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Scrambled salmonella on menu at unchecked factory farms



BY MACKENZIE PERKINS
STAFF WRITER

Since spring, more than half a billion eggs have been recalled for potential salmonella contamination. The source? Two massive egg farms in Iowa. The cause? It's still being debated. Every expert in the field has offered up their two cents.

At both farms, FDA inspectors cited numerous examples of poor sanitation. Flies, maggots, pigeons and other wild birds, unkempt manure pits, and escaped hens were among the conditions that more than likely contributed to the largest outbreak of salmonella enteritidis ever recorded.

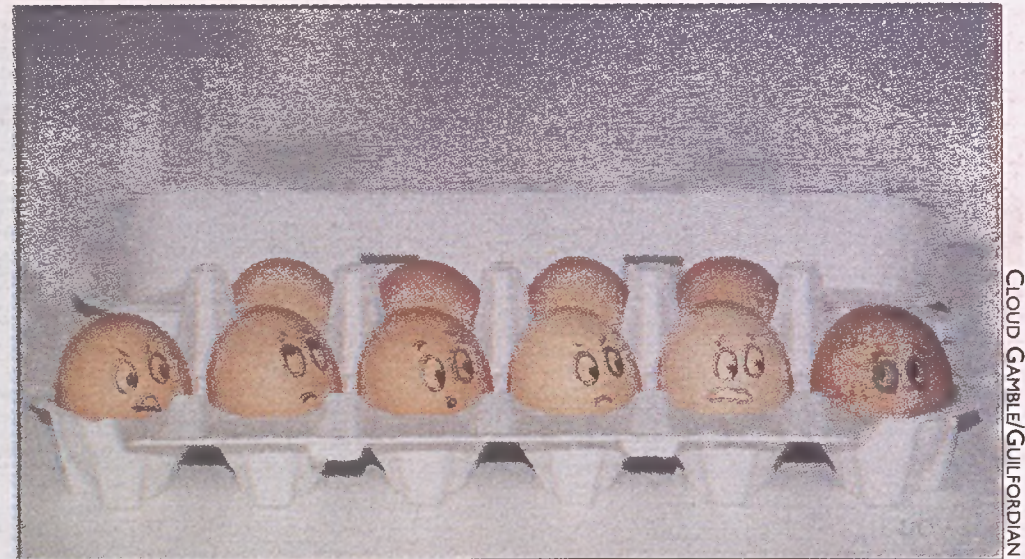
But how is it that food products generated in such a questionable environment have made it onto the shelves of our

local grocery stores? Most Americans know next to nothing about the sources of the food they eat. We don't walk into supermarkets with suspicions of infectious disease on our minds. We tend to assume that if food is for sale it actually meets health codes. So, when it's discovered that about 1,500 cases of salmonella have been reported, it raises questions about policy.

An egg safety rule that could have prevented the outbreak was passed early in Obama's term and went into effect in July, making it too little too late. The rule requires egg farms to perform environmental tests for contamination and to manage the rodent and pest populations, but neither of the farms responsible for the current outbreak had undergone recent inspections.

In response to the situation, all 500 or so large-scale egg farms will undergo FDA inspections over the next 15 months. But would the stipulations of Obama's new egg safety rule have been met with such fervor if not for the health scare? Would there even have been adequate funding for such a venture?

And what about basic decency? It's mind boggling to me that the responsible parties at Hillendale and Wright County Egg farms could be so indifferent to the conditions of their facilities when so many people rely on their products for sustenance.



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Is the threat of governmental fines or legal repercussions their only motivation to provide viable nourishment to the American community?

I'm sure that we are all aware, at least to some degree, of the ethical questions raised by factory farming methods in regards to the treatment of animals, but this situation raises concerns regarding humans.

Eighty percent of the eggs consumed in the United States come from these mega farms, according to The New York Times. Sanitary conditions are difficult to guarantee in such over-crowded operations. By cramming as many animals as possible into a confined space, as the widely-practiced factory-farm model does, the spread of disease becomes all the more likely. Additionally, antibiotics are often used in a non-therapeutic manner on these mega farms, which could potentially create antibiotic-resistant pathogens.

One alternative is to buy locally. Free-range chickens won't spread infectious disease with such efficiency. In addition, more attention is paid to animals on smaller-scale farms, meaning they are more likely to receive medical treatment on an individual basis.

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Building Community & Trust with Jorge Zeballos

A workshop that will lead participants through an interactive and experiential examination of institutional racism and its impact on the lives of individuals in this society.

Participants will also have the opportunity to investigate how racism impacts Guilford College and discern strategies for creating an inclusive, affirming and empowering campus environment for all!

SCHEDULE

Friday, September 24
(King)
4:00pm-8:00pm

Saturday, September 25
(Community Center)
9:00am-5:00pm

Sunday, September 26 (Community
Center)
9:00am-5:00pm

For registration information contact

Jorge Zeballos at
jzeballo@guilford.edu by September
17th.

Letter to the Editor

Professor petitions students to lobby for administrative staff

Guilford's administration has held admirable forums to solicit feedback on its next five year plan. Concerns have been raised about the lack of administrative assistance at the academic department level. The best way we can increase the academic quality of our students' education would be to create new staff positions responsible for administering to academic departments. Most departments, unbeknownst to many, have practically zero administrative assistance. Colleagues at other liberal arts colleges are seriously shocked that we have no secretaries or administrators for departments. My department shares an administrator with several other departments and she works half days five buildings away. It is impractical to ask her for assistance with scanning, photocopying, budgetary assistance, scheduling, office equipment procurement, work study management, or the like. Faculty spend unnecessary time procuring chalk, composing reports, answering unnecessary e-mails, budgeting work-study, and scheduling committee meetings — time better spent in office hours with students, preparing for class, grading student work, etc. The best use of resources would be to hire administrative staff for academic departments and free up professors to do the work for which they were trained and hired: to teach Guilford students. Many of Guilford's staff work the equivalent of two or more jobs, often more than 40 hours per week, yet are paid for a single job. The answer is not to saddle these individual staff members with even more responsibilities, but to hire new staff. Staff would benefit from such an initiative, as would faculty, and thereby the students. The next S.L.R.P. contains optional spending decisions and new projects. I urge students to lobby instead for the hiring of new staff for academic departments, for it will only benefit your education. Please know that our doors will remain open for students.

Eric D. Mortensen, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies