

SALMONELLA, E. COLI AND CAMPYLOBACTER SPP. IN WORKING FARM DOGS IN NEW ZEALAND AND THEIR HOME-KILL DIETS

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Campylobacter spp. are the main cause of bacterial gastroenteritis in humans in New Zealand. Dogs have been shown to be carriers of *Campylobacters* and the organisms are suspected to be commensal in this species. Working in farm environments is a risk factor for campylobacteriosis in people and, as New Zealand has a very high number of working dogs on farms, the dogs may have a role in the epidemiology of campylobacteriosis. In addition, *Campylobacter* spp. may act as a primary or secondary pathogen in dogs and farm environment may be a risk factor for dogs

Raw (thawed from frozen) home-kill meat is often used in the working dogs' diet in this country and previous reports have confirmed the presence of zoonotic bacteria on commercial raw meat diets with *Salmonella* spp. and *E. coli* commonly isolated in studies abroad. *Campylobacter* spp. was isolated from commercial raw meat diets purchased in Palmerston North (Acke *et al.* 2011). The prevalence of *E. coli*, *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* spp. has not been investigated previously in working dogs or recovered from home-kill diets. A pilot study was performed across sheep and beef farms in the Manawatu region investigating healthy working dogs and their home-kill diets. Bacteriological samples were collected from working dogs and thawed frozen diet samples. In addition, a questionnaire was designed to document common practices on farms with regard to management of working dogs and handling and storage of home-kill meat to identify possible risk factors to both people and dogs for contracting campylobacteriosis and salmonellosis.