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UK Guide to the National Control Programme for *Salmonella* in turkey flocks

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Introduction

This guidance sets out the main sampling requirements of the *Salmonella* National Control Programme (NCP) in breeding and fattening turkey flocks in the UK and the measures which will be taken when a flock is positive for *Salmonella*. The guidance also applies to the equivalent legislation in Devolved Administrations.

This guidance should not be read in isolation: specific advice on the NCP will be available from your veterinarian and government officials. Advice is also available from the Defra website, the Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA) and Animal Health (AH) to all farmers on action shown to be effective in controlling *Salmonella*: including biosecurity, cleaning and disinfection, and rodent control.

What is the National Control Programme for Turkey Flocks?

In brief, the National Control Programme (NCP) for *Salmonella* in turkey flocks is a three-year programme, beginning in 2010, to reduce/control the prevalence of *Salmonella* in turkey flocks across all EU Member States to a target agreed by all Member States and the European Commission (EC). At the end of the three-year period, the EC will review progress.

The NCP was written in partnership with representatives from the poultry industry. It sets out the new statutory requirements for the monitoring and control of *Salmonella* contained in EU Regulations (EC) No. 2160/2003 (as amended by Regulation (EC) No. 199/2009 and (EC) No. 213/2009) and (EC) No. 584/2008. These Regulations are intended to ensure that, for the protection of human health, coherent action is taken across the Community to reduce *Salmonella* serotypes considered to be of particular significance to human health (*Salmonella* Enteritidis and Typhimurium). The turkey NCP is one of a series of NCPs being implemented in poultry breeding and production.

The NCP for turkeys, like the NCPs for chickens: broilers, breeders and layers, sets out the monitoring and controls producers must follow to reduce and/or control the flock prevalence of *Salmonella* Enteritidis (SE)

and *Salmonella* Typhimurium (ST) to the EU target of 1% or less positive flocks out of the total number of flocks tested per year. In the case of turkey flocks, the target must be reached by all EU countries by 31 December 2012.

The NCP requires specific control measures following the detection of *Salmonella* Enteritidis or *Salmonella* Typhimurium in order to protect human health. These are intended to help prepare producers for compliance with the microbiological criteria for *Salmonella* absence in fresh poultry meat (as required by Zoonoses Regulation 2160/2003).

Part I – What do I have to do?

Does the NCP apply to all turkey flock holdings?

The requirements of the NCP apply to **the following** operators:

Operators	Capacity
Breeding holdings	over 250 turkeys
Fattening holdings	500 turkeys or more

An exception to this is for turkey fattening holdings with an annual throughput of between 500 and 10,000 turkeys, which are able to demonstrate that they only supply locally¹, as these holdings will not be required to carry out their own Food Business Operator (FBO) sampling, hereafter referred to as “Operator sampling”. However, these holdings will still be subject to official sampling if selected as a part of the 10% of holdings selected at random, and voluntary sampling is recommended so that flock-owners can be aware of their *Salmonella* status and take appropriate measures if required.

Do I need to register for the NCP?

Yes – unless you are already registered under The Great Britain Poultry Register (GBPR) or the equivalent register in Northern Ireland (NI). These registers detail the locations and numbers of all poultry for the purposes of control of avian influenza and *Salmonella*. If you are not already registered with the GBPR, then you are required to register for GBPR. All hatcheries are also required to register if not already included on the GBPR or NI equivalent. Further information on registration is available from your local Animal Health Office or on Defra-web at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/farmanimal/diseases/vetsurveillance/poultry/index.htm#reg>

¹ supply of food of animal origin direct to consumers or to local retailers via farmers’ markets within the supplying establishment’s own county, plus the greater of either the neighbouring county or counties or 50km/30 miles from the boundary of the supplying establishment’s county; additionally, anywhere within the UK in the two weeks preceding Christmas or Easter.

How does the NCP define a flock?

The NCP defines a flock as a single group *or* multiple groups of turkeys, which share the same production unit (i.e. using the same air-space or range area). Where housing systems are not typical, the situation is likely to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Multiple groups of turkeys, which have 'beak-to-beak' contact (inside or outside the house), are likely to be treated as a *single flock*.

Do I have to keep records of movements of birds?

