

Salmonella

Salmonella is an enteric microorganism associated with the intestinal tract of many animals and thus is potentially present in most raw meats. *Salmonella* is recognized as a potential problem in salted, dried meats. Illness is usually caused by ingestion of sufficient microorganisms to survive digestion and reproduce in the human intestinal tract.

Fortunately, salmonellae are heat sensitive and easily destroyed with the mild heat treatments for cooking meat. Also, salmonellae are acid sensitive, not surviving well in fermented meats, and are not good competitors, being inhibited by the lactic starter cultures. They are also sensitive to meat curing practices. Salmonellae have not been a problem with fermented sausages if the product is properly fermented using an appropriate starter culture. *Salmonella* not only survives drying but also becomes more heat resistant with drying and is more of an issue in non-fermented dried meats, such as jerky, and whole meat cuts, such as dried hams.

Control mechanisms include proper temperature and sanitation prior to processing, and the use of wet heat early in the heat process to avoid pre-drying. In non-heated meats, the proper use of high salt and proper curing techniques are most effective.