectants should have time to dry before samples are taken. As a general rule, detergents such as hypochlorites, alkalis, gluteraldehydes and Virkon can be used for the disinfection of poultry houses, wooden structures, concrete surfaces, equipment and vehicles. The aerosol application of gluteraldehyde is suitable for the disinfection of fans and similar equipment.

- Environmental samples are taken and repopulation will be permitted and all restriction bans lifted when two consecutive sample batches, taken 14 days apart result negative to isolation of salmonella spp.

4.4.5 Qualification of animals
There is no national legislation on qualification of flock. This will be considered after the first year or two that the programme has be running.

4.4.6 Control procedures and in particular rules on the movement of animals liable to be affected or contaminated by a given disease
Movement of animas is restricted on *Salmonella enteritidis* or *Salmonella typhimurium* positive cases, as detailed in point 4.4.4.
In other cases of infection of Salmonella spp of public health importance, restrictions as detailed in point 1.6 would be carried out.

4.4.7. Measures and applicable legislation as regards the control of the disease.
Council Regulation 2160/2003 and Commission Regulation 646/2007 are followed in setting up the sampling scheme, testing regime and setting of targets
In accordance to Commission regulation (EC) No 1177/2006, no antimicrobials will be used as a preventive measure in the control programme. No vaccination is currently carried out and will not be considered. Treatment of products coming from infected flocks will not be treated in any way but destroyed.

4.4.8 Measures and applicable legislation as regards the compensation for owners of slaughtered and killed animals:
"Collection of information on Zoonosis and Zoonotic Agent Rules" L.N 78/2005, art. 8.1 which falls under the Veterinary Service Act,; and art.8.1. of this same Act. set down provisions for financial compensation.

4.4.9 Information and assessment on biosecurity measures management and infrastructure in place in the flocks involved.
Please refer to Part A point 2.3

5. General description of costs and benefits.
The costs to the farmer will be felt initially in cases of eradication. The farmer will obviously encounter losses following eradication and costs in upgrading holdings. However, in the long run the farmer will have a reduction in costs of medicinals and farm management. They will see an increase in production and financial return also from the overall positive impact consumer confidence in local produce.

The costs on society would result in an increase in waste that will have to be eliminated and also probably in an increase in the cost of poultry products; however, there would be the benefits of food safety.

6. Data on the epidemiological evolution during the last five years:
Refer to Part B . point 2

6.1 Evolution of Zoonotic salmonellosis

Targets

7.1. Targets related to testing - Broilers - 2010

7.1.1. Targets on diagnostic tests

Animal species:Gallus gallus:

Region [b]	Type of the test [c]	Target population [d]	Type of sample [e]	Objective [f]	Number of planned tests
Malta / Gozo	microbiological	Broilers – 2/3 weeks of age	Best/sock swabs	Control	850
	serotyping	Broilers – 2/3 weeks of age	isolate	control	150
	Antibiotic –residue tyeling	Broilers – 2/3 weeks of age	Muscle	monitoring	262
				Total	1262

(a) Species if necessary.
(b) Region as defined in the approved control and eradication programme of the Member State.
(c) Description of the test.
(d) Specification of the targeted species and the categories of targeted animals if necessary.
(e) Description of the sample (for instance faeces).
(f) Description of the objective (for instance surveillance, monitoring, , control of vaccination).

7.1.2. Targets on testing of broiler flocks[1]

Year: 2010 **Situation on date: N/A**

Animal species:Gallus gallus **infection[a]:Zoonotic Salmonellosis -**

Region	Type of flock[b]	Total number of flocks[c]	Total number of animals	Total number of flocks under the programme	Total number of animals under the programme	Expected number of flocks to be checked[d][e]	Number of flocks[d][e] expected to be positive[f]			Number of flocks expected to be depopulated[g]		Total number of animals expected to be slaughtered or destroyed [g]		Expected quantity of eggs to be destroyed (number or kg) [g]		Expected quantity of eggs channelled to egg products (number or kg)	
							(a1)	(a2)	(a3)	(a4)	(a5)	(a4)	(a3)	(a4)	(a3)	(a4)	(a3)
Malta / Gozo	Broilers	120	3,400,000	130	3,400,000	130	1	10	15	11	/	100,000	/	/	/	/	/
Total		130	3,400,000	130	3,400,000	130	1	10	15	11		100,000					

(a) For zoonotic salmonellosis indicate the serotypes covered by the control programmes: (a1) for *Salmonella* Enteritidis, (a2) for *Salmonella* Typhimurium, (a3) for other serotypes-specify as appropriate, (a4) for *Salmonella* Enteritidis or *Salmonella* Typhimurium.

(b) For example, breeding flocks (rearing, adult flocks), production flocks, laying hen flocks, breeding turkeys,broiler turkeys, breeding pigs,slaughter pigs,etc. Flocks or herds or as appropriate.

(c) Total number of flocks existing in the region including eligible flocks and non-eligible flocks for the programme.

(d) Check means to perform a flock level test under the programme for the presence of salmonella. In this column a flock must not be counted twice even if it has been checked more than once.

(e) If a flock has been checked, in accordance with footnote (d), more than once, a positive sample must be taken into account only once.

[1] Specify types of flocks if appropriate(breeders, layers, broilers).

8. Detailed analysis of the cost of the programme - 2010

Costs related to	Specification	Number of units	Unitary cost in EUR	Total amount in EUR	Community funding requested (yes/no)
1. Testing					
1.1. Cost of the analysis	*Test:* Number of bacteriological tests (cultivation) planned to be carried out in the framework of official sampling	*850*	*35*	*29,750*	*Yes*
	Test: Number of serotyping of relevant isolates tests planned to be carried out	*150*	*56*	*8,400*	*Yes*
Antibiotic – residue testing		*262*	*6*	*1,572*	*yes*
1.2. Cost of sampling		*650 visits*	*6*	*3,900*	*yes*
1.3. Other costs					
2. Vaccination or treatment of animal products					
2.1. Purchase of vaccine/treatment of animal products	Number of purchase of vaccine doses planned if a vaccination policy is part of the programme as set out explicitly under point 4 of Annex II				
2.2. Distribution costs					

2.3. Administering costs					
2.4. Control costs					
3. Slaughter and destruction					
3.1. Compensation of animals		100,000	3	300,000	Yes
3.2. Transport costs		100 (1,000 birds=1 ton	60/ton	6,000	Yes
3.3. Destruction costs		100	1,050/ton	105,000	Yes
3.4. Loss in case of slaughtering					
3.5 Costs from treatment of animal products (milk, eggs, hatching eggs, etc)					
4. Cleaning and disinfection		11	920	10,120	yes
5. Salaries (staff contracted for the programme only)					
6. Consumables and specific equipment					
7. Other costs					
	TOTAL			464,742	

MINISTERU GHAR-RIZORSI U
AFFARIJIET RURALI

MALTA

MINISTRY FOR RESOURCES AND
RURAL AFFAIRS

Taqsima ta' Regolament Veterinarju,
Konservazzjoni u Kontroll tes-Sajd

Veterinary Regulation, Fisheries
Conservation & Control Division

Annex 1

27th August 2009

DECLARATION

The Veterinary Regulation Fisheries Conservation Control Division as competent authority, responsible for the implementation of the National Salmonella Control Programme in broiler flocks of Gallus gallus, confirms adherence to the provisions laid down in relevant veterinary legislation governing zoonotic salmonella. These being namely, Council Directive 2003/99/EC, Council Regulation 2003/2160/EC, Commission Regulation 2007/646/EC and Commission Regulation 1177/2006/EC. Particular attention will be given to confirmation of results and verification of achievement of the Community target.

VETERINARY REGULATION FISH.CONS.& CONTROL
MALTA

Dr. Anthony Gruppetta
Director General
Veterinary Regulation Fisheries Conservation Control Division
Malta

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TELEPHONE: (356) 25905000 - FAX. (356) 21 238105

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE NATIONAL SALMONELLA CONTROL PROGRAMME IN EGG-LAYING FLOCKS OF GALLUS GALLUS IN ACC. TO |COMMISSION DECISION: 90/424/EEC, 2004/450/EC

PART A

a)Aim of programme: To carry out a monitoring and control programme for Zoonotic Salmonella in laying flocks of Gallus gallus in accordance to Council Regulation 2160/2003 and Commission Regulation 1168/2006; to achieve a reduction of the prevalence of *Salmonella enteritidis* and *Salmonella typhimurium*.
The prevalence of *Salmonella enteritidis* and *Salmonella typhimurium* oscillates around 20%, since the overall prevalence of Salmonellosis in 2004 was of 43.87%,. Therefore in accordance to article 1 by the end of 2009, at least a 30% reduction of positive flocks of adult laying hens would be achieved.

