

Crisis Control Newsletter



Crisis Control Newsletter from RQA, Inc. - A Catlin Preferred Provider to
Foodservice, Food Processing and Consumer Products Industries

July 2009
Volume U0709 Issue 1

Inside This Issue:

Featured Article-U.S. Government Tightens Food Safety Standards	1
Table 1 - Under the New Rules	1
Recall Re-caps	2

U.S. Government Tightens Food Safety Standards

High profile, large-scale food recalls such as salmonella linked to peppers, spinach, pistachios, milk products and peanuts and E.coli linked to cookie dough and beef products has eroded consumer confidence in the safety of the nation's food supply.

In June 2009, IBM conducted a study of 1,000 consumers in the 10 largest cities nationwide. Results show that "consumers are increasingly wary of the safety of food purchased at grocery stores, and their confidence in – and trust of – food retailers, manufacturers and grocers is declining". Additionally, only 55 percent of respondents trust food manufacturers when handling a food product recall, indicating a decrease in their level of trust over the past two years.

To put the food safety issue in perspective, an estimated 76 million people in the U.S. get sick every year with food borne illness and 5,000 die, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The overall impact of food safety has brought the topic to the forefront for governments, retailers, manufacturers and consumers.

How has the U.S. government responded to the issue of food safety?

The U.S. Government has taken measures to tighten its food safety standards. Since January 2009, more than 600 bills addressing food safety have been introduced in state legislatures. Additionally, President Obama's proposed budget includes \$1 billion for the FDA to spend on improving food safety.

"On July 7th, the Obama administration ordered tougher steps to curb salmonella and E.coli contamination of U.S. food and created a post of deputy food commissioner to coordinate safety." (REUTERS, David Alexander, 7/7/09)

A food safety working group created by President Barack Obama in March has made recommendations for a focus on prevention, increased surveillance and enforcement, and improved response and recovery after a foodborne outbreak.

Prevention is at the heart of the plan and "is a large step in the right direction". (Donna Rosenbaum, Safe Tables Our Priority).

Table 1 - Under the New Rules

A food safety working group established by President Barack Obama said that the government will try and boost the safety of some of the nation's most popular foods by enforcing stricter rules in an effort to reduce instances of salmonella and E. coli contamination.

Under the new rules:

- Egg and poultry producers will have to follow new standards designed to reduce salmonella contamination, including increased testing and refrigeration for eggs.
- The Food Safety Inspection Service of the USDA will increase sampling of ground beef ingredients in an effort to better detect E. coli contamination.
- The FDA will recommend ways that producers of leafy greens, melons and tomatoes can reduce disease strains, and require more demanding standards in those industries within two years.
- The FDA and the USDA will create new positions to increase their capabilities to oversee food safety.

The group is also directing the FDA to provide enhanced guidance to help the food industry establish a better trace back and response system to quickly determine the origin of an outbreak. By creating a new unified incident command system, improvements in the delivery of individual food safety alerts to consumers will be possible and the agencies that regulate food will be able to communicate better.

Source: The Associated Press Tuesday July 07, 2009 and The White House Press Release July 7, 2009

By: Carol Kozlowski, CPIM, Manager of Crisis Management for Insurance Services, RQA, Inc.

Recall Re-Caps

Product: Frozen Meat and Poultry Products
Incident: Unapproved Ingredient– Amaranth Red #2
Date: June 30, 2009

A Buffalo, NY establishment is recalling approximately 208,768 pounds of frozen meat and poultry products because they contain an unapproved ingredient, Amaranth Red #2, which is declared on the label. The frozen meat and poultry products were produced from June 1, 2008, through June 5, 2009, and were sent to distributors and retail establishments in CA, IL, NY and PA. The problem was discovered by the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets and reported to FSIS by the company. FSIS has received no reports of illness due to consumption of these products.

