

Report on zoonoses and zoonotic agents in Austria 2012

The present Report on Zoonoses is intended to give a general overview on the occurrence of zoonotic agents in food-producing animals, in foodstuffs, and in humans and also on the incidence of food-borne outbreaks in Austria in 2012. In Austria, a decline in human cases has been observed for many zoonotic agents. This is due to the successful control of zoonoses in the animal production, in part by maintaining the official disease-free status for certain epizootics; these facts also reflect the excellent cooperation between veterinarians, farmers and the food industry in combating food-borne zoonoses.

In the EU and also in Austria the numbers of campylobacteriosis cases in humans are either increasing or remaining at a high level. Control measures for *Campylobacter* turned out to be very difficult and complex; in response, a platform called "Campylobacter – a concern to everyone" was launched in June 2012. Experts in the fields of human and veterinary medicine and food, as well as representatives from industry, several authorities, the poultry health service, trade organizations and others were assembled to discuss strategies against *Campylobacter* in the Austrian broiler production chain and the impact of *Campylobacter* on human health in Austria.

Besides the measures undertaken by food producers and authorities to control zoonoses along the food chain, the consumers also must be involved. As information about incidence of infectious diseases, safe food handling, and the proper preparation of possibly contaminated foodstuffs is available to the public, the consumer also must take responsibility for safe meals. Consumers ask for naturally-produced foodstuffs but also that the product is free of pathogens. Animals can harbour human pathogens without falling ill or showing any symptoms of disease. If all human pathogens are eliminated during food production, as a consequence other microorganisms, such as those needed to mature certain foods or that ensure the unique taste of a certain dish, are also erased. Therefore it is of utmost importance for consumers to properly store and also carefully and appropriately prepare foodstuffs.