A laying flock shall be considred positive for the purpose of verifying the achievement of the Community target, where the presence of Salmonella enteritidis and Salmonella typhimurium 9other than vaccine strains) was detected in one or more samples in the laying flock. Positive laying flocks shall be counted only once , irrespective of the number of sampling and testing operations and only be reported in the first year of detection.

b) Relevant animal population and phases of production covered by the programme: Laying hens

rearing flocks :- day-old chicks
- pullets. two weeks before moving into laying phase or laying unit

laying flocks:- every 15 weeks during the laying period (usually runs for an average of 18 months)

c) The control programmes are approved by the Ministry. Human resources for laboratory testing have been recruited and further calls for permanent posts will be issued in the coming months. Enforcement can be carried out to ensure compliance with part D of Council Regulation 2160/2003.

1. General

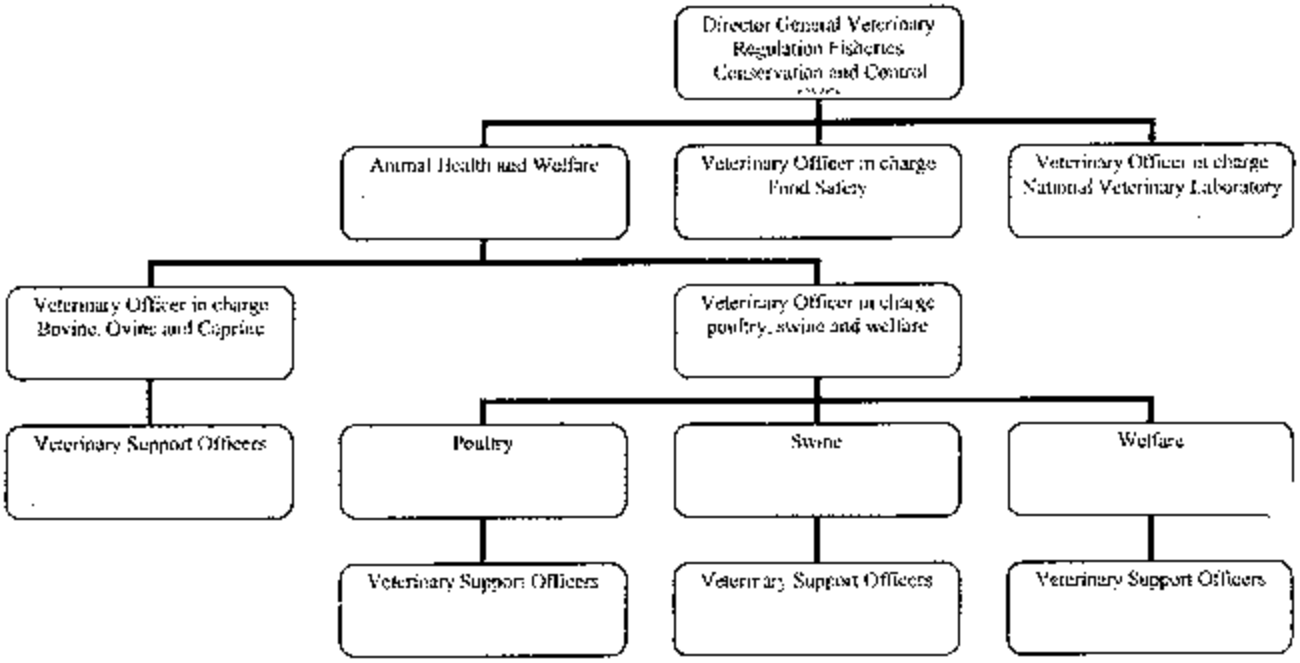
1.1 The information available regarding the occurrence of salmonellosis in layer flocks of Gallus gallus dates back to the baseline study carried out within the framework of EU Directive 2003/99 and Council Regulation 2160/2003.
The study was carried out between October 2004 and September 2005. All farms registered and functioning within that period were sampled in accordance to the legislative requirements.

The overall prevalence of Salmonellosis in the national layer flocks was of 43.85%. Twenty-five (25) farms resulted positive out of a total of fifty-seven (57) farms. However the isolates were not typed and therefore there is no available information regarding the prevalence values of Salmonella serovars, primarily *Salmonella typhimurium* and *Salmonella enteritidis*.

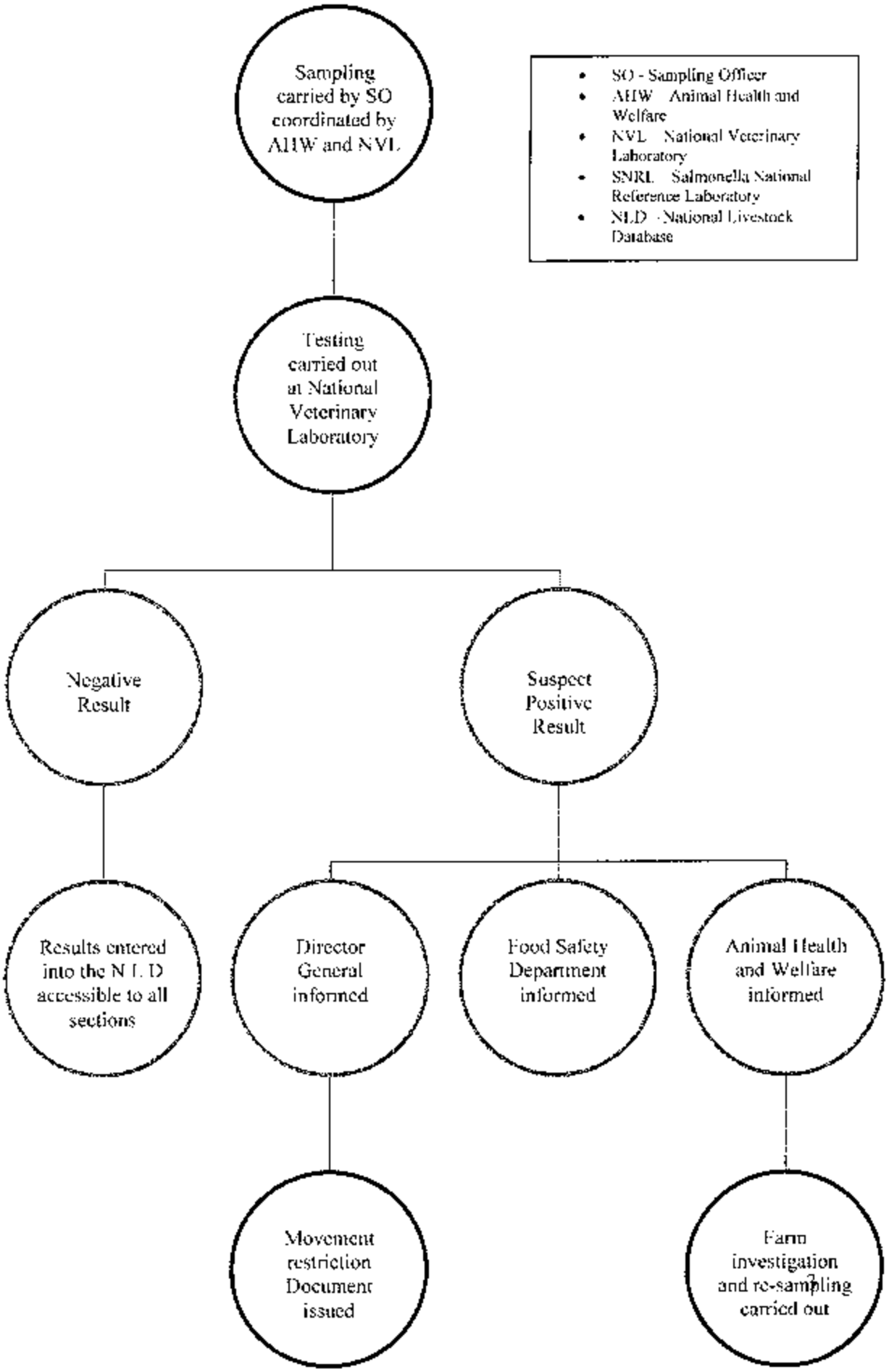
1.2 Structure and organization of the competent authority

