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Report on the monitoring of zoonoses and food-borne disease outbreaks

Data for 2019

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Summary

In 2019, campylobacteriosis was once again the zoonosis most commonly recorded in humans. A total of 7,223 cases of campylobacteriosis that had been confirmed by laboratory diagnosis were reported. This corresponds to a reporting rate of 84 new infections per 100,000 inhabitants. This is a slight decrease compared to 2018 (7,675 cases). In most cases, humans are infected by contaminated food, with poultry meat being the main source of infection. The bacterium, which is infectious for humans, occurs naturally in the gut of chickens and does not pose a threat to their health.

The second most common zoonosis in Switzerland is salmonellosis. A total of 1,547 cases of salmonellosis in humans that had been confirmed by laboratory diagnosis were reported in 2019, corresponding to a reporting rate of 18 new infections per 100,000 inhabitants. The number of cases increased slightly compared with 2018 (1,467). The number of salmonellosis cases in animals (90 cases) decreased slightly compared with 2018 (98 cases). Cattle, reptiles, dogs and cats were mainly affected.

With a total of 993 confirmed cases, the number of infections with verotoxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (VTEC) in humans increased again in 2019 (822 cases in 2018). The resulting reporting rate of 11.5 new infections per 100,000 inhabitants is the highest since mandatory reporting was introduced in 1999. The main cause of this increase is thought to be the increased testing for VTEC due to new technological methods and the associated more frequent detection of cases.

A total of 103 cases of Q fever were reported in 2019, corresponding to a reporting rate of 1.2 new infections per 100,000 inhabitants and a doubling of the number of cases since 2018. This increase is largely due to an outbreak in spring in the canton of Ticino. The outbreak was most likely linked to two infected goat herds.

In 2019, a total of 162 cases of tularaemia in humans were reported, corresponding to 1.9 cases per 100,000 inhabitants. The number of cases has more than doubled since 2016. Tick bites were the main source of infection.

Outbreaks of food-borne diseases have been rare in Switzerland for years. In the year under review, 23 such incidents were reported. Although twice as high as in 2018 (12 incidents), this figure remains low.