Appendix H: Egg Producers Federation Layer Farm Protocol

Letter from Egg Producers Federation:

24 April 2002

To All Egg Producers

Salmonella Typhimurium type 160 is a strain of salmonella that has made a dramatic impact in New Zealand in a short time. It is the major factor in the high rate of recent sparrow deaths in New Zealand. It has three factors that make it a particular concern for the egg laying industry. It is extraordinarily prevalent in the environment; it is highly adaptable to avian species and vertical (ovarian) transmission is a possibility.

The fact that the two breeding companies have detected this strain in their sheds and it has infected some breeding flocks shows the risk. This is despite the high level of biosecurity within the two companies. The infection was identified in late 2001. The breeding companies acted very quickly and are now vaccinating all day old chicks.

The prevalence in the environment of this strain of salmonella means that it poses a higher risk to our industry than any salmonella threat we have faced before. The Egg Producers Federation has brought together expert technical and veterinary personnel for a full and careful assessment of the situation. The advice they have given is in the attached Protocol. An EPF Executive subcommittee worked with the technical experts and representatives of the breeding companies in developing the Protocol. The EPF Executive then reviewed the Protocol to ensure that it is practical and workable.

The Protocol sets out a series of key actions that should be undertaken in relation to Biosecurity, Vaccination and Training. The actions are very important and we urge you to act on them as soon as possible. The Protocol should be part of your Risk Management Programme. The Protocol will be included in the generic layer hen RMP once it is in place.

There are two features of the Protocol. The first we would bring to your attention is the importance of reducing the risk of salmonella infection from feed. We recommend heat treatment or the introduction of a salmonella inhibitor at the manufacturers recommended rate as soon as possible and no later than 1 November 2002. Feed is considered a major potential source of salmonella infection and this recommendation is a crucial element of the defence against its introduction.

The second and major feature of the Protocol is the decision to vaccinate. The vaccination must be applied on three occasions.

1. The two breeding companies and PacificVet, the New Zealand distributors of the vaccine, MeganVac-1, have agreed that the cost of the first vaccination, which will be undertaken at day old, will be paid by the breeding companies and added to the chick cost.
2. The breeding companies hatchery chicken dispatch docket will have information on the contact details for Pacific Vet (a toll free number is available) and the dates for the second and third vaccinations.
3. Pacific Vet will invoice each producer directly by dispatching the vaccine to the address on the dispatch docket that has been forwarded to Pacific Vet by the breeding company hatcheries on the day of dispatch of the day old chicks.

1 The various controls that have been recommended in this protocol have been incorporated into the relevant sections of the Layer Farm RMP in Chapter 3 of this Code of Practice.
4. The large majority of farmers are already clients of PacificVet. However, where producers are not on the PacificVet books the breeding company hatcheries will provide full details including the postal address and telephone number to PacificVet.

5. A list of poultry specialist veterinarians and their contact details will accompany the PacificVet invoice. Normal PacificVet policy will apply in respect of transport costs.

6. Veterinary prescription will be part of the dispatch docket. Information on the vaccine is included with this posting and we urge you to read it.

7. Pacific Vet will forward a reminder to producers who have not ordered. A follow – up to vaccinate will be made to producers.

8. The vaccination programme outlined will commence on Monday 29 April 2001. It will apply to each new flock you receive from your breeding company.

9. The Egg Producers Federation is also working with Agriquality on extending the current Agriquality testing regime for eggs to assist in maintaining public confidence in the safety of egg consumption.

This strain of salmonella has the ability to cause serious illness in humans. The virulence of the strain and the possibility of ovarian transmission make it a potential public health concern. It is therefore vital we act as a united industry to protect firstly the public and our industry.

The Ministry of Health\(^2\) and the Ministry of Agriculture\(^3\) are aware of the risk posed by STM 160. The Egg Producers Federation has kept both government departments informed of the actions we are undertaking. They are supportive of our proactive actions for consumer food safety. It is important that we are successful in its implementation. Prevention is better than cure.

We thank you for your support.

Michael Brooks,
Egg Producers Federation

24 April 2002 (Clause (a)(iv) amended July 2002)

REARING FARM/LAYER FARMS PROTOCOL

SALMONELLA TYPE 160

(a) Biosecurity

(i) Sheds should be bird and rodent proof;
(ii) Change of boots and over clothing and a minimum of hand washing or full shower if possible when exiting from positive sheds;
(iii) Use only potable water on the farm;
(iv) Egg collection belts in the shed must be dry-cleaned to a regular programme. The pre-grading egg conveyor belts must also be cleaned and sanitized to a regular programme. Should a positive test occur for salmonella then sanitizing must be weekly using Virkon or another approved chemical. The conditions for the use of Virkon are that before use all edible product and packaging material must be removed from the room. Following its use food surfaces must be thoroughly rinsed with potable water before production starts. There is a list of other approved chemicals on the following web site www.nzfsa.govt.nz/animalproducts/legislation/notices/m15-chem-scheule-all.pdf;

\(^2\) Food-related activities are now covered by the New Zealand Food Safety Authority.

\(^3\) Food-related activities are now covered by the New Zealand Food Safety Authority.
(v) Foot baths must be at the entrance of all sheds and changed three times a week;
(vi) Movement between sheds should always be from youngest to oldest birds. If there are positive or potentially positive flocks on site then movement must be from negative to positive flocks;
(vii) Equipment used on the farm must go through the biosecurity process in the same manner as it is applied to individuals. Equipment must not be moved from shed to shed unless a total clean down and disinfection programme has been carried out;
(viii) A vermin control programme must be in place to control rodents;
(ix) Manure when collected and removed off the site must be securely covered when transported to an approved destination;
(x) Wild birds must be prevented entry to open style sheds and any feed spillages removed as soon as they occur;
(xi) Egg trays and egg trolleys must be cleaned and sanitized prior to their return to the farm site from the egg packing house;
(xii) Feed must be treated to exclude the risk of salmonella. We recommend that you phase in as soon as possible, and no later than 1 November 2002, treatment by either an approved heat treatment or the introduction of a salmonella inhibitor added at the manufacturers recommended rate;
(xiii) Feed should be kept in closed containers on farms;
(xiv) Sheds should be cleaned and sanitized after the depletion of all flocks;
(xv) Sheds that have had a positive flock must be cleaned and sanitized;
(xvi) All sheds should be swept down daily to keep dust levels down.

Sanitized in this Protocol means spraying with disinfectant. Sanitizing programmes should only be undertaken with approved products.

(b) Vaccination

(i) Take time to read the vaccine ‘Directions for Use’.
(ii) Per your veterinarian’s prescription, use one-half dose per layer pullet (i.e. a 1000 dose vial vaccinates 2000 layer pullets, a 500 dose vial vaccinates 1000 layer pullets).
(iii) Vaccination of all flocks at day old in the hatchery followed by a second vaccination at two–six (2-6) weeks of age and a third vaccination between thirteen - sixteen (13-16) weeks of age.
(iv) A coarse spray applies the first vaccination in the hatchery. The second and third vaccinations may be applied by either coarse spray or drinking water methods. Note: Do not use chlorinated water as this kills the vaccine. Use unchlorinated, potable water. Add ‘trim milk’ to drinking water per instructions to neutralise any residual chlorine or disinfectant.

(c) Training

(i) Training in vaccination application will be necessary for layer farm/ rearing farms operators who have not been trained.
(ii) The person in your operation who will undertake vaccination application should be identified and trained.
(iii) PacificVet (toll free 0508-388-388) can offer training or advice on application.