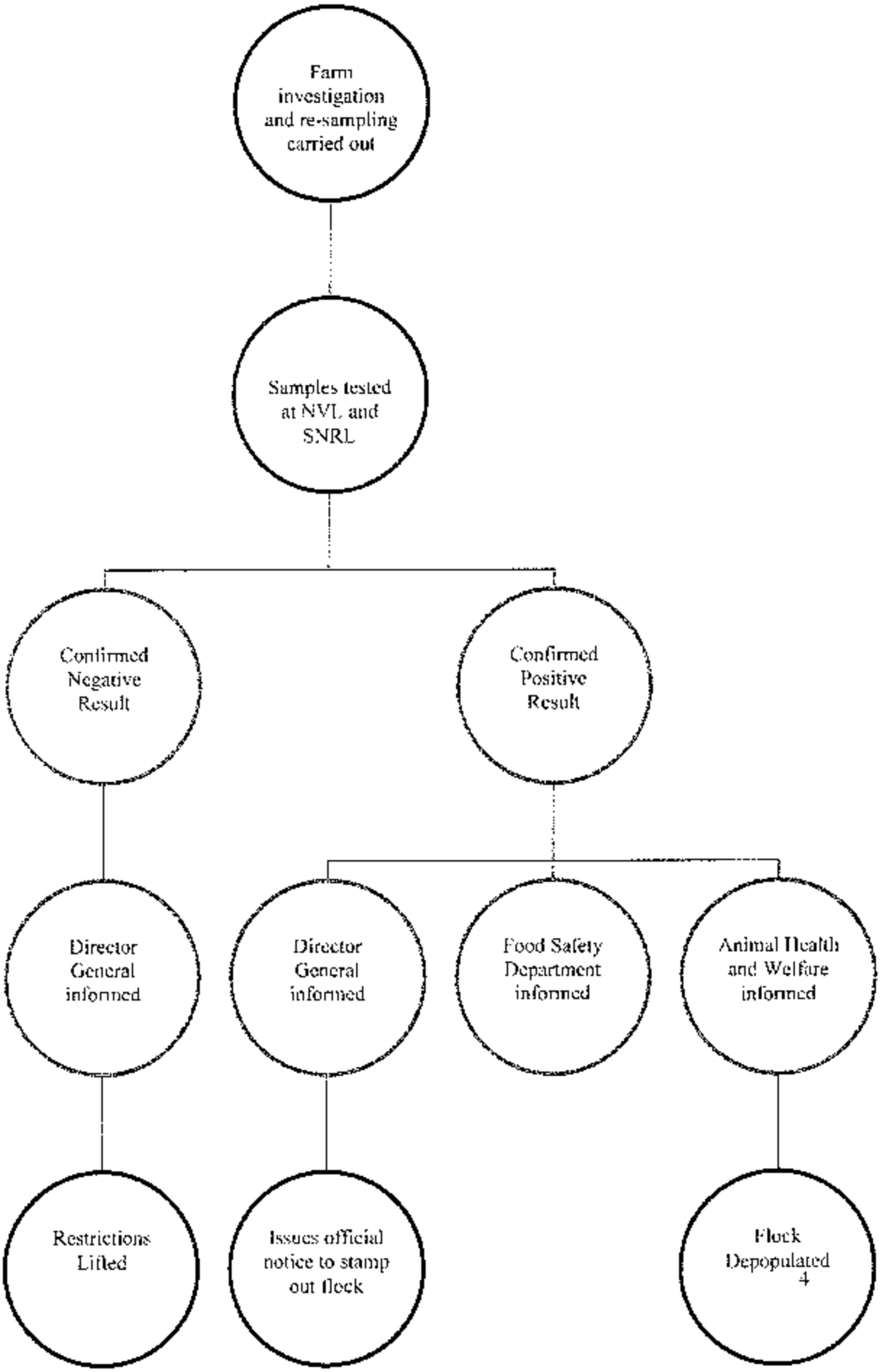
The competent authority for the implementation of the Salmonella National Control programme in layer hens of Gallus gallus is the Veterinary Regulation, Fisheries Conservation and Control Division (VRFCCD), which falls under the Ministry of Resources and Rural Affairs. The VRFCCD is the competent authority responsible for drawing up the national control programmes under Council Regulation 2160/2003, organizing, executing, collecting and reporting of all data.

Organogram



Information Flow Diagram




Farm investigation and re-sampling carried out
Samples tested at NVL and SNRL
Confirmed Negative Result
Confirmed Positive Result
Director General informed
Director General informed
Food Safety Department informed
Animal Health and Welfare informed
Restrictions Lifted
Issues official notice to stamp out flock
Flock Depopulated

1.3 Laboratories:
The National Veterinary Laboratory of the VRFCCD will be responsible for the analysis of the samples collected under the framework of this programme.
The laboratory, to date, is not accredited however quality assurance systems will be in accordance to the requirements of current EN/ISO standards. The National Reference Laboratory does not yet organize ring trials, however through the NRL, the national veterinary laboratory will be participating in ring trails organized by reference laboratories for which the NRL also participates.
The sampling scheme to be carried out by the operator will be conducted also by the competent authority as detailed in point 1.5 and therefore no private laboratories will be involved in analysis that fall under this control programme.

1.4 Examination of samples
Samples will be collected by VRFCCD staff and kept refrigerated until receipt at the laboratory, which will be within 24hours from collection. The samples will be examined within 48 hours from receipt and kept refrigerated until such time.
Analysis of the boot swabs, faecal and dust samples will be carried out in accordance to Commission Regulation 1168/2006. The method of analysis used is that recommended by the Community Reference Laboratory for Salmonella, being the current version of draft Annex D of ISO 6579 (2002): "Detection of Salmonella spp. in animal faeces and in samples of primary production". Serotyping will be carried following the Kaufmann-White scheme.

1.5 Official controls
At feed -level
The raw materials used are normally of EU certified origin (see point 2.2.)
Official sampling for Salmonella testing on feeds has been set up. An approximate of fifteen samples from the different types of feed produced locally will be analysed from the feedmills every semester. These will be tested for Salmonella spp and antimicrobial-residue.

At flock-level
All registered and functioning egg-layer flocks on both Malta and Gozo will be included in the national control programme.

- In consideration of the local epidemiological situation, the number of farms and limited capacity; the competent authority would be sampling all registered and operational farms twice a year, as detailed in the table below.

Targeted age-group	Samples to be taken
Pullets 2 weeks prior to laying	Caged flocks: 2x150g of naturally pooled faeces from belts 2 dust samples: (100g in 250ml) or 1 dust + 1sample of 150g naturally pooled faeces 2 birds tested for antibiotic residues
Laying hens 15 weeks into laying period	2x150g of naturally pooled faeces from belts 2 dust samples: (100g in 250ml) or 1 dust + 1 naturally pooled faeces (150g) 2-3 birds tested for antibiotic residues

This would substitute one of the sampling requested by the operator.

- The competent authority would also sample at the age of approx 18 - 20 weeks (2 weeks prior to laying), those flocks housed in building where salmonella was detected in the preceding flock.

- In all other laying flocks on those holdings where *Salmonella enteritidis or Salmonella typhimurium* were detected in one laying flock on the said holding.

- In case of suspicion of *Salmonella enteritidis or Salmonella typhimurium* , as result of an epidemiological investigation of food-borne outbreaks in accordance to Article 8 of Directive 2003/99/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council.

In the above mentioned last three situations (exceptional cases), birds from the same flock under control, will be taken to verify antibiotic residue analysis on muscle, to acertain that the birds are not affected by the use of antimicrobials.

It is important to note that moreover, the competent authority will also be taking over the sampling delegated to the food business operator, as laid down in Commission Regulation 1168/2006, in consideration of the limited capacity of the farms and that there are no private laboratories approved for salmonella microbiological testing in Malta. (see part B, point 3)

The collection of samples, transport, detection and typing are as already indicated in points 1.3 and 1.4.

