

A sociological study of poultry farmers' attitudes to *Campylobacter* control.

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### **Summary**

A multi-disciplinary 4-year project (OZ0608) aims to develop practical control measures for *Campylobacter* in broiler flocks. One component of the project is to obtain information on poultry farmers' attitudes to biosecurity, and, more specifically, the control of *Campylobacter*. In this study, up to 20 broiler farmers are being interviewed and the data analysed using recognised sociological techniques. The results will be used to inform the design of a questionnaire for a larger survey of broiler farmers. This work is being conducted in parallel with the development of strain-specific *Campylobacter* probes and longitudinal field studies.

### **Introduction**

There is increasing interest in the development of national control programmes for *Campylobacter* in poultry because of its public health importance and these will require evidence-based on-farm practical control strategies. This project aims to develop practical control measures for *Campylobacter* in broiler flocks using a multidisciplinary approach involving epidemiological studies, novel molecular tools, quantitative risk assessment and farmer surveys.

### **Objectives**

The aim of this initial farmer survey is to obtain information on poultry farmers' attitudes to biosecurity, and, more specifically, the control of *Campylobacter*, prior to conducting a larger survey of broiler farmers.

### **Materials and Methods**

Up to 20 farmers who have day-to-day management responsibilities on broiler farms are being interviewed using recognised sociological techniques ('grounded theory'; Strauss and Corbin 1990). Farmers are asked about the application of general biosecurity measures, and more specifically about *Campylobacter* and options for its control in their broiler flocks. Questions include the following: "How do you view *Campylobacter* and its control?", "What do you perceive are the benefits of control to be?", "What control measures do you currently use and why?", "What control measures might you adopt in the future?", "What would encourage you to adopt other measures?", "What are the constraints to adopting these measures?". The interviews are conducted by one of two operators and transcribed from a tape into a Word text document before analysis using a qualitative data analysis programme, MAXQDA (VERBI Software, Berlin 2001; [www.maxqda.com](http://www.maxqda.com)).

## **Results**

To be presented in the poster.

## **Discussion**

This project is using new approaches to investigate potential control measures for *Campylobacter* on broiler farms in the UK. Here we describe the initial survey of farmers that will be used to design, with industry, a large-scale survey of poultry farmers' attitudes to biosecurity, and more specifically the control of *Campylobacter*. The optimal adoption of a control package developed in the main project will depend on many factors including the cost and perceived benefits of control measures, the farmer's self-interest (ie, non-economic aspects), and the risk/uncertainty and informational complexity of the package (Pannell 2003). This project aims to address these different aspects and work with industry to ensure that the proposed control package is cost-effective and feasible.

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## **References**

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