Yes, you will need to record the following for each flock when birds/chicks or eggs are moved onto or off a holding:

- (a) the date of the movement;
- (b) whether the movement was on to or off the holding;
- (c) the number of birds/chicks/eggs moved;
- (d) the age of the birds/chicks/eggs moved;
- (e) in the case of the movement of an entire flock, the identification of that flock, where there is more than one flock on the holding;
- (f) the identity of the building or group of buildings in to or from which the birds/chicks/eggs were moved;
- (g) the address of the holding that they came from, or the holding or slaughterhouse they were sent to.

Do I have to keep records of testing and sampling?

Yes, if you have a turkey flock for which testing is compulsory. Records must be kept for at least two years and be made available for inspection on request. Under the NCP, all producers may be audited at any time. It would be convenient to keep the records in a book in tabular form, or they may be included in any suitable and secure computerised system that you use. You will need to record:

- (a) the date and time at which the sample was taken;
- (b) the type of sample taken;

- (c) where there is more than one flock on the holding, the identification of the flock from which the sample was taken; (this is the house name or number and date that the flock was moved into the house or range area);
- (d) the age of the flock sampled;
- (e) the laboratory to which the sample was sent;
- (f) the date of intended slaughter;
- (g) the result of the test.

When will these records be checked?

These are likely to be checked during routine auditing visits. Records may also be checked after any positive result in any of the houses or during the collection of an official control sample.

Part II A – What samples are required for *Salmonella* testing of fattening flocks?

<p>Reg. 584/2008</p>	<p>Fattening flocks</p>
<p>Operator (producer) sampling</p>	<p>Three weeks before slaughter (results valid for 6 weeks)</p>
<p>Competent Authority (official) sampling</p>	<p>Once a year, all flocks on 10% holdings with at least 500 fattening turkeys, including holdings exempt from operator sampling</p> <p>+</p> <p>All flocks on the holding when one flock tested positive for <i>S. Enteritidis</i> or <i>S. Typhimurium</i> during operator sampling within the previous 12 months, unless the meat of the turkeys in the flocks is destined for industrial heat treatment or another treatment to eliminate <i>Salmonella</i></p> <p>+</p> <p>All flocks on the holding when one flock tested positive for <i>S. Enteritidis</i> or <i>S. Typhimurium</i> during routine sampling by the operator</p> <p>+</p> <p>When the Competent Authority considers it necessary</p>
<p>Samples</p>	<p>Two pairs boot swabs – (samples may be pooled for testing)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>One pair boot and 1 900cm² dust swab (samples may be pooled for testing)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Four hand-held 900cm² dust swabs if <100 turkeys and boot swabbing is impractical</p>

Part II B – What samples are required for *Salmonella* testing of breeding flocks?

	Breeding flocks – rearing	Breeding flocks – adults
Operator sampling	<p>Day old + Four weeks of age + Two weeks before moving/ changing to laying unit</p>	<p>Every third week during laying period in holdings over 250 (at hatchery or holding) + Three weeks before slaughter (if not already included in three weekly sampling)</p>
Competent Authority (official) sampling	<p>None</p>	<p><i>Competent Authority routine official sampling for breeding flocks will usually take place at the hatchery. Positive trace-backs will include sampling at the holding.</i></p> <p>Once a year, all flocks on 10% holdings with at least 250 adult breeding turkeys – taken between 30 and 45 weeks of age – including: All adult flocks on all holdings with elite, great grandparent and holdings with elite, great grandparent and grandparent breeding stock;</p> <p>+ All holdings where <i>S. Enteritidis</i> or <i>S. Typhimurium</i> was detected during the previous 12 months + All flocks on holdings in case of trace-back of <i>S. Enteritidis</i> or <i>S. Typhimurium</i> from samples taken at hatchery/holding by operator/official controls</p>

<p>Samples</p>	<p>DAY OLD</p> <p>10 poult box liners per hatchery source plus all poults found dead or culled on arrival</p> <p><u>FOUR WEEKS of age AND TWO WEEKS BEFORE MOVE TO LAYING PHASE</u></p> <p>Five pairs boot swabs submitted as two batches of five individual boot swabs</p> <p>OR</p> <p>One pair boot swabs and one 900cm² dust swab (submitted separately)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Four hand-held 900cm² dust swabs if <100 turkeys and boot swabbing is impractical</p>	<p>Holding</p> <p>Five pairs boot swabs (submitted as two batches)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>One pair boot swabs and one 900cm² dust swab (submitted separately)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Four hand-held 900cm² dust swabs if <100 turkeys and boot swabbing is impractical (submitted in two batches)</p>	<p>Hatchery</p> <p>Visibly soiled liners from five hatcher baskets covering 1m²</p> <p>OR</p> <p>900cm² swabs from five places in hatchers or hatcher baskets</p> <p>OR</p> <p>10g broken eggshells from each of 25 hatcher baskets</p>
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Where can I obtain Operator sampling equipment?

