



Salmonella Testing Policy

amended March 2024

INTRODUCTION:

Following the identification of intact shell eggs as a possible source of *Salmonella enteritidis* (S.e.) in cases of human food poisoning in the 1980s, egg industries worldwide became sensitized to the potential consequences to consumers and their confidence in the safety of table eggs.

While Egg Farmers of Ontario (EFO) manages the testing program and supports quota holders with Salmonella incidents, they don't assume responsibility for testing outcomes, clean-up, or eggs sold from affected flocks. Quota holders are continually reminded that maintaining a Salmonella-free environment is their sole responsibility.

All samples in Ontario are tested by the Agriculture and Food Lab at the University of Guelph, using Salmonella PCR, S. Enteritidis PCR and culture methods.

Therefore, EFO has established the following S.e. testing policy:

1. All layer flocks must be tested twice per flock; first test between 19 and 35 weeks of age, second test after 55 weeks of age and not later than 4 weeks prior to flock depopulation.
 - For those flocks participating in an extended lay program, the barn is tested again within a month, if the flock moves facilities.
2. All pullet flocks must be tested once per flock; between 10-14 weeks of age.

PROCEDURE: ON-FARM SAMPLING

1. Sampling can only be completed by EFO inspectors, or designated personnel, who have been trained in the proper technique for salmonella testing.
2. One sampling kit is used per flock.
3. Samples are taken from the floor, ventilation system (fans), egg belts or roll-out, and manure/litter or any other suitable area as determined by the inspector.
4. Samples are shipped overnight to the laboratory or dropped off directly at the lab.
5. Effective January 1, 2024, new or renovated facilities must be S.e. tested after disinfection and prior to chicks or pullets being housed. A minimum of 4 weeks is required to allow for test turn-around and re-cleaning.
6. Effective January 1, 2024, layer or grow-out facilities are no longer permitted to be used for multiple species (excludes pullet to layer transitions). For example, a barn cannot be used for pullets one flock and then turkeys the next, and then back to pullets.

PROCEDURE: RESULTS

There are three possible outcomes from the testing:

- Negative – The results are uploaded to EFOonline or sent via mail for those farmers that are non-digital.
- Salmonella positive, not S.e. – The results are uploaded to EFOonline or sent via mail for those farmers that are non-digital.
- Salmonella enteritidis positive – Layers:
 1. The quota holder is promptly informed via phone, by Operations Department staff, after which the grading station is alerted. Concurrently, Operations Department staff notifies the Poultry Insurance Exchange (PIE) to initiate the insurance claim procedure.
 2. No retesting will be completed.
 3. EFO reserves the right to direct the use of eggs from an impacted flock based on market conditions.



4. All S.e. positive flocks will be depopulated as directed by EFO. In multi-barn complexes, if one barn tests positive, it is depopulated immediately, irrespective of egg demand. This action is taken to prevent S.e. from spreading to adjacent barns.
 5. Eggs from all other barns in a multi-barn complex are held or sent to industrial product until all the other barns have been tested (re-tested even if tested on same day as positive facility).
 6. The quota holder must undertake an intensive cleaning and disinfection of the premises following depopulation, including a full wet wash.
 7. After cleaning and disinfection, an S.e. test is mandatory. Repopulation can only proceed once negative results are confirmed.
 8. A minimum of four weeks is required for cleaning and testing, ensuring sufficient time for potential re-cleaning and re-testing should the initial test return positive.
 9. Additional environmental samples are taken following the placement of the new flock, for a total of four tests for that flock.
 10. All pullets being placed into the facility for the following flock must be vaccinated for S.e. It is highly recommended that all following flocks be vaccinated.
 11. Eggs will not be tested due to the difficulty of testing egg samples and the low incidence of S.e. in eggs, even from known S.e. positive hens. Eggs from flocks with an environmental detection of S.e. positive will not undergo subsequent testing.
 12. The sale of farm gate eggs is not permitted from a positive S.e. flock.
- **Salmonella enteritidis positive – Pullets:**
 1. The pullet quota holder is promptly informed via phone, by Operations Department staff, after which the hatchery is alerted. Concurrently, Operations Department staff notifies PIE to initiate the insurance claim procedure.
 2. If the grower is not the owner, they are responsible for informing the owner or contractor.
 3. Pullets on the premises are required to be depopulated as soon as possible.
 4. The quota holder must undertake an extensive clean-up and disinfection of the premises following depopulation, including a full wet wash.
 5. After cleaning and disinfection, an S.e. test is mandatory. Repopulation can only proceed once negative results are confirmed.
 6. A minimum of four weeks is required for cleaning and testing, ensuring sufficient time for potential re-cleaning and re-testing should the initial test return positive.
 7. Additional environmental samples are taken following the placement of the new flock, for a total of two tests for that flock.
 8. All pullets in this facility for the following flock must be vaccinated for S. e. It is highly recommended that all following flocks be vaccinated.