1.6 Measures taken with regards to animals and products in which Salmonella spp. is detected.

Council Regulation 2160/2003, Commission Regulation 1168/2006, Commission Regulation, 1117/2006 and Commission Regulation 2137/2007are directly applicable. Only those poultry flocks and their products found to be infected with *Salmonella enteritidis* and *Salmonella typhimurium*, will be considered unfit for human consumption and will be withheld and destroyed in accordance to articles 6 to 11 of CAP. 437, Veterinary Services Act.

Other Salmonella spp. isolated:
In cases where other Salmonella spp. are isolated, other than *Salmonella enteritidis and salmonella typhimurium*, action will be taken for those serovars of public health importance as recommended by the EFSA and the Commission. However even those serovars frequently isolated locally will be addressed. If there is a change in the trend of the locally most frequently isolated serovars during the three-year period of the programme, this will be taken into consideration. Measures taken will reflect specific requirements D of Annex II of regulation 2160/2003 EC.

In cases were other Salmonella spp. of public health importance are isolated:

- The official veterinarian i/c of poultry and/ or veterinary support officer/s from the poultry section of Animal Health will carry out an investigation on the farm.
- They would also be responsible for re-sampling. Other flocks of different age-groups would also be sampled. The sampling protocol will be in accordance to annex I Part D, art.4 b of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1237/2007. Samples for antimicrobial-residue analysis will also be taken.
- Microbiological analysis would be run in parallel with the Public Health Laboratory (National Reference Laboratory for Salmonella).

In case there is reconfirmation of one of the targeted serovars, different considerations can be taken depending on the capacity of the holding , the age-group infected and microbiological results of other houses on the farm (where present).

- Eradication will not be mandatory, however it may be considered in certain cases.
- Biosecurity measures will be strengthened to ensure that the infection does not spread between the different houses (if it is the case) and other holdings; such as, no movement of live animals from farm, external disinfection of vehicles transporting products out of farm and proper disinfection of equipment used.
- The farm will be under constant vigilance of the competent authority and sampling would be repeated every three weeks from all age-group and houses on the farm, in order to follow the evolution of the infection.
- After all infected flock has reached end of production and has been slaughtered; following an order of the CVO, operations on the farm will be temporarily prohibited. CVO. Thorough cleaning and disinfection procedures will be carried out. Repopulation will be permitted only once two consecutive environmental

sampling batches taken at a distance of two weeks have resulted negative to Salmonella spp. isolation.

- After repopulation the adult hens will be sampled every eight (8) weeks instead of every fifteen weeks for twelve (12) months.

Confirmed case of *Salmonella enteritidis or Salmonella typhimurium:*
If a positive case of isolation of *Salmonella enteritidis* or *Salmonella typhimurium* is confirmed (see point Part B. point 3) then the flock and their products will be considered as unfit for human consumption and condemned.

- If there are different houses on the holding, one or more may be exempt, in those cases were there is adequate evidence of effective biosecurity measures on the farm and no *Salmonella enteritidis or Salmonella typhimurium* were isolated from these houses; also the antimicrobial-residue tests is negative.
- The infected flock would be slaughtered on farm and the carcasses disposed of as described in detail in points 4.4.4 and 4.4.6 .
- There would be recall of animal products found positive to the detection of *Salmonella enteritidis* and *Salmonella typhimurium* or originating from flocks found to be infected with these serovars.
- There are no measures to treat salmonella infected products or products originating from salmonella-infected flocks. Such products would have to be destroyed by incineration. Prior to leaving the premises, officials will mark the egg-products in order to distinguish them from those fit for human consumption.

There is one public incinerator which falls under the administration of the Waste Serv Ltd, which falls under the Ministry of Resources and Rural Affairs. Recalled products have to be transported in leak-proof containers provided for by the Waste-Serv Ltd and then the products will be destroyed through incineration.

No vaccination programme against *Salmonella enteritidis* with either live or dead vaccines are carried out on the national flock.

1.7 National legislation relevant to the implementation of the programme.

The Veterinary Service Act, Chapter 437, art 5.1, states that "the Minister may prescribe rules concerning the prevention and control of diseases". See attached Annex 2 for the full list of EC legislation transposed.
Council and Commission regulations are directly applicable.

1.8 Financial assistance provided to food and feed businesses in the context of the programme.

The Veterinary Service Act, Chapter 437, art 18.1 regards financial contribution in connection with national schemes for the eradication of particular diseases.

"Collection of information on Zoonosis and Zoonotic Agent Rules" - LN 78/2005 art 8.1. regulates financial contribution for zoonotic control programmes.
The financial contribution would only be calculated and confirmed at the closure of the eradication procedures. However an estimate of the costings would be as follows:
Birds will be calculated at 3 euro per bird.
Incineration would cost 750 euro per ton.
Transport of products or carcasses would cost approximately 60 euro per ton.
Culling of flocks is estimated at 300 Euro per ton (1000 birds = 1ton).
Feeds will be calculated at current market prices: about 350 euro per ton.

2. Concerning food and feed businesses covered by the programme.

2.1. There are no parent stock flocks on the Islands of Mata and Gozo.
There are two registered hatcheries on the Island of Malta.
Hatching Regulations L.N48 of 1997. lays down the provisions that regulate the national hatchery establishments.
Hatching eggs are imported from EU member states, primarily from France. Italy, Netherlands and Belgium. All consignments are imported with the official Intra Trade Certificate issued according to Council Directive 539/90. In 2008; 98,120 egg-laying hatching eggs were imported. Day-old chicks and layer pullets are also imported from Italy. A total of 79,520 day-olds and 42,273 layer pullets were imported in 2008. Therefore between hatching eggs and live chicks/pullets, a total of 219,913 were imported; half the amount compared to last years import.
The hatcheries are obliged to the report to the VFRCCD, as competent authority, the number of hatching eggs imported, submitting a copy of import/trade documents. The competent authority then prints out a "hatch report" which is passed on to the hatchery. This form is returned to the competent authority once the particular batch of eggs have been hatched and sold. This hatch report includes a list of farms which are the destination of chicks sold.
The farmers can either sell the eggs produced directly to shops, supermarkets or egg-collectors, who in turn would deliver to shops / supermarkets. There is no central egg-packing plant. All farmers pack their own egg produce. The majority of farms pack the eggs manually, however the few larger holdings have automation of the grading, stamping and packing. In 2003 the Egg Marking Standard Regulations 345/2003 came into force. In accordance to this law, each individual egg-laying farm is given a unique identity number that has to be printed on all the eggs produced on that farm and sold to shops, supermarkets or egg-collectors. This legislation excludes eggs sold directly to the consumer. The control at retail level falls under the supervision of the Environmental Health Department which falls under the Directorate of Public health under the Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Community Care

Total number of Farms registered with the CA	Malta	Gozo
50	42*	8

*15 of these farms are mixed farms with both layer and broiler flocks.

A number of farms is on the decline over the past years..

Capacity of holding	No. of Farms
100,000-50,000	1
49,999 – 25,000	2
24,999 – 15,000	6
14,999 – 10,000	4
9,999 – 5,000	9
4,999 – 2,000	11
1,999 - 500	7
Less than 499	5

The majority of the farms are family-run on a part-time basis. About half the farms operate an all-in all-out system since they have more than one house. Usually, the smaller holdings have different age-groups held in the same enclosure.
The majority of farms use a caged system on more than one tier, usually up to a maximum of 5 tiers. All cage houses have belts.
There is only one farm that keeps the egg-laying hens in barns on deep litter.
Hens usually go into the laying period around eighteen (18) weeks and have an average laying-period of eighteen (18) months. Some farms prolong the laying period through moulting.

