

**PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**PHOTOGRAPH ATTACHED**

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***Automated Spiral Plate Counting  
Helps Pinpoint Source of Salmonella Outbreak***

**Cambridge, UK:** Synbiosis, a world-leading manufacturer of automated microbiological systems announced that using a ProtoCOL system for automated spiral plate counts has been proven to help trace contaminated food sources rapidly.

The Synbiosis ProtoCOL system used in conjunction with spiral plating at the Microbiology Department, Western General Hospital, Edinburgh helped to locate the source of last year's national outbreak of Salmonella food poisoning in Scotland, which affected 36 people.

ProtoCOL was used to automate spiral plate counts of viable organisms on plate count agar of over 50 food samples from three different Chinese restaurants.

The Microbiology Department used the system's camera control and integrated software to quickly indicate which foods contained a large number of viable organisms. Further tests on a smaller number of suspected samples then narrowed it down to chicken in a sauce supplied to restaurants by a local retailer.

Nigel Clarke, Head of Quality Control at the Western General's Microbiology Department said: "Once parameters for colony counting are set, ProtoCOL can evaluate a plate in seconds and because there is no personal bias, counts are reliable. In an outbreak, it is like looking for a needle in a haystack, since there are a large number of samples to evaluate quickly to try and prevent further cases. For this situation, we consider ProtoCOL the best system available for rapid colony counts."

Simon Johns, International Product Manager for Synbiosis commented: "We have worked closely with the world's leading manufacturer of spiral platers for many years to ensure that ProtoCOL analyses spiral plate sectors consistently and reproducibly. We are convinced it will not only make it easier for microbiologists to trace sources of food poisoning but will also prove invaluable with all types of rapid food quality assurance."

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**News Release**