Approved laboratories will be able to provide advice on where to obtain sampling equipment. They will also be able to advise you on suitable containers for samples. In most cases the laboratory or your vet will be able to supply sampling equipment.

Part III A – How do I take samples at the holding?

It is essential that all samples are correctly labelled and forms fully completed identifying the sample by farm, house number, date the flock was housed, date and time of sampling and as an NCP sample so that the flock from which the samples have been taken can be accurately identified.

Equipment List:

- Disposable over-boots;
- New disposable plastic gloves;
- Sealable bags and sample pots enough for packing boot/gauze swabs and dust samples separately;
- Boot swabs (permeable fabric overshoes, sterile socks or mop caps/hair nets worn over the overshoes);
- Potable water for moistening boot swabs. Clean tap water is suitable, but if there is any doubt as to its quality, use a new (previously unopened) bottle of drinking water without gas. Commercial pre-moistened boot swabs can also be used;
- Packing materials;
- 900cm² fabric hand swabs.

Prior to entering the house, ensure that all necessary equipment (gloves, overshoes, boot swabs, containers, etc.) is assembled so as to prevent cross-contamination during, or after, sampling.

Fattening flocks have the following sampling options:

- a) Two pairs of boot swabs pooled to one sample OR
- b) One pair of boot swabs and one 900cm² dust swab (may be pooled for testing) OR
- c) Four hand-held 900cm² dust swabs: **if** below 100 turkeys **and** boot swabbing is impractical.

The boot swabs can be dispatched in one bag to the lab.

*Breeding flocks **sampled at the holding** have the following sampling options:*

- a) Five pairs of boot swabs pooled into two samples OR
- b) One pair of boot swabs AND one 900cm² dust swab. Keep these samples separate, because at the laboratory the boot swabs and dust samples must be pre-enriched (the first part of the test) as separate samples.

To take boot swabs:

- Ensure that there can be no contamination of swabs prior to use and that the swabs cannot come into contact with disinfectant.
- Plastic over-boots should be put on after stepping through disinfectant boot dips, not before. Contact of the swabs or gloves used during sampling with disinfectant may lead to false negative results for *Salmonella* or positive results for disinfectant and may invalidate the sample.
- If wearing plastic over-boots to enter the house, rather than dedicated waterproof boots for each house, go through the disinfectant boot dips first, then put on a second pair of plastic over-boots before putting on the boot swabs.
- The area to be sampled must represent the entire area to which the birds have access.
- Once the boot swabs are in place, the sampling area should be divided into two (fattening flocks) or five (breeding flocks) equal sectors for sampling.
- Each pair of boot swabs must cover 50% of the house, in the cases of fattening flocks, or 20% in the case of breeding flocks.
- If the house is divided into pens, ensure that all pens are represented in the sampling in a proportionate way.
- Walk with one pair of boot swabs in each sector of the house.
- Take a minimum of 100 steps per pair of boot swabs, ensuring that all areas of the house are sampled as noted above.
- DO NOT sample any outdoor areas in the case of free range turkeys.
- Carefully remove the boot swabs and turn them inside out to retain any material which has stuck onto them.

- Place the swabs in a suitable pot or sealable bag for dispatch to the laboratory, ensuring that they are clearly labelled.
- All boot swabs from any one flock may be pooled into a single container.

To take dust samples:

- Put on new plastic gloves, ensuring that there is no contamination with disinfectant.
- Dust samples are collected using one or more moistened fabric hand swab of at least 900cm².
- Hold the swab and use it to collect dust samples from ledges, partitions, ventilation grills and anywhere dust has settled.
- DO NOT sample from feeding systems.
- Ensure that the swab is opened out fully and used in at least 20 different places from all sections of the house.
- Make sure that both sides of the swab are completely covered with dust.
- Place the swab and dust into a suitable pot or sealable bag for dispatch to the laboratory.

