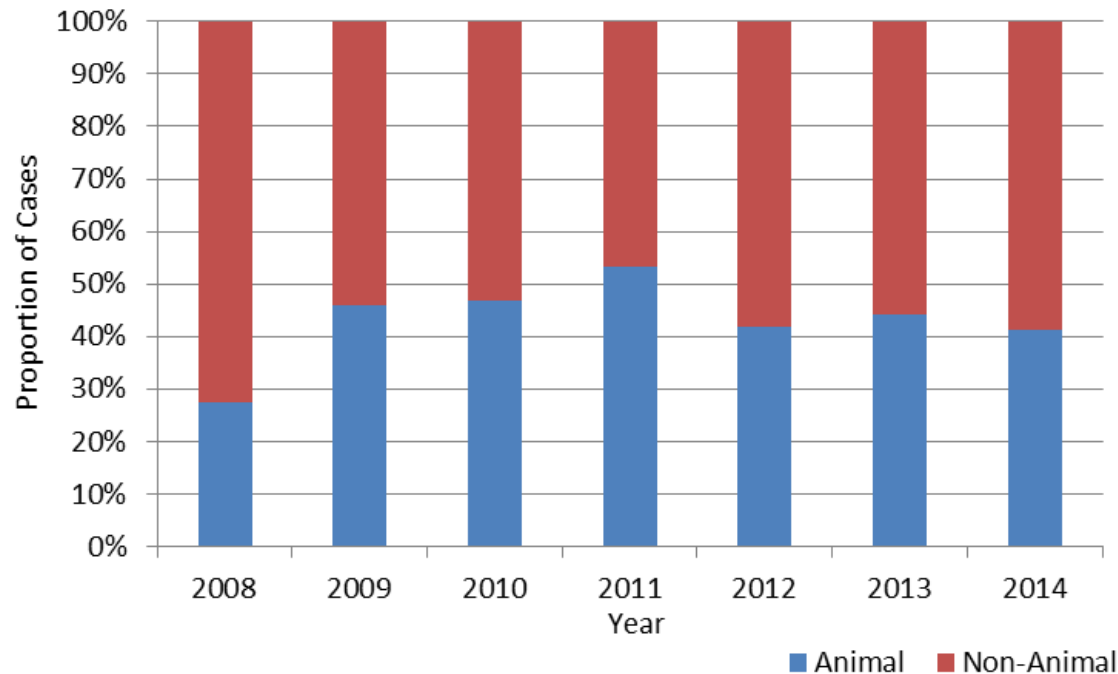


Locally Acquired Salmonella in Alberta 2008 – 2014

Animal and Non-Animal Contact

Salmonellosis is a bacterial infection characterized by acute enterocolitis (inflammation of the digestive tract) with a sudden onset of headache, fever, abdominal pain, diarrhea, nausea, and occasionally vomiting. On average 900 cases of *Salmonella* are reported to public health officials in Alberta each year. Most *Salmonella* cases are related to travel, but 200 – 300 cases, annually, are locally acquired. People often think of *Salmonella* as a foodborne pathogen, but it is becoming increasingly common for this disease to be acquired from contact with a household pet. Reptiles, amphibians, as well as feeder mice, can be sources of *Salmonella* infection. Pet owners may be unaware of this infection. Proper hand hygiene can reduce the risk of disease.

The chart shows the proportion of locally acquired *Salmonella* where the source of disease was animal contact. While the overall proportion of cases with an animal source has only increased slightly the most common animal source has changed from livestock, mainly poultry to domestic pets, typically reptiles.



Reptiles most likely source

In the spring of 2014 the US CDC announced a multistate Outbreak of *Salmonella Cotham* and *Salmonella Kisarawe* resulting from contact with Bearded Dragons¹. Similarly, Alberta noted 15 cases of *Salmonella* infection attributed to Bearded Dragons, an increase from 2 cases in each of the previous 3 years.

In Alberta there have been two outbreak investigations of *Salmonella*. The source of both outbreaks was feeder mice. In one local outbreak, five households were affected when the feeder mice they used to feed their reptiles were colonized with *Salmonella*. There was also a multi-state outbreak in the US that included Alberta cases associated with the outbreak.²

¹ <http://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/cotham-04-14/index.html>

² <http://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/typhimurium-rodents-05-14/index.html>