



## WHO Global Salm-Surv - Building Global Capacity and Connections

### What is WHO Global Salm-Surv?

WHO Global Salm-Surv is a program consisting of institutions and individuals committed to enhancing the capacity of national ministries of health and national reference laboratories to detect, respond, and prevent foodborne and other infectious, enteric diseases. The program promotes integrated, laboratory-based surveillance and outbreak detection and response, and fosters inter-sectoral collaboration and communication among microbiologists and epidemiologists in human health, veterinary, and food-related disciplines.

### Why was WHO Global Salm-Surv created?

A WHO survey conducted in the last decade revealed a lack of basic infrastructure for laboratory-based *Salmonella* surveillance in up to one third of WHO member states (Herikstad H, et al. *Epidemiology and Infection*, 2002). Recognizing the public health importance of foodborne disease, including *Salmonella*, and the need to enhance capacity for laboratory-based surveillance, the World Health Organization, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Danish Institute for Food and Veterinary Research founded WHO Global Salm-Surv in January 2000.

### Who participates in WHO Global Salm-Surv?

There are currently over 900 WHO Global Salm-Surv individual members from National Reference Laboratories and other national and regional institutes in public health, veterinary and food-related disciplines in 142 countries. WHO Global Salm-Surv members are microbiologists and epidemiologists who work in public health, veterinary medicine, food-related services or environmental health.

### What does WHO Global Salm-Surv entail?

WHO Global Salm-Surv has six program components: international training courses, the Electronic Discussion Group, External Quality Assurance System, Global *Salmonella* Country Databank, focused regional and national projects, and antisera and reference testing services. Our major program component is our international training courses.

WHO Global Salm-Surv conducts training courses at 14 sites around the world. Typically, 30-40 participants from 10-12 countries attend each week-long training course. Courses are basic, intermediate, or advanced depending on the skills needed in each region. To date the program has held over 45 international training courses in Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Russian for over 800 microbiologists and epidemiologists from over 120 countries.

### Why is WHO Global Salm-Surv important to public health?

The WHO Global Salm-Surv Vision states, "*Foodborne and other infectious enteric diseases are a common cause of illness disability and death worldwide. We believe they are preventable and therefore, place an unnecessary burden on society. Our vision is that all countries will prevent and control these diseases.*" Each year, foodborne illness caused by *Salmonella* and other infectious enteric pathogens cost U.S. companies and consumers millions of dollars in medical and labor costs. However, what is the impact of these outbreaks in other countries? Is there enough surveillance capacity for outbreak detection and response to take place? Many foodborne disease outbreaks in many countries go undetected in part, due to lack of training and communication between the human, veterinary, and food sectors. WHO Global Salm-Surv is working to reverse this trend.

### What activities have WHO Global Salm-Surv conducted in the Middle East?

WHO Global Salm-Surv has conducted four training courses attended by microbiologists and epidemiologists in the region. In March 2007, WHO Global Salm-Surv, in collaboration with the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO) and the Naval Medical Research Unit No. 3 (NAMRU-3), conducted the Level IV Advanced Workshop in Cairo, Egypt. Thirty-nine epidemiologists and microbiologists from public health, food, and veterinary institutions, including the Field Epidemiology Training Programs in the region, participated from the following countries: Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. The workshop focused on surveillance, outbreak response, and burden of illness studies on *Salmonella* Typhi and *Brucella*; bench top laboratory training in serotyping of *Salmonella* Typhi; isolation, identification, and PCR techniques on *Salmonella* Typhi and *Brucella*; and hands-on basic and intermediate techniques on Epi-Info.

### What are the future activities for WHO Global Salm-Surv?

WHO Global Salm-Surv plans to further its impact globally by adding new training sites and projects in the Pacific, Southern African, and Western European regions. WHO Global Salm-Surv program activities will continue to enhance laboratory-based surveillance of foodborne diseases and result in improved outbreak detection and response globally, thereby reducing the global burden of foodborne diseases.