To take hand-held gauze swabs

- These should only be used in houses of <100 birds, where it is not possible to take boot/sock swabs as access to the house is limited **or** the alternative methods noted above are impractical or unsafe to the operator.
- Put on new plastic gloves, ensuring that there is no contamination with disinfectant.
- A gauze swab of at least 900cm² is moistened and opened out fully.
- The pen area, floor and perches (if present) are thoroughly swabbed in several different areas where faecal material has accumulated.
- The entire surface of both sides of the swab should be visibly soiled.
- Place the swab into a suitable pot or sealable bag for dispatch to the laboratory.

Part III B – How do I take samples at the hatchery?

Equipment List:

- Disposable over-boots;
- New disposable plastic gloves;
- Sealable bags and sample pots;
- 900cm² fabric hand swabs;
- Potable water for moistening swabs. Clean tap water is suitable, but if there is any doubt as to its quality, use a new (previously unopened) bottle of drinking water without gas. Commercial pre-moistened swabs can also be used;
- Packing materials.

Prior to entering the hatcher room, ensure that all necessary equipment (gloves, overshoes, hand swabs, containers, etc.) is assembled so as to prevent cross-contamination during, or after sampling.

Breeding flocks **sampled at the hatchery** have the following sampling options:

- a) 10g broken eggshells from each of 25 hatcher baskets (250g total sample) crushed, mixed and sub-sampled to 25g.
- b) Visibly soiled hatcher basket liners covering 1m² (from suitable types of liners only: paper or jute are usually acceptable – foam liners are bulky so you should ensure that the laboratory is prepared to handle such samples).
- c) 900cm² swabs of fluff and debris from five places in hatchers, or five separate hatcher baskets, at take-off.

Please note that if there are more than 50,000 eggs of one flock in hatchers, a second sample must be collected from that flock. It is not mandatory to include a hatcher with eggs from different flocks if at least 80% of the eggs are in other sampled hatchers.

To take eggshell samples:

- Put on two pairs of new plastic gloves, ensuring that there is no contamination with disinfectant.
- Crush and remove >10g of broken eggshells from 25 hatcher baskets.
- Place into a strong plastic bag and further crush with your hand or blunt object.
- Ensure that the bag and your gloves remain intact and undamaged by the shells.
- Mix the total 250g crushed sample thoroughly and re-sample 25g of this.
- Pack and dispatch 25g sub-sample.

To take hatcher basket samples:

- Put on new plastic gloves ensuring that there is no contamination with disinfectant.
- Select visibly soiled hatcher basket liners made from paper or jute.
- Select >1m² of hatcher basket liners from each of five different hatcher baskets that have contained eggs from the breeding flock to be sampled. If very bulky material, such as plastic foam, is used for liners, the broken eggshell sampling method may be preferable.
- Place the liners into a separate plastic bag for each flock.
- Pack and dispatch.

To take hatcher fluff/dust samples:

- Put on new plastic gloves, ensuring that there is no contamination with disinfectant.
- Dust samples are collected using a moistened fabric hand swab of at least 900cm².
- Hold the swab and use it to collect fluff or dust samples from five separate places on the floor and surfaces of the hatcher to be sampled immediately after take-off – before any cleaning.

Alternatively, hand swabs can be taken from five different hatcher baskets before residual material is emptied. This may not be possible where automated tray emptying machines are used.

- Ensure that the swab is opened out fully and that both sides of the swab are completely covered with fluff or dust.
- Place the swab into a suitable pot or sealable bag for dispatch to the laboratory.

Where should these samples be sent?

Samples must be sent to a laboratory which is approved to carry out the necessary tests under the National Control Programme. A list of approved laboratories in Great Britain is available from your local Animal Health Office and on the Defra website at

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/zoonoses/ncp.htm>.

The samples should be sent, at least by first class post but preferably by express mail or courier, to the laboratory on the day of collection (or at the latest 24 hours of the sample being taken). Each sample from each flock should be correctly labelled individually and should indicate the following:

- date and time the sample was taken;
- the identity of the flock sampled including;
 - house name or number;
 - for hatchery samples, the details of the hatcher machine number and hatchery – as well as the breeding flock farm and house that the samples relate to – as detailed below:
 - date, including month and year, that the flock was moved into the house and the house number;
- age of the flock sampled;
- the name and address of the holding;
- the contact details of the person submitting the sample.

You should liaise with the laboratory on the details of dispatching the samples, ideally avoiding sampling late in a working week, which may delay testing of the samples due to postal and other delays.

If I am unable to send the samples on the day of collection, what do I do?

