

raised for backyard use (i.e., meat and egg production for the family). *S. Infantis* with the outbreak PFGE pattern was recovered from three of 47 environmental samples and five of 33 bird samples taken at the hatchery. Other *Salmonella* serotypes also were isolated from the environmental samples, including serotypes Montevideo (seven), Chester (one), and Mbandaka (one).

Missouri

In April 1999, the Missouri Department of Health (MDOH) noted a cluster of *Salmonella* serotype Typhimurium infections with an identical PFGE pattern; 40 case-patients were identified with onset of illness during April 4--May 30, 1999. The ages of infected persons ranged from 8 months to 46 years (mean: 13 years); 28 (70%) were age <20 years; 23 (58%) were male. Symptoms reported by the 33 patients interviewed included fever (42%), bloody diarrhea (27%), stomach cramps (27%), and vomiting (21%). Three patients were hospitalized. Overall, 32 (97%) persons reported exposure to young fowl: 18 (56%) were exposed to chicks, 10 (31%) to ducklings, three (9%) to both chicks and ducklings, and one (3%) to a young turkey.

MDOH conducted a case-control study of persons exposed to chicks or ducklings to identify whether specific behaviors were associated with illness. Twenty case-patients were enrolled; 40 controls who had been exposed to chicks and ducklings during the same time were identified through media advertisements and word-of-mouth. During the 4 weeks before onset of patient illness, chicks or ducklings that were identified as ill by the patient or handler were associated with human illness (odds ratio [OR]=21; 95% CI=2--508); handwashing after handling fowl was protective against illness (OR=0.0; 95% CI=0.0--0.2).

Legislative Efforts

During February 2000, CDC contacted 51 state and territorial public health departments to ascertain laws on the sale of baby fowl to noncommercial distributors and private persons; 28 (55%) responded. Ten (36%) states have laws restricting the sale of baby fowl for noncommercial purposes, including the sale of fowl aged <3 weeks (Indiana and Maryland), <4 weeks (Ohio and Pennsylvania), <8 weeks (Massachusetts and Virginia), and <12 weeks (Connecticut). In addition, Connecticut, Ohio, and Virginia require fowl to be sold in groups of greater than five birds. Illinois prohibits the sale of chicks during the Easter season, and Kansas requires persons to have a temporary or permanent license to sell chicks.

Reported by: S Bidol, MPH, MG Stobierski, DVM, B Robinson-Dunn, PhD, J Massey, DrPH, W Hall, MD, M Boulton, MD, State Epidemiologist, Michigan Dept of Community Health. M Warwick, MD, M Borst, S Wiedlocher, Missouri Dept of Health. State Br, Div of Applied Public Health Training, Epidemiology Program Office; Foodborne and Diarrheal Diseases Br, Div of Bacterial and Mycotic Diseases, National Center for Infectious Diseases; and an EIS Officer, CDC.

Editorial Note:

Although most of the 1.4 million human salmonellosis cases that occur annually in the United States are caused by foodborne sources (1), direct contact with animals, particularly reptiles and occasionally birds, also may be a source of infection (2--4). Most reptiles and many birds shed *Salmonella* in their feces. Humans become infected when contaminated food, hands, or other

objects are placed in the mouth; therefore, handwashing is critical to prevent *Salmonella* infections following direct or indirect contact with animals. The Missouri outbreak described in this report and previous outbreaks (3,4) demonstrate that handling young fowl can be a risk for *Salmonella* infections, particularly in children who receive fowl as gifts during Easter; children have more frequent hand-to-mouth contact and are less likely to practice handwashing after handling fowl. The Michigan outbreak describes the risk for infection associated with the backyard production of fowl.

Prevention efforts, such as sales restrictions and consumer education, may be difficult because selling pet fowl and raising backyard fowl are largely unregulated. Several states responding to the survey reported laws that restrict the sale of chicks, ducklings, and other young fowl. Some of these restrictions are based on previous reports of chick-associated and duckling-associated salmonellosis during Easter (5). Enforcement also may be difficult because young fowl can be purchased by mail and Internet orders from out-of-state hatcheries. State-mandated point-of-sale educational material may be effective in educating consumers about the risk for salmonellosis. States may wish to join Michigan and Missouri in issuing a press release during the spring of 2000 to raise public awareness about the risk for *Salmonella* infections posed by young fowl. MDCH, MDA, and MDOH have developed safety instructions to be distributed with young fowl that emphasize the importance of handwashing and supervision of young children interacting with young fowl.