Product: Soft Mexican-Style Cheeses
Incident: Pathogen – *Listeria Monocytogenes*
Date: June 13, 2009

A Reading, MI firm is recalling all lots of various types of soft Mexican-style cheeses due to potential *Listeria* contamination. A sample of cheese, taken by an investigator from the FDA on 5/26/09, was tested by an FDA laboratory and discovered to be contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes*. The products were distributed to retail stores and delis in: IL, IN, MI, GA, TN, KY, NC, SC, OH and WI. No illnesses have been reported to date in connection with the recalled products. Consumption of food contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes* can cause Listeriosis, an uncommon but potentially fatal disease that can cause high fever, severe headache, neck stiffness and nausea. Listeriosis can also cause miscarriages and stillbirths. Consumers and retailers are urged to return all unused recalled product to the manufacturer.

Product: Framing Nailers
Incident: Hazard: Malfunction or Failure to Operate
Date: June 25, 2009

A Towson, MD distributor is recalling approximately 9,000 framing nailers due to serious injury hazard. The bump action trigger on the framing nailers could have been incorrectly assembled during production, which would allow the nailer to eject a fastener unexpectedly or cause the trigger lock-off not to function. This can pose a serious injury hazard to the user or bystander. This product was sold to wholesale distributors and retailers nationwide from January 2008 through September 2008. Consumers should immediately stop using the framing nailers and contact the distributor for instructions on receiving a free replacement bump action trigger.

Product: Fully Cooked Ham Products
Incident: Undeclared Additive – Monosodium Glutamate
Date: June 10, 2009

A Seminole, OK establishment is recalling about 2.68 million pounds of fully cooked ham products, because they contain monosodium glutamate (MSG) which is not declared on the label. MSG is used as a flavor enhancer in a variety of foods prepared at home, in restaurants, and by food processors. Some persons who have eaten foods containing MSG have reported adverse reactions. The fully cooked ham products were produced on March 1, 2009, through June 9, 2009, and were distributed to retail stores, service delis and wholesale distributors. The problem was discovered by the company. FSIS has received no reports of illness due to consumption of these products.

Product: Cookie Dough
Incident: Pathogen – *E.Coli O157:H7*
Date: June 19, 2009

A Solon, OH company is recalling refrigerated cookie dough products after being notified by the FDA and CDC that they are conducting an investigation into reported *E.coli O157:H7* illnesses that may be linked to these products. A number of consumers reporting illness indicated that they had consumed raw refrigerated cookie dough. The company strongly advises consumers that raw cookie dough should not be eaten. This message also appears prominently on their packaging. Consumers who have purchased these products should not consume them. Instead, consumers should return these products to their local grocer for a full refund. *E. coli O157:H7* is a potentially deadly bacterium that can cause bloody diarrhea, dehydration, and in the most severe cases, kidney failure. The very young, seniors and persons with weak immune systems are the most susceptible to foodborne illness.

Product: Coffeemakers
Incident: Hazard: Burn
Date: June 23, 2009

A Miramar, FL distributor is recalling approximately 584,000 coffeemakers due to a burn hazard. The brew basket can shift out of alignment allowing hot water to overflow. This poses a scalding and burn hazard to consumers. The firm has received 235 reports of hot water overflowing and contacting consumers, including 10 reports of second-degree burns. These coffeemakers were sold at major retailers nationwide from March 2006 through March 2009. Consumers should stop using the recalled products immediately and contact the company for a replacement brew basket.

Sources – www.fda.gov, www.usda.gov, www.cpsc.gov

Crisis Control is a newsletter jointly published by RQA, Inc. and Catlin Group. For more information about these topics and more, please contact:

Melanie Neumann, Esq.
 VP Crisis Management & General Counsel
 RQA, Inc.
 Phone: 708-364-8957
 Email: m.neumann@rqa-inc.com
 Please visit: www.rqa-inc.com

Catlin Contacts:

London, UK
 Neil Evans (neil.evans@catlin.com)
 David Burke (david.burke@catlin.com)
 Stuart Allen (stuart.allen@catlin.com)
 Ian Bailey (ian.bailey@catlin.com)
 Or email CrisisManagement@catlin.com

Hartford, US
 Margaret A. Curcio, CIC (margaret.curcio@catlin.com)

Please visit: www.catlin.com