In exceptional circumstances, when samples cannot be sent within 24 hours of being taken, they must be kept refrigerated at 4°C until they are sent to a laboratory. Samples must not be frozen. **Samples MUST be submitted within 48 hours of being taken and testing begun within 96 hours**, otherwise they will not be eligible for testing and a repeat sample will have to be taken.

Will I receive the results of the tests for *Salmonella*?

Normally the laboratory will send the test results to the sender of the sample. If this is not the registered person, the laboratory must also forward a copy to the registered person. If a test proves positive for *Salmonella*, the person in charge of the laboratory must immediately report the result to the appropriate government official, as required under the Zoonoses Order 1989. See Part IV for further information on measures which will be taken in response to a positive sample.

Am I responsible for sampling and laboratory charges?

Owners are responsible for all expenses involved in the sampling and testing required under the NCP, except in the case of some official samples. However, this is subject to further review and changes.

What are Official Control Samples?

Official control samples are those which are collected and tested under the control of an authorised government official. These are collected to provide official verification that the UK target for the control of *Salmonella* in turkey flocks is being met and to confirm whether or not infection is present in other flocks on the site or to trace back possible infection to the flock of origin from hatchery positive samples.

When are Official Control samples collected?

The NCP requires that these samples will be collected on the following occasions:

From **fatteners**:

1. Annually from all flocks on 10% of holdings with an annual throughput of at least 500 fattening turkeys.
2. From all other flocks on a holding after a positive result for SE or ST detected in operator samples in the last 12 months.
3. From all other/newly placed flocks on a holding after a positive result for SE or ST detected at the hatchery through official/operator sampling.

From **breeders**:

4. Annually from all flocks on 10% of holdings with more than 250 adult breeding turkeys. (To be sampled when the birds are between 30 and 45 weeks of age.)
5. Annually from all flocks on holdings with parent breeding elite, great grandparent and grandparent breeding turkeys.
6. From all flocks on a breeding holding following a positive operator sample.

From both **fatteners and breeders**:

7. Flocks with unknown health status (e.g. where there is no evidence of operator sampling on the premises).
8. Flocks with suspect health status. (e.g. if an operator sample at holding returned a positive result there would be official testing prior to any mandatory slaughter).
9. Whenever the Competent Authority deems it is necessary.

Who is responsible for the collection of official control samples?

All of these samples will be collected under the control of the Competent Authority. It is expected that, in most circumstances, they will be collected by government officials or their nominated representatives.

Part IV – What happens if *Salmonella* is detected?

Currently the NCP only applies to SE and ST. Free advice and assistance will be available from the Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA) (who may visit your holding) and Animal Health (AH) on measures which can be taken to control SE or ST on the holding. Defra has also published guidance on the control of *Salmonella* on-farm which is available on Defra-web:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/farmanimal/diseases/atoz/zoonoses/salmonella-cop.htm>

You are also advised to contact your local veterinary surgeon for help and advice.

My fattening flock has returned a positive operator sample – what happens next?

If *Salmonella* Enteritidis (SE) or *Salmonella* Typhimurium (ST) is detected in an operator sample you should be immediately informed by the testing laboratory.

Official samples, will then be collected by the Competent Authority from all other flocks on the holding at the time, if the flocks are still present.

The Competent Authority will also sample all flocks in the next crop of turkeys on the holding. If any of the samples from follow-on crops of birds return a positive result for SE or ST, the holding will be placed under restriction under the Zoonoses Order and it will only be possible to move birds off the holding under licence. Supervised cleansing and disinfection, and further official sampling will be required.

A further official sample will be collected from all flocks on the holding in the subsequent crop. If these samples are also positive for SE or ST, the restriction notice remains in place and supervised cleansing and disinfection is again required. Restocking may only take place under licence, after negative sampling results in the cleaned and disinfected houses.

If you do get a positive result as described above, a government veterinarian may visit your holding to provide advice on *Salmonella* control. The possible steps are set out in further detail in annex I.

What happens if my fattening flock returns a positive result from a routine official control sample?

If SE or ST is detected in an official routine control sample, the same measures explained above will also be taken.

What happens to the meat from a positive flock?

The Food Hygiene Legislation requires producers to inform processors of the results of any *Salmonella* testing as food chain information. Processors knowingly accepting a flock that has tested positive for *Salmonella* must take approved steps to control the hazard and minimise any risk of cross-contamination to slaughter and processing equipment and carcasses from negative flocks.