2.2 Structure of the production of feed.

There are six feed mills. These feed mills import and produce the majority of feed supplied to local farms. An average of 200,000 tons of all types of animal feed is produced per year. The two larger feed mills import premixes from approved EU countries (predominantly UK). These are mixed with other ingredients such as cereals and soya imported from EU and Non-EU countries. The other four smaller feed mills import concentrates which are then mixed with other ingredients such as cereals.
A small number of farms carry out home mixing using concentrates to obtain a mash.
Legal notice 374/2000 regulates the responsibility of feed mills. An official letter will be sent to all feed mills and farms carrying out home mixing, whereby they will be held responsible for testing their final products. The feed mills will be requested to submit a plan for the following year by November; to the competent authority stating their sampling programme with supporting information. The competent authority will have twenty (20) working days to send in any remarks. The feed mill will be obliged by law to transmit their results quarterly to the competent authority; unless *Salmonella enteritidis* or *Salmonella typhimurium* are isolated. In such cases, the feed mill is to report within

three working days to the competent authority. Recall of infected products or any other appropriate action would be taken following an investigation and retesting carried out by the competent authority. Those egg-laying farms carrying out home-mixing will be obliged to conduct microbiological analysis for Salmonella in the same way as the feed mills. They will also be required to submit a sampling plan to the competent authority with all supporting information. The same obligations for reporting *Salmonella typhimurium* or *Salmonella enteritidis* positive samples as detailed above, would apply. The competent authority would then carry out an investigation and testing of feed and flock. Following positive results the actions stated in point 4.4.4 would apply.

2.3 Relevant guidelines for good animal husbandry practices or other guidelines on biosecurity measures.

Detailed guidelines for good husbandry practices and biosecurity measures on poultry farms are being finalized. However general guidelines are covered in the Code of Good Agriculture Practice (Cogap).
It covers certain practices such as:

- the guidelines for storage of feed
- the quality of building material
- need for a vehicle disinfection pits
- necessity of a manure clamp

All farms producing manure have to store solid manure in an enclosed place known as the manure clamp, for six months a year (from the 15th October to 15th March). All farms are to have a leak proof cesspit, to collect foul water arising from cleaning etc. The manure clamp is to be connected to the cesspit. The water is kept for 15 days then collected by a bowser. These regulations serve to reduce the environmental pollution and the nitrate level in fields fertilised with manure. However, they also provide a tool to permit biosecurity measures to limit spread of disease.
In 2005, an extensive exercise was carried out by the competent authority which addressed good animal husbandry practices and welfare issues (eg. cage –size).
Those farms not adhering to Community standards had to invest in restructuring their farm. General guidelines on good animal husbandry and biosecurity guidelines covering hygiene management, measures to be taken in cases of salmonella infection and hygiene during transport will be drawn up.

Hygiene management on farm:
The farmer has to obtain an authorization form from the competent authority (attach.2) to be able to buy the day-old chicks from the hatchery. Almost all farms have automatic cleaning belts while few carry out the cleaning manually. Cleaning is usually carried out weekly. The faecal material falls into the pits where it is usually shoveled out into dumpers and taken to the manure clamp by van. A small number make use of conveyer belts. During the week there is cleaning out of the shed, removal of cobwebs etc. Those farms that have an all-in-all out- system, leave the shed without birds for a short period, during which time the shed is well-cleaned out, disinfected and the cages are washed out and repaired if necessary. Pest control (mice, rats and birds) is generally addressed through the use of nets on the windows, blocking any holes in the building structures and the use of venom. Some farms insert blocks of venom in plastic tubes which are placed around the perimeter of the holding, while others spread the venom. Some farms also use pans with foam soaked in disinfectant outside the sheds for disinfecting boots, however not all farmers are in the habit of changing their clothing prior to entering the sheds.

Measures for preventing infections:
Most holdings have pits for the disinfection of the vehicles entering or leaving the premises. However none have separate entrances. The feed is bought fresh from the feed mills, even though there are those that also have their own silos. Due to the island's high humidity levels, farmers are not in the habit of storing large quantities of feed to avoid the formation of yeasts and moulds. Feeds are usually kept in their bags within the sheds in dark, dry corners.
The water-supply can be direct from the main government supply or from private bore holes. In the latter case, control of the water is purely voluntary; however from the information we have this is not frequently carried out unless the family uses the water from the bore hole for their own personal use.
A high percentage of farms are small in capacity and are family-run, therefore few people would be responsible for the daily management of the animals. There is no legal obligation for people handling live animals to carry out medical checks. The larger holdings engage employees.
The hatchery transports the day-old chicks to the farms, while live pullets are transported by the company. Eggs are packed on farm, manually or automatically. The majority of operators distribute the eggs to shops, supermarkets etc.; however there are a few who sell to third parties (egg-collectors), who in turn distribute the produce.

2.4 Routine veterinary supervision on farm.
All layer farms are visited twice annually by official personnel as part of the Avian Influenza programme. During this visit blood samples are taken and a general animal health check is carried out.

One of the largest local feed mills provides free technical support. A lot of the farmers buying their feed from this feed mill make regular use of the technical personnel. If there is any cause for suspicion, the company's veterinarian is then called out.

2.5 Registration of farms.

Local regulations request commercial egg producers to have an approval mark and compensation schemes enforce the registration of egg-laying farms with the competent authority. There is the Egg Marking Regulation 345/2003 which requires that all eggs sold at retail level, excluding those sold directly to the consumers on farm, have to be marked by a unique identity number. This unique number is issued by the competent authority, which is the VRFCCD. The control at retail level falls under the supervision of the Environmental Health Department which falls under the Directorate of Public Health under the Ministry of Social Policy.

Farms not registered with the competent authority can not be given this unique identity number.

There is also the Special Marketing Policy Programme Maltese Agriculture (SMPPMA) which entitles only registered business operators to a refund of 16 euro cents per dozen eggs sold.

2.6 Record keeping at Farm.

All farms keep an official register. This is tied up to the fact that the competent authority requests that each registered farm submits two monthly reports. One sheet holds all details of the production on farm. This report details the daily production of eggs, number of birds, number of deaths, quantity of feed used. The second report is a sales report where the farmer is declaring the quantity of eggs sold with proof of VAT receipts. These monthly reports are tied up with the subsidiary scheme of 16 euro cents per dozen eggs sold under the SMPPMA scheme.

2.7 Documents to accompany animals when dispatched.

The hatcheries are obliged to the report to the VRFCCD, as the competent authority, the number of hatching eggs imported (submitting a copy of import documents). A hatch report for each batch of eggs is given to the hatchery that duly fills in the information and returns the hatch report to the competent authority after hatching. The report includes the list of farms which are the destination of the chicks. On this report the competent authority issues a movement document with all relevant details which is given to the farmer. On culling of the egg-laying hens at the end of their productive life, the farmer fills in the details and submits the movement document back to the competent authority. The competent authority can then cross-check statistics coming from import documents and the "hatch report". Spent hens delivered dead to the thermal facility are recorded in line with procedures laid down for all animal by-products. A document is issued by the

Waste Serv (thermal unit), a copy of which is passed on to the competent authority together with the movement document.
It must be stated that non-compliance with procedures as detailed would jeopardize qualification for subsidy under the SMPPMA scheme.

PART B

1. Identification of programme

Member State	Malta
Disease	Infection of animals with Zoonotic *Salmonella spp*
Animal population covered by the programme	Egg-laying flocks of Gallus gallus
Years of Implementation	2010
Reference of this document	MT SAL-LAY10
Contact Name	Dr Anthony Gruppetta DG Civil Abattoir Albertown, Marsa Malta Tel: +356.25905168 Fax: +367.25905182 e-mail; evo.mrac@gov.mt 2nd contact person: Dr. Susan Chircop Tel: +356.25095304 e-mail: susan.chircop@gov.mt
Date sent to the Commission	29th April 2009

2. Historical data on the epidemiological evolution of Zoonotic salmonella

No epidemiological evolution data is available. However following the baseline study conducted in 2004, 25 farms out of 57 were positive to salmonellosis following microbiological investigation. That would come to an overall prevalence of 43.85% of egg-layer flocks infected with *Salmonellosis spp.* Taking into consideration the full holding capacity of the farms that resulted positive, approximately 60% of national flock would be infected. The prevalence of *Salmonella enteritidis* and *Salmonella typhimurium* oscillates around 20%, since the overall prevalence of Salmonellosis in 2004 was of 43.87%,. therefore in accordance to article 1 by the end of 2009, at least a 30% reduction of positive flocks of adult laying hens would be achieved.
In 2008, no Salmonella control was carried out on layer flocks. The Salmonella control programme on the local layer commenced in 2009.

