

Crisis Control Newsletter



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

June 2009
Volume U0609 Issue 1

Inside This Issue:

Featured Article - Ingredient Authenticity in Product Adulteration	1
Table 1 - Imported Honey	1
Recall Re-caps	2

Ingredient Authenticity in Product Adulteration

During the past two years, adulteration of food products by various types of contaminants caused many consumer injuries. Adulteration of food products with chemicals and veterinary antibiotics caused many of these injuries.

Chemicals:

Illegal **chemical** contaminants, such as melamine, glycol, urea and other violative chemicals were intentionally added to ingredients by suppliers. Substituting chemicals for the authentic ingredient is economic fraud - it reduces the supplier's cost and increases the ingredient's profit margin.

Some of these illegal chemical additives are toxic and resulted in consumer death or serious, long term injury. Issues like these cause product recalls, which cost American and Canadian food and consumer products companies millions of dollars in direct expenses. This is further compounded with indirect costs for long term litigation, escrow settlements, class actions lawsuits, brand impairment or destruction and factory closings..

Veterinary Antibiotics:

Many foods have Standards of Identity, such as honey. Label violations for inaccurate fact panels or incorrect nutritional labeling are considered misbranding and relate to the food's authenticity. Honey is used as an ingredient in many foods, such as barbeque sauces, cereals, snack foods, breads and pastries. It is also used as a condiment for many food items, including breakfast items, chicken and tea.

American share of the domestic honey industry has declined from 75% in 1989 to 38% in 2006. Chinese honey dumping has forced many producers in the USA out of business.

The farmers in China began treating hives with a banned antibiotic, Chloramphenicol, which causes aseptic anemia, a potentially fatal blood condition. Unethical exporters sell antibiotic tainted honey by blending it into simple syrup to avoid detection. If companies do not test for the antibiotic, it goes unnoticed.

Other antibiotics, such as Quinolones and Fluoroguinolones, are bactericidal drugs used to treat sick bee hive populations, before nectar flows, and are illegally added to honey as mold inhibitors. These drugs can cause heart problems, Pseudomembranous colitis, Rhabdomyolysis (breakdown of muscle tissue), Stevens-Johnson syndromes, hypoglycemia and kidney stones in some consumers.

Table 1 - Adulterated Imported Honey

While there are methods to prove honey adulteration, more reliable quality control tests and better analytical methods are needed to determine honey authenticity.

Veterinary Antibiotics:

- Chloramphenicol
- Quinolone
- Fluoroquinolone

Adverse Health Effects:

- Nerve Damage
- Heart Problems
- Mental Disorders
- Colitis
- Muscle Tissue Breakdown
- Hypoglycemia
- Kidney Stones

Product testing is essential to prevent illegal contamination from reaching the food producers and consumers. Types of tests that detect these and other related contaminants are:

- **ELISA**, Enzyme-Linked ImmunoSorbent Assay
- Biochip array drug residue screening tests

Lab data should accompany any imported honey, with tests results from these and other more specific tests, in order to ensure the safety of the product for human consumption.

By: Jerry Mithen, Vice President of Manufacturing Services, RQA, Inc.

Contributing Editors: Angie Lawless & Carol Kozlowski

Recall Re-Caps

Product: Ground Beef
Incident: Pathogen – *E. Coli* O157:H7
Date: May 21, 2009

A Coal Valley, IL firm is recalling approximately 95,898 pounds of ground beef products that may be contaminated with *E. coli* O157:H7. These ground beef products were produced on March 10, 2009 and were distributed to various consignees nationwide. The problem was discovered through an epidemiological investigation of illnesses. On May 13, 2009, FSIS was informed by the Ohio Department of Health of a cluster of *E. coli* O157:H7 infections. Illnesses have been reported in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Illinois. *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: Bean and Soy Sprouts
Incident: Pathogen – *Listeria Monocytogenes*
Date: May 28, 2009

A Whatley, MA company is recalling bean and soy sprouts, distributed to retail stores and restaurants throughout MA, CT, NY and NJ, because of possible *Listeria monocytogenes* contamination. *L. monocytogenes* is an organism, which can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. The contamination was discovered after a sample at a retail store in New York tested positive. There have been no reports of illness associated with this matter. All grocery stores, food services, and other retailers who have this lot should remove this product from their shelves. Consumers should discard this product or return them to the place of purchase for a full refund.

Product: Composite Decks
Incident: Hazard: Fall/Injury
Date: May 13, 2009

A Nashville, TN manufacturer is recalling approximately 48 million linear feet of composite decking because it can prematurely deteriorate and unexpectedly break. Consumers can fall through broken decking and suffer serious injuries. The company has received 37 reports of composite decks breaking, resulting in 14 injuries, including a broken wrist, sprained ankle, minor lacerations and bruises. This product was sold nationwide from January 2005 to August 2008. Consumers with the recalled decking should immediately contact the company for a free inspection. If the decking is affected by premature deterioration, the company will arrange for a free replacement.

Product: Ground Beef
Incident: Foreign Material
Date: May 29, 2009

A Sauget, IL establishment is recalling about 241,000 pounds of ground beef products, because they may contain foreign material. The products were produced on various dates from January 2009 through May 2009 and were distributed to institutions in DE, FL, IL, KY, NC, NM, OH, SC, TN, TX, and VA. The problem was discovered after the company received complaints from institutional customers about finding metal clips, which were used to seal the casing chubs, in the product. FSIS has not received any consumer complaints at this time. Neither FSIS nor the establishment has received reports of injury at this time.

Product: Butter & Garlic Croutons
Incident: Undeclared Allergen - Milk
Date: May 1, 2009

A New York, NY company is recalling 531 cases of butter & garlic crouton product, because the croutons may contain undeclared milk allergens. People who have an allergy or sensitivity to milk products are at risk for serious or life-threatening allergic reactions, if they consume this product. These products were distributed to stores in the Northeastern U.S. There has been one reported allergic reaction at this time. Consumers with an allergy to milk are advised not to consume this item, and they are urged to return the item to the store where purchased for a full refund.

Product: Cell Phones
Incident: Hazard: Failure to Operate
Date: May 22, 2009

A Richardson, TX manufacturer is recalling about 160,000 cell phones. When these phones are in a no-service area and display an "out of range, try again later" message, they could fail to connect to emergency 911. There have been no reported incidents. These phones were sold directly to consumers through targeted national advertisements and publications, nationwide electronics and drug stores and on the Web from March 2008 through May 2009. The company is directly contacting consumers to schedule a free software upgrade. Consumers should call the company, if they have not already been contacted.

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

Recall Matters 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
 Florian Beerli (florian.beerli@catlin.com)

Please visit: www.catlin.com