My breeding flock has returned a positive operator sample at the hatchery – what happens next?

The source of the infection needs to be determined by trace-back to the flock of origin. All flocks on the holding(s) of origin will be sampled by the Competent Authority. If *S. Enteritidis* or *S. Typhimurium* is confirmed by the Competent Authority, **the flock(s) will be required to be slaughtered**. Any hatching eggs from the affected flocks, which have been in the hatchery since the time the flock was suspected of being infected, must be destroyed and the hatchery will be put under restriction. An audit of the hatchery will normally be carried out to ensure that contamination has not become resident. Removal of a restriction notice will be dependent on negative results from official sampling after cleaning and disinfection.

My breeding flock has returned a positive operator sample at the holding – what happens next?

The Competent Authority will take further samples from the affected flock(s). If *S. Enteritidis* or *S. Typhimurium* is confirmed by the Competent Authority, **the flock will be required to be slaughtered**. Any hatching eggs from the affected flock, which have been in the

hatchery since the time the flock was suspected of being infected, must be destroyed. All other flocks on the holding will also then be sampled by the Competent Authority, and affected flocks will be placed under restrictions.

What happens if my breeding flock returns a positive result from a routine official control sample?

An official control sample taken from the holding returning a positive result for SE or ST will result in the **requirement for immediate slaughter of the flock**.

An official control sample taken from the hatchery returning a positive result requires trace-back to the flocks of origin and official sampling of that flock will follow.

If breeding birds from positive flocks are to enter the human food chain, then the same microbiological criteria as applied to the meat from fattening turkeys from positive flocks will apply.

Who should I inform about positive results?

The laboratory result should be recorded as Food Chain Information and be made available to the processor.

Further information

Where can I get further information and application forms?

For further information about the requirements of the legislation, and to obtain an application form for registration, please see the Defra website at **www.defra.gov.uk/animalh**

You can also contact your local Animal Health Office or Divisional Veterinary Office, whose address and telephone number can be found at **www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/** or **www.dardni.gov.uk**

Copies of the relevant legislation can be purchased from HMSO/TSO online bookshop:

www.opsi.gov.uk/

Further copies of this leaflet are available free of charge from: Defra Publications, Admail 6000, London SW1A 2XX or by calling 08459 556000.

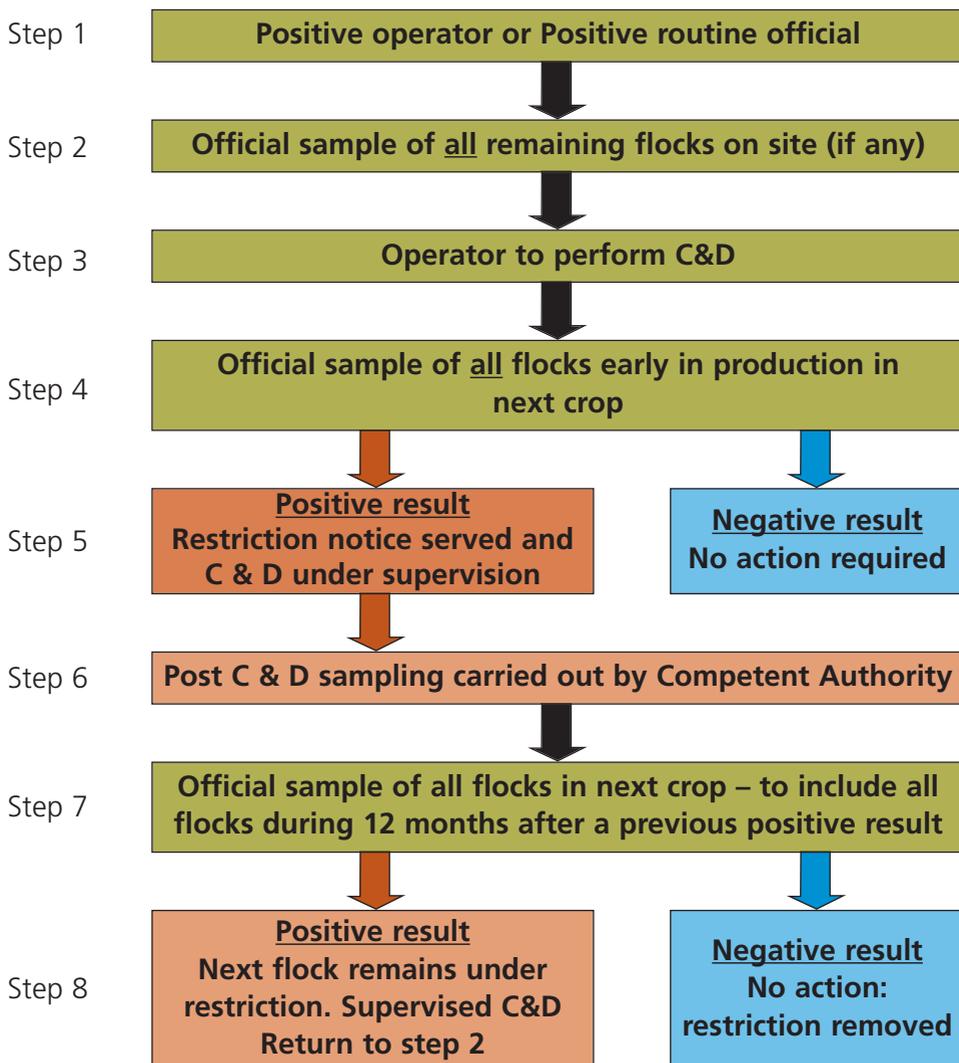
A Code of Practice for the prevention and control of *Salmonella* in turkey flocks is also available, free of charge, from Defra Publications.