3. Describtion of the submitted programme.

The main objectives of this programme is to monitor and control all egg-laying flocks of Gallus gallus in Malta and Gozo, in accordance to Commission Regulation 2160/2003 for Zoonotic *Salmonella spp.* Flocks found infected with *Salmonella typhimurium* and *Salmonella enteritidis* will be eradicated and their products destroyed to achieve a reduction in the prevalence of these serotypes in the national flock, as indicated in Commission Regulation 1168/2006. The prevalence of *Salmonella enteritidis* and *Salmonella typhimurium* oscillates around 20%, therefore in accordance to article 1 by

the end of 2009, at least a 30% reduction of positive flocks of adult laying hens would be achieved.

The target population would be all registered egg-laying flocks of Gallus gallus.
Malta and Gozo will be considered as one region.
All registered and functioning farms will be tested. Sixty-four (64) farms which are functioning, will be tested, having a total population of approximately 586,241.
The testing scheme would follow the programme elaborated in point 1.5:

The sampling scheme below includes both the official and operators programme, since as stated before, the competent authority will also be taking over the sampling delegated to the food business operator, as laid down in Commission Regulation 1168/2006

Targeted age-group	Samples to be taken
Day-old chicks	Box-liners: 10 (pooled into 2 samples) dead chicks: (10 pooled into one sample)
Pullets 2 weeks prior to laying	Caged flocks: 2x150g of naturally pooled faeces from belts Barn houses: 2 pairs of boot swabs (only one house) 1 dust sample: (100g in 250ml) 2 birds /farm tested for antibiotic residues
Laying hens every 15 weeks	2x150g of naturally pooled faeces from belts 1 dust sample: (100g in 250ml) 3 birds /farm tested for antibiotic residues annually.

The competent authority would be responsible for the sampling and testing, which would be carried out as stated in points1.3 and 1.4.

The competent authority is also responsible for the national residue plan.
However apart from this programme, each farm will be tested for antimicrobial-residue during the sampling for the salmonella control programme. Two pullets will be sampled from the same house and tier where a faecal sample is collected. During the sampling of the adult egg-laying hens on three occasions, one layer each time will be sampled from the cages were the sampling is carried out.

The six-plate test will be carried out at the National Veterinary Laboratory of the competent authority.

If the results are positive to antimicrobial residue analysis; the flock will be considered suspect of infection with *Salmonella enteritidis/ Salmonella typhimurium*, and an official investigation will be conducted as detailed in point 4.4.4.

Definition of a positive case:

i. Confirmed case of *Salmonella enteritidis or Salmonella typhimurium* infection.

In the case of primary positive isolation of *Salmonella enteritidis / Salmonella typhimurium*, the flock will be considered suspect of infection. A farm investigation will be initiated as described in point 4.4.4. Samples for microbiology and antimicrobial-residue analysis are once again taken from all houses on the holding and the sampling protocol will be in accordance to annex I Part D, art.4 b of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1237/2007. Microbiological analysis will be run in parallel with the Public Health Laboratory (National Reference Laboratory for Salmonella). In case of confirmation, the flock is considered as a positive case.

On the findings of the official investigation, if there is evidence that biosecurity measures on the farm are adequate and effective between houses and no *Salmonella enteritidis / Salmonella typhimurium* was isolated from one or more houses on the farm holding, these may be exempt from measures as listed in point 4.4.4 in case of a positive case. This situation may arise only in the largest of holdings.

ii. In the case of a positive antimicrobial residue analysis result but a negative isolation result, an appropriate suspension time will be conferred following the findings of the official investigation. After such time has lapsed, antibiotic-residue testing and microbiological re-testing of the flock will be conducted in accordance to annex I Part D, art.4 b of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1237/2007. The microbiology analysis will be run in parallel with the Public Health Laboratory.

ii.a) If the analysis results in positive isolation of *Salmonella enteritidis* or *Salmonella typhimurium*, the flock will be considered as a positive case and the measures described in point 4.4.4 will be carried out.

ii.b) If, on re-analysis, once again, there is a positive antimicrobial-residue result and negative Salmonella spp. isolation, the flock is considered as positive to *Salmonella enteritidis* and *Salmonella typhimurium* infection and will be considered as unfit for human consumption.

ii.c) If there is no positive isolation of Salmonella enteritidis or Salmonella typhimurium and the antimicrobial-residue analysis is negative; the CVO would lift all restrictions on the farm/flock..

Vaccination as a preventive measure and treatment of products coming from infected flocks will not be considered.

4. Measures of the submitted programme

4.1 Summary of measures under the programme

Duration of the programme:

First year 2009 last year: 2011

- Control/Eradication
- Testing
- Killing of animals tested positive
- Extended slaughter or killing
- Disposal of products

- Monitoring

4.2 The central authority in charge of supervising and coordinating is the Veterinary Regulation Fisheries conservation and Control Division (VRFCD).

The National Veterinary Laboratory:

(i) Senior veterinary officer will be responsible for:

- appropriate training of personnel responsible for collecting the samples
- in charge of supervising that the programme is adhered to and that the samples are collected according to the programme.
- all necessary material needed for sampling eg. Boot swabs, sterile bags, etc are available.
- ensure that samples are analysed in accordance to time frame and methodology as laid down in the programme
- reporting suspect positives / confirmed to the animal health section and CVO
- co-ordinate with the Public Health Laboratory parallel analysis of suspect samples
- inform Director of Department for Safety of the Food Chain of any infected flocks.
- collecting/ filing all relevant data and reporting results.

Animal Health Department:

(ii) Senior veterinary support officer in charge of the poultry section will be responsible for:

- co-ordinating sampling team
- making appointments with the farmers and preparing daily sampling schedules
- collaborating with the senior veterinary officer i/c lab
- organizing on farm investigation in cases of suspect/confirmed positive results
- collaborate in census, movement restriction, eradication and disinfection measures
- collaborate in farm investigations in view of repopulation of farm

(iii)Assistant Veterinary Support Officers will be responsible for:

- Ensuring to follow appropriate training
- collecting and transporting samples appropriately

- deliver samples within 24hours from collection to the laboratory
- ensure that accompanying documents are filled appropriately

(iv) Veterinary officer i/c poultry

- carry out on-farm investigations in collaboration with senior veterinary support officer i/c poultry section
- co-ordinate and conduct census, movement restriction, disinfection and eradication measures
- submit on farm investigation report to the SVO i/c lab within 48hours
- co-ordinate farm investigation in view of repopulation
- responsible for recommending repopulation following positive finding after on-farm investigation

(v) Veterinary Officer responsible for by products:

- is responsible of ensuring that biosecurity measures and provisions in Council Regulation 1174/2002 are adhered to during disposal of carcasses and products.

Animal Welfare Department

(vi) Animal welfare officer:

- responsible for ensuring that animal welfare provisions are respected during killing on farm.

Department for Safety of the Food Chain

(vii) Director is responsible for;

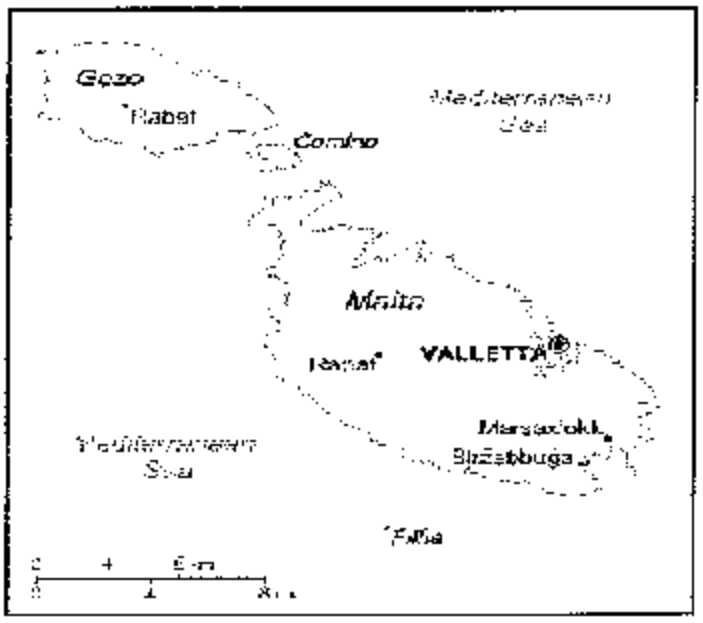
- informing the national contact person for the rapid alert system regarding confirmed infected flocks for Salmonella enteritidis and Salmonella typhimurium

Chief veterinary Officer

Following recommendations from senior veterinary officer i/c lab and veterinary officer i/c of poultry section;

- Responsible of issuing restriction movement documents
- issuing of documentation for lifting restriction measures on a farm and /or permitting repopulation.