To prevent the transmission of *Salmonella* from chicks, ducklings, and other young fowl to humans, persons should avoid contact with feces and carefully wash their hands with soap and water after handling young fowl or anything that has come in contact with them. Chicks, ducklings, and other young fowl may not be appropriate pets for children and should not be kept in households with infants, children aged <5 years, or immunocompromised persons. During investigations of *Salmonella* infections, especially during spring and Easter, health-care workers and public health personnel should consider contact with young fowl as a potential source and obtain cultures from these animals if they are suspected as the source of infection.

References

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**Petition to the City of Binghamton City Council and Mayor Regarding
the Community Food System Zoning Proposal**

Whereas:

1. The City of Binghamton, as a result of declining population, aging housing stock, and repeated flooding is left with dozens of blighted and abandoned homes, as well as vacant lots;
2. The city lacks the resources to properly maintain and secure these blighted and vacated properties, and residents or investors are not interested in purchasing, maintaining and securing those properties;
3. Community gardening and urban farming has been the most consistently successful way of inexpensively maintaining and securing those properties by engaging the surrounding community to put those properties into productive use by transforming them from blight into a community asset;
4. Community gardening on vacant lots tends to result in individuals developing their own personal gardens on their lawns and backyards;
5. This proliferation of community gardening activities brings individuals out of their homes, and into contact with one another in conviviality and delight while increasing property values, as documented in studies across the country;
6. Composting food and yard waste contributes to the overall health of community and household gardens, as well as lowering the overall volume of waste produced by residents of the city;
7. Compost, not being defined within the Codes of Ordinance, is left up to the discretion of individuals and communities to define, and has resulted in confusing situations for Code Enforcement, neighbors, and people who compost;
8. Small flocks of chickens, and colonies of rabbits have been permitted within the city for decades;
9. Small flocks of chickens, and colonies of rabbits contribute to healthy compost, flourishing gardens, and self-sufficient households and communities;
10. The proliferation of community food production on yards and formerly vacant properties necessarily requires pollinating insects;
11. Bees are already being kept in movable frame hives in the city;
12. Feral colonies of bees tend to proliferate in poorly maintained, and abandoned properties;
13. Feral colonies of bees tend to be more aggressive than colonies of bees kept in movable frame hives;
14. Urban beekeepers tend to be the best recourse for extracting hives from abandoned homes and vacant lots within cities, and consequently maintaining them in the more controllable environment of a movable frame hive;
15. Bees are currently neither allowed, nor disallowed within the Codes of Ordinance, and clear guidance within the code will allow for controlled, scalable apiculture to take place in the city;
16. Keeping chickens, ducks, rabbits, and bees, as well as cultivating fruits and vegetables out of the earth occasionally results in more bounty than can readily be consumed;

17. Allowing individuals to sell excess production is consistent with the highest ideals and entrepreneurial spirit that is the backbone of our city, our state, and our country;
18. Urban agriculture is promoted and practiced heavily by young people in cities throughout the Northeast, and the rest of the country;
19. The decline in population of the City of Binghamton, owing in part to the flight of young people from the area and sometimes referred to as Brain Drain, is steadily and effectively being counterbalanced by enthusiastic, civic-minded young people remaining and returning to the area with the help of urban agriculture, and the vibrant communities it is helping to create;
20. Supporting this trend in urban agriculture will aid in Retaining Brains, which is clearly in the best interest of the City of Binghamton, as well as the communities in which those young people live;
21. Agricultural activities necessarily bring young people and their more experienced elders together into a symbiotic and time-honored tradition of intergenerational cooperation and collaboration which fosters respect and mutual appreciation;
22. Defining the many beneficial activities mentioned above and implied by community gardening and urban agriculture will allow for their proliferation within the city along a course that respects both individual rights, and the best interests of neighborhoods and communities.

Therefore, the below signed do hereby petition City Council and the Mayor of Binghamton to pass the Community Food System Zoning Amendment Proposal in its entirety, and without further delay.

Name	Signature	Address
Sylvia Votey	Sylvia Votey	35 Midwood Dr. Bing. 13903
Vietong Monico	Vietong Monico	99 Highland Ave Bing 13905
Mariella Millien	Mariella Millien	33 Walnut St Bing 13905
Marsha Huntton	Marsha Huntton	152 Maple St 110 13903
Jessie Partridge	Jessie Partridge	52 Lincoln Ave, Bing. 13905
Traey Sager	Traey Sager	5 Everett St Bing NY 13905
Becky Robinson	Becky Robinson	17 Wilcox St. Bing 13904