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# Poultry Pointers

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**UPDATE:  
SALMONELLA  
ENTERITIDIS  
INFECTIONS AND  
SHELL EGGS, 1990**

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Salmonella Enteritidis (SE) is a pathogenic (disease producing) bacterium that can cause severe foodborne disease outbreaks.

During 1985-1989, state and territorial health departments reported 244 SE outbreaks, which accounted for 8607 cases of illness, 1094 hospitalizations, and 44 deaths.

Of the 109 outbreaks in which a food vehicle was identified, 89 (82 percent) were associated with shell eggs.

From January through October in both 1989 and 1990, 49 outbreaks were reported. Four (8 percent) of the 49 outbreaks reported in 1990 occurred in hospitals or nursing homes, compared with 20 (26 percent) of the 77 outbreaks in 1989.

The decrease in hospital- and nursing home-associated SE outbreaks may reflect efforts to improve food safety in these settings (in particular, using pasteurized eggs).

Although infections with SE

first emerged as a public health problem in the New England and mid-Atlantic regions, 22 (45 percent) of the 49 outbreaks reported in 1990 occurred outside these areas.

Most cases of SE infection occur as sporadic cases or in limited family outbreaks. Many of these sporadic cases and limited outbreaks may be associated with consumption of contaminated eggs that have been insufficiently cooked to kill Salmonella. Therefore, the occurrence of infections acquired by eating foods prepared in the kitchens of private homes might be reduced by improved education of consumers regarding the risks of eating raw or undercooked eggs and by increased availability of pasteurized eggs.

To reduce the risk for SE infection in other settings, such as nursing homes and hospitals, pasteurized egg products should be used in recipes that call for undercooking or pooling of eggs. Similarly, commercial food service establishments can reduce the risk of outbreaks by using pasteurized egg products in such recipes.

An estimated 0.01 percent (i.e., one in 10,000) of shell eggs contain SE. Consequently, foods containing raw or undercooked eggs (e.g., homemade eggnog, hollandaise sauce, and Caesar salad dressing) pose an occasional risk of infection with SE.

The likelihood of serious mor-

bidity or death as a result of infection with SE is greatest among very young, elderly, or immunocompromised persons — these persons should be especially careful not to eat foods containing raw

or undercooked eggs.

Commercial eggnog is made with pasteurized eggs and is safe.

Source: "Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 1990." 39:909-912.

Consumers with questions on poultry, meat products, and other perishable foods can call USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays, Eastern Standard Time.

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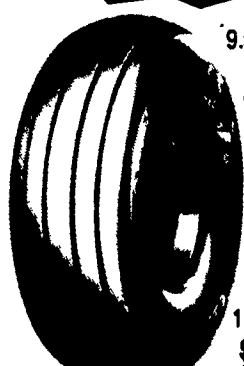


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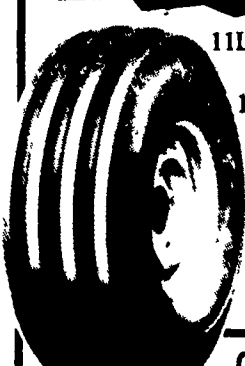
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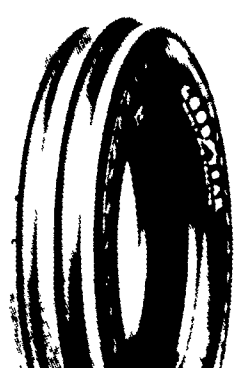
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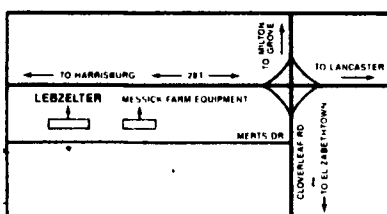
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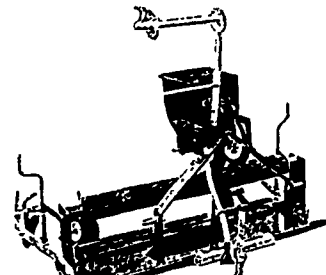
**1-800-932-3999 OR 367-6777**

(For Pennsylvania & Maryland)

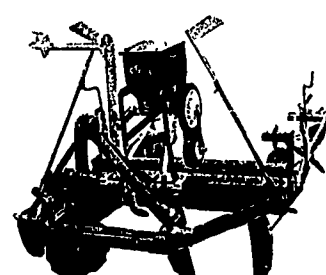
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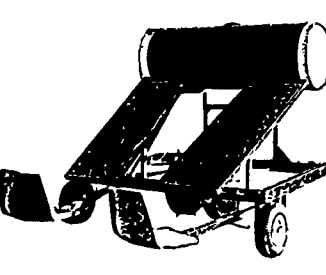
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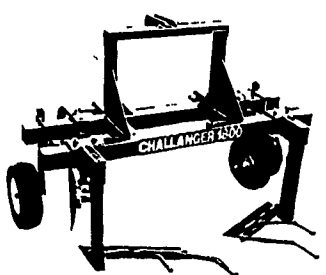
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