4.3 The Islands of Malta and Gozo are covered by this programme and are considered as one region. The Veterinary regulation Fisheries Conservation and Control Division administers the whole region.



4.4 Measures implemented under the programme

4.4.1 Measures and applicable legislation as regards registration of holdings:
Local regulations request commercial egg producers to have an approval mark and compensation schemes enforce the registration of egg-laying farms with the competent authority. Refer to part A, point 2.5.

4.4.3 Measures and applicable legislation as regards the notification of disease:
The Veterinary Services Act, Chapter 437, art 35.1(f) provides for the obligation of notification of any suspicion of zoonosis or other disease or any other phenomenon or circumstances liable to present a serious threat to animal or public health.

4.4.4. Measures and applicable legislation as regards the measures in case of a positive case:
Council Regulation 2160/2003, Commission Regulation 1168/2006 and Commission Regulation (EC) 1237/2007 are directly applicable.

(i) Primary isolation of *Salmonella enteritidis* or *Salmonella typhimurium.*

When a *Salmonella enteritidis* or *Salmonella typhimurium* is isolated from primary faecal or environmental samples in commercial poultry flocks the senior veterinary officer (SVO) in charge of the lab would:

- report suspect positives to the animal health section and CVO.

- An official restriction on the farm is issued by the CVO to prevent movement of animals to and from the farm.

- The SVO of the laboratory would co-ordinate with the Public Health Laboratory (National Reference Laboratory for Salmonella) to carry out parallel microbiological analysis of suspect samples.
  The official veterinarian /assistants would be responsible for re-sampling. Where present, other flocks of different age-groups / houses would be sampled. The sampling protocol will be in accordance to annex 1 Part D, art.4 b of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1237/2007. Seven samples will be taken, (five faecal samples and two dust samples). A sub-sample of 25 grams will be collected of each faecal material and dust sample for analysis and all will be analysed separately. Samples for antibiotic-residue analysis will also be taken but analysed.

- The official veterinarian i/c poultry together with veterinary support officer/s from the poultry section of animal health will carry out an investigation on the farm and conduct a census.

- No eggs, poultry carcasses, animal feed, material or waste may leave the holding without a written authorisation issued by an official veterinarian.

- Persons not directly involved in taking care of the animals are not permitted to enter buildings where infected flocks are kept.

- Appropriate means of disinfection, using a disinfectant officially approved as effective against Salmonella spp., is to be used at the entrances and exits of the building housing poultry and of the holding itself.

- Vehicles and equipment used for transport of animals or products have to be cleaned and disinfected with an officially approved disinfectant effective against Salmonella spp. immediately after the movement.

  These measures will remain in force until results of re-analysis are completed.

(ii) Negative diagnosis of positive initial results:
On primary isolation of *Salmonella enteritidis* or *Salmonella typhimurium*, as stated above, re-sampling will be carried out in accordance to Commission Regulation (EC) 1237/2007.
If Salmonella infection with *Salmonella enteritidis* or *Salmonella typhimurium* is not confirmed on re-analysis and the result for antimicrobial-residue analysis is negative, the CVO would consider the initial result as a false positive and withdraw the restrictions placed on the farm. The flock would then be considered as fit for human consumption.

(iii) Action taken on confirmed positive results of *Salmonella enteritidis* and *Salmonella typhimurium*.

Restriction measures already in place (as described in point 4.4.4.(i)) are maintained. Different houses within the holding may be exempt, in those cases that there is adequate evidence of effective biosecurity measures on the farm and no *Salmonella enteritidis or Salmonella typhimurium* were isolated from these houses. This situation may arise only in the largest of holdings.

- The owner of the infected holding or the owner's representative will be served with an official notice in writing ordering the slaughter and destruction of the flock; where one or more houses are exempt, this would be clearly indicated. Valuation of the animals on the holding will normally be carried out before they are killed. The birds will, by preference, be killed by dislocation of the neck. Other methods of killing may include the use of gases such as carbon dioxide or other gases in closed trailers or containers. Carbon dioxide gas in the form of 22kg tanks is available locally. Mobile enclosed trailers or containers can be transported on site if required. Killing of the birds will be supervised by officials from the competent authority and the Official veterinarian responsible for animal welfare has to ensure that welfare provisions are respected. All personnel involved in culling are required to wear protective clothing, gloves and nose/mouth masks.

- the carcasses will be disposed of through incineration at the thermal unit run by the Waste Serv Ltd. There is only one public incinerator which falls under the administration of the Waste Serv. Ltd, which falls under the ministry of Resources and rural Affairs. The carcasses have to be transported in leak-proof containers supplied by Waste Serv and transported drip-proof in vehicles that must be disinfected externally before leaving the holding. Officials from the competent authority have to supervise all procedures.

- There would be recall of animal products originating from flocks found to be infected with *Salmonella enteritidis* and *Salmonella typhimurium*.

- There are no facilities to treat salmonella – infected products or products originating from salmonella-infected flocks. Such products would have to be destroyed by incineration. Transport of these products will have to be carried out following the same measures as in the case of the infected slaughtered flock.

- Feeds will also be considered contaminated and will be destroyed.

Cleaning and disinfection should be started as soon as the animals have been killed and removed from the holding and must be carried out in a methodical way. Officials from the competent authority should supervise the operations. Detailed procedures would be laid down in the good animal husbandry guideline to be drafted. However, there is a first stage where an officially approved disinfectant would be sprayed and left to act for 24 hours. This will be followed by general cleaning to remove organic matter and dust. Attention should be given to areas and equipment difficult to reach. Fans, drains, slats etc should not be neglected. After thorough cleaning (steam cleaning is recommended) fumigation is carried out. Disinfectants should have time to dry before samples are taken. As a general rule, detergents such as hypochlorites, alkalis, gluteraldehydes and Virkon can be used for the disinfection of poultry houses, wooden structures, concrete surfaces, equipment and vehicles. The aerosol application of gluteraldehyde is suitable for the disinfection of fans and similar equipment.

- Environmental samples are taken and repopulation will be permitted and all restriction bans lifted when two consecutive sample batches, taken 14 days apart, result negative to isolation of salmonella spp.

- Monitoring on these farms will be increased to monthly sampling schemes during the laying period for the next twelve (12) months of the new flock after repopulation.

4.4.5 Qualification of animals
There is no national legislation on qualification of flock. This will be considered after the first year or two that the programme has be running.

4.4.6 Control procedures and in particular rules on the movement of animals liable to be affected or contaminated by a given disease
Movement of animas is restricted on *Salmonella enteritidis* or *Salmonella typhimurium* positive cases, as detailed in point 4.4.4. Monitoring on these farms will be increased to monthly sampling schemes during the laying period of the subsequent flock once re-populated for the next twelve (12) months.
In other cases of infection of other Salmonella spp, restrictions as detailed in Part A, point 1.6 would be carried out.

4.4.7. Measures and applicable legislation as regards the control of the disease.
Council Regulation 2160/2003, Commission Regulation 1168/2006 and Commission Regulation (EC) 1237/2007 are followed in setting up the sampling scheme, testing regime and setting of targets.

There is no intention of carrying out vaccination programmes.
No vaccination is currently carried out. Commission Regulation (EC) No 1177/2006 on the requirements for use of antimicrobials and vaccines in control programmes for

poultry will be adhered to. Antimicrobials will not be used as preventive measures in any Salmonella control programme.

4.4.8 Measures and applicable legislation as regards the compensation for owners of slaughtered and killed animals:
"Collection of information on Zoonosis and Zoonotic Agent Rules" – LN 78/2005, art. 8.1 which falls under the Veterinary Service Act,; and art.8.1. of this same Act. set down provisions for financial compensation.