Further information on how to collect samples can be found at the Defra website at www.defra.gov.uk/animalh

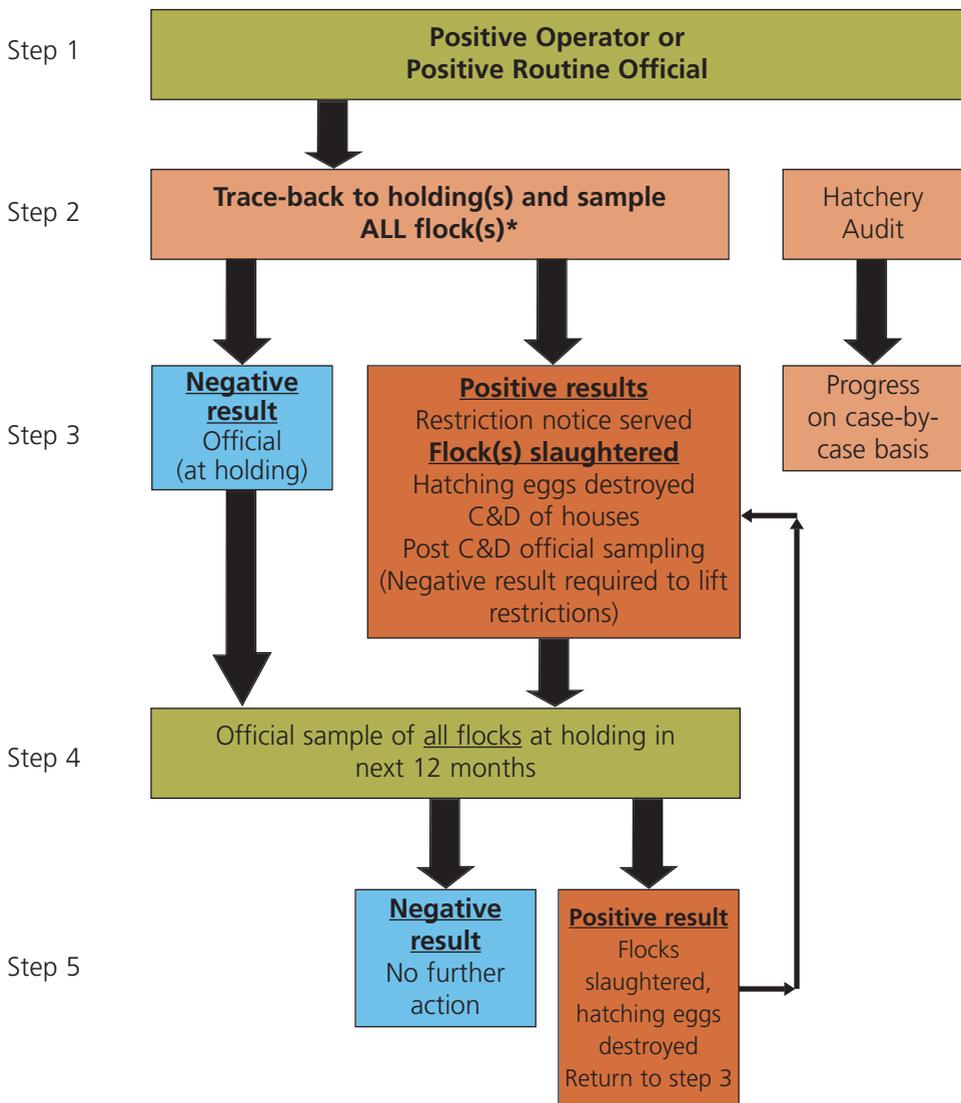
Annex – Summary

Please note the following flow charts are for guidance only and, each case will be assessed individually and appropriate actions taken at the time.

