



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Ground beef recalled for possible E. coli contamination

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health announces that it has received recalls from two firms for ground beef products because of possible E. coli 0157:H7 contamination. The department also is investigating several recent cases of E. coli 0157:H7 infection. Nine cases, seven confirmed and two pending, have occurred in Alabama in the past two months. To date, there is no known association between these cases and ground beef products.

E. coli 0157:H7 is a potentially deadly bacteria that can cause bloody diarrhea and dehydration. The very young, the elderly and persons with compromised immune systems are the most susceptible to foodborne illness.

Although the products being recalled should be returned to the place of purchase, consumers preparing other ground beef products should heed the following advice from the USDA:

Consumers should only eat ground beef patties that have been cooked to a safe temperature of 160 degrees F. When a ground beef patty is cooked to 160 degrees F throughout, it can be safe and juicy, regardless of color.

The only way to be sure a ground beef patty is cooked to a high enough temperature to kill harmful bacteria is to use an accurate digital thermometer. Color is not a reliable indicator that ground beef patties have been cooked to a temperature high enough to kill harmful bacteria such as E. coli 0157:H7. Eating a pink or red ground beef patty without first verifying that the safe temperature of 160 degrees F has been reached is a significant risk factor for foodborne illness.

Thermometer use to ensure proper cooking temperature is especially important for those who cook or serve ground beef patties to people most at risk for foodborne illness because E. coli 0157:H7 can lead to serious illness or even death. Those most at risk include young children, the elderly, and those with compromised immune systems.

The ground beef recalls were announced by the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The recalls are only for one day's production and are only for certain production codes, as described below.

Consumers with food safety questions can phone the toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555. The hotline is available in English and Spanish and can be reached from 9

a.m. to 3 p.m. central time Monday through Friday. Recorded food safety messages are available 24 hours a day.

ConAgra Beef Company of Greeley, Colo., is voluntarily recalling approximately 354,200 pounds of fresh and frozen ground beef products marked with the package code "Freeze or sell by 06 18 02," and each case contains six 10-pound chubs, five-pound and one pound chubs. The one-pound chubs did not have the Sell or Freeze By date; they had a Julian date of 151 02.

The ground beef products being recalled are:

"ConAgra Beef," "Ground Beef 75/25 Fine Grind, 6-10# Chubs" with the case code "42122";

"ConAgra Beef," "Ground Beef Sirloin 90/10 Fine Grind, 6-10# Chubs with the case code "42132"

"ConAgra Beef," "Ground Beef 81/19 Coarse Grind, 6-10# Chubs" with the case code "42141"

"ConAgra Beef," "Ground Beef Chuck Coarse Grind, 6-10# Chubs" with the case code "42162";

"ConAgra Beef," "Ground Beef Round Coarse Grind, 6-10 # Chubs" with the case code "42169:"

"ConAgra Beef," "Ground Beef Round Fine Grind, 6-10 # Chubs" with the case code "42171:"

"ConAgra Beef," "Ground Beef Round Fine Grind, 6-10# Chubs" with the case code "42172," and

"CERTIFIED ANGUS BEEF," "Ground Beef Chuck Fine Grind, 6-10# Chubs" with the case code "42262."

The following cases of ground beef products being recalled are marked with a package code "Freeze or sell by 06 18 02," and each case contains eight ten-pound chubs.

"ConAgra Beef," "Ground Beef 81/19 Coarse Grind, 8-10# Chubs" with the case code "42410"

"ConAgra Beef," "