4.4.9 Information and assessment on biosecurity measures management and infrastructure in place in the flocks involved.
Please refer to Part A, point 2.3

5. General description of costs and benefits.
The costs to the farmer will be felt initially in cases of eradication. The farmer will obviously encounter losses following eradication and costs in upgrading holdings. However, in the long run the farmer will benefit from a reduction in costs of medicinals and farm management. They will see an increase in production and financial return also from the overall positive impact consumer confidence in local produce.
The costs on society will be due to an increase in waste that will have to be eliminated. However, there would be the benefits of food safety.

6. Data on the epidemiological evolution during the last five years
6.1 Evolution of zoonotic salmonellosis

Targets

7.1. Targets related to testing - Layers - 2010

7.1.1. Targets on diagnostic tests

Animal species:Gallus gallus:

Region[b]	Type of the test[c]	Target population[d]	Type of sample[e]	Objective[f]	Number of planned tests*
Malta / Gozo	microbiological	Laying hens; day-old chicks	Box-liners	Control	434
			Dead chicks	Control	224
		Laying hens pullets (16-18 wks)	Faecal	Control	150
			dust	Control	150
		Adults, every 15 weeks during laying	Faecal	Control	150
			dust	control	150
	serotyping	Laying flocks	isolate	control	55
	Antibiotic –residue testing	Laying hens pullets (16-18 wks)	Muscle		
		Adults, every 15 weeks during laying	muscle		128
					192
			Total		1633

(a) Species if necessary.
(b) Region as defined in the approved control and eradication programme of the Member State.
(c) Description of the test.
(d) Specification of the targeted species and the categories of targeted animals if necessary.
(e) Description of the sample (for instance faeces).
(f) Description of the objective (for instance surveillance, monitoring, , control of vaccination).

7.1.2. Targets on testing of Layers[1]

Year: 2010 **Situation on date: N/A**

Animal species:Gallus gallus **infection[a]:Zoonotic Salmonellosis -**

Region	Type of flock[b]	Total number of flocks[c]	Total number of animals	Total number of flocks under the programme	Total number of animals under the programme	Expected number of flocks to be checked[d]	Number of flocks[e] expected to be positive[e]			Number of flocks expected to be depopulated[e]		Total number of animals expected to be slaughtered or destroyed[e]		Expected quantity of eggs to be destroyed (number or kg)		Expected quantity of eggs channelled to egg products (number or kg)	
							(a1)	(a2)	(a3)	(a1)	(a3)	(a1)	(a3	(a1)	(a3)	(a1)	(a3)
Malta / Gozo	Laying hens	60	425,000	60	425,000	60	Approx 15%		Approx 5%	9	/	110,000	/				
Total		60	425,000	60	425,000	60				9		110,000					

(a) For zoonotic salmonellosis indicate the serotypes covered by the control programmes: (a1) for *Salmonella* Enteritidis, (a2) for *Salmonella* Typhimurium, (a3) for other serotypes-specify as appropriate, (a4) for *Salmonella* Enteritidis or *Salmonella* Typhimurium.

(b) For example, breeding flocks (rearing, adult flocks), production flocks, laying hen flocks, breeding turkeys,broiler turkeys, breeding pigs,slaughter pigs,etc. Flocks or herds or as appropriate.

(c) Total number of flocks existing in the region including eligible flocks and non-eligible flocks for the programme.

(d) Check means to perform a flock level test under the programme for the presence of salmonella. In this column a flock must not be counted twice even if it has been checked more than once.

(e) If a flock has been checked, in accordance with footnote (d), more than once, a positive sample must be taken into account only once.

[1] Specify types of flocks if appropriate(breeders, layers, broilers).

8. Detailed analysis of the cost of the programme - 2010

Costs related to	Specification	Number of units	Unitary cost in EUR	Total amount in EUR	Community funding requested (yes/no)
1. Testing					
1.1. Cost of the analysis	*Test:* Number of bacteriological tests (cultivation) planned to be carried out in the framework of official sampling	*1258*	*35*	*44,030*	*Yes*
	Test: Number of serotyping of relevant isolates tests planned to be carried out	*55*	*56*	*3,080*	*Yes*
Antibiotic – residue testing		*320*	*6*	*1,920*	*yes*
1.2. Cost of sampling		*580 visits*	*6*	*3,480*	*yes*
1.3. Other costs					
2. Vaccination or treatment of animal products					
2.1. Purchase of vaccine/treatment of animal products	Number of purchase of vaccine doses planned if a vaccination policy is part of the programme as set out explicitly under point 4 of Annex II				
2.2. Distribution costs					

2.3. Administering costs					
2.4. Control costs					
3. Slaughter and destruction					
3.1. Compensation of animals		110,000	3	330,000	Yes
3.2. Transport costs		110 (1,000 birds=1 ton	60/ton	6,600	Yes
3.3. Destruction costs		110	1,050/ton	115,500	Yes
3.4. Loss in case of slaughtering					
3.5 Costs from treatment of animal products (milk, eggs, hatching eggs, etc)					
4. Cleaning and disinfection		9	920	8,280	yes
5. Salaries (staff contracted for the programme only)					
6. Consumables and specific equipment					
7. Other costs					
	TOTAL			512,890	

MINISTERU GHAR-RIZORSI U
AFFARIJIET RURALI

MALTA

MINISTRY FOR RESOURCES AND
RURAL AFFAIRS

Taqsima ta' Regolament Veterinarju,
Konservazzjoni u Kontroll tas-Sajd

Veterinary Regulation, Fisheries
Conservation & Control Division

Annex I

27th August 2009

DECLARATION

The Veterinary Regulation Fisheries Conservation Control Division as competent authority, responsible for the implementation of the National Salmonella Control Programme in layer flocks of Gallus gallus, confirms adherence to the provisions laid down in relevant veterinary legislation governing zoonotic salmonella. These being namely, Council Directive 2003/99/EC, Council Regulation 2003/2160/EC, Commission Regulation 2006/1168/EC and Commission Regulation 1177/2006/EC. Particular attention will be given to confirmation of results and verification of achievement of the Community target.

VETERINARY REGULATION FISH.CONS.& CONTROL
MALTA

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http://www.health.gov.mt/fsc/fsc_vsa.htm

Veterinary Services Act, 2001 (Act No. XXII of 2001) **Legal Notices**	
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Certificate of Hybrid Breeding Pigs, their Semen, Ova and Embryos Regulations, 2003	L.N. 281 of 2003
Hybrid-Breeding Pigs for Breeding Regulations, 2003	L.N. 282 of 2003
Acceptance of Pure-Bred Breeding Animals of the Bovine Species for Breeding Purposes Regulations, 2003	L.N. 283 of 2003 Amended by L.N. 117 of 2007
Acceptance of Pure-Bred Breeding Pigs for Breeding Purposes Regulations, 2003	L.N. 284 of 2003
Entry in Registers for Hybrid Breeding Pigs Regulations, 2003	L.N. 285 of 2003
Pure-Bred Breeding Bovines Regulations, 2003	L.N. 286 of 2003
Zootechnical Standards for Breeding Animals of the Porcine Species Regulations, 2003	L.N. 287 of 2003
Regulations on Methods for Monitoring Performance and Assessing the Genetic Value of Pure-Bred and Hybrid Breeding Pigs, 2003	L.N. 288 of 2003
Trade with Member States in Equidae Regulations (Zootechnical and Genealogical Conditions), 2003	L.N. 289 of 2003
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Pure-Bred Breeding Sheep and Goats Regulations, 2003	L.N. 291 Of 2003

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Collection of Data Concerning Competitions for Equidae Regulations, 2003	L.N. 307 of 2003
Criteria for the Recognition of Breeders' Organisations and Associations which maintain or establish Herd-books for Pure-bred Breeding Animals of the Bovine Species Regulations, 2003	L.N. 308 of 2003
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Sampling Methods and Methods of Analysis for the Official Control of the Levels for Certain Contaminants in Foodstuffs Rules, 2005	L.N. 97 of 2005
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Methods of Analysis for the Official Control of Feedingstuffs Rules, 2005	L.N. 99 of 2005
Conditions for the Registering of Establishments operating in the Animal Feed Sector Rules, 2005	L.N. 100 of 2005
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