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From the Principal Private Secretary

23 December 1988

The Prime Minister had intended to raise the question of salmonella and eggs at Cabinet but this was overtaken by other events. She thinks it important that the Government presents a united front in its efforts to tackle the problem. She understands that joint evidence is being prepared for the Select Committee on Agriculture. She has suggested that consideration be given to developing this material into a Government statement which could be issued more widely.

The ground such a statement might cover could be:

- (i) Recent historical trends for salmonella and salmonella enteritidis phage type 4. The Prime Minister attaches importance to a common presentation of the statistics.
- (ii) A comparison with experience in other countries and the measures they are taking.
- (iii) What is being done throughout the food chain to tackle the problem. The Prime Minister hopes that the measures suggested in the Minister of Agriculture's paper of 16 December can be quickly agreed and implemented. She has noted the point made by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury that it is important for the industry to take some action itself to rebuild consumer confidence in its product.

There are two other issues where the Prime Minister would welcome further information:

- (i) Is it proposed to make the voluntary codes of practice statutory, and if so when?
- (ii) How are carcasses from the culling scheme to be disposed of? The Prime Minister is very much opposed to re-cycling these back as feedstuff.

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I am copying this letter to Andy McKeon (Department of Health) and Carys Evans (Chief Secretary's Office, H.M. Treasury).

(ANDREW TURNBULL)

Mrs. Shirley Stagg,
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

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