

February 24, 2003

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Dr. Mark B. McClellan, Commissioner  
Food & Drug Administration  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Dr. McClellan:

There has been a disturbing rise in human illnesses caused by Salmonella enteritidis in the Southeastern United States and is changing in the rest of the country.

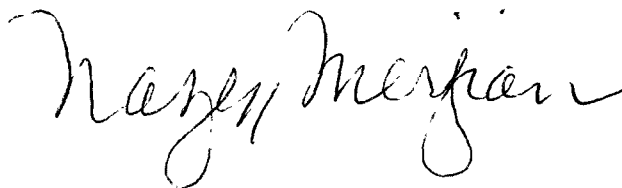
SE infection is primarily associated with egg consumption. Egg farms have grown bigger and housing for hens more crowded. Studies show that large farms with over 100,000 laying hens are much more likely to harbor SE than are small farms.

SE contamination in flocks can be reduced by testing for contamination and by using various biosecurity measures. State sponsored programs requiring on-farm testing for Salmonella can reduce the number of people who sicken. However, these programs are still voluntary for egg producers. They ought not to be.

The best way to control SE infections is to combine on-farm testing and control programs with the elimination of the inhumane practices on factory farms.

We request that the FDA publish the proposed Egg Safety Action Plan.

Sincerely,



Nazen Merjian  
VFA

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