If a sample in a **fattening flock** is positive for *Salmonella* Enteritidis or *Salmonella* Typhimurium, the following steps may take place.

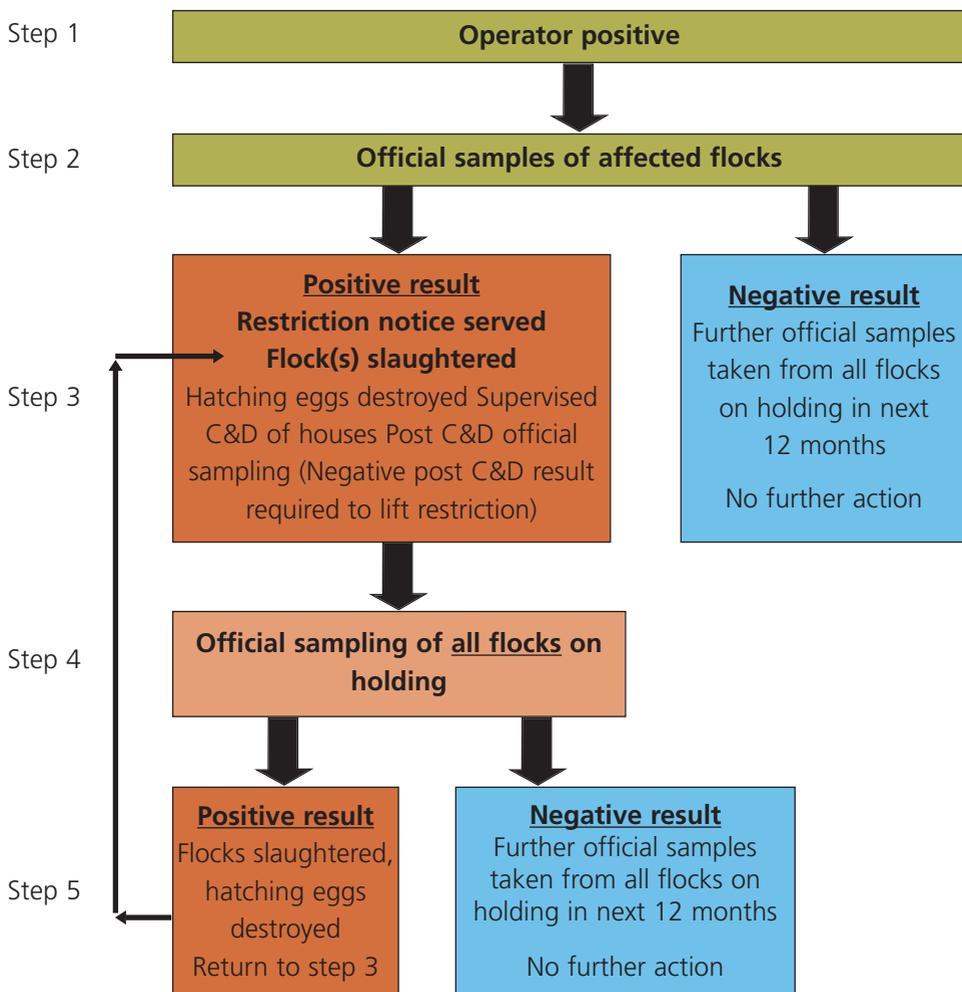


If an operator sample (or an official routine) in a **breeding flock at HATCHERY** is positive for *Salmonella* Enteritidis or *Salmonella* Typhimurium, the following steps may take place.



* sampling of all flocks is necessary after positive hatchery samples in order to minimise the risk of error in the trace-back from hatchery to flock

If an operator sample in a **breeding flock at HOLDING** is positive for *Salmonella* Enteritidis or *Salmonella* Typhimurium, the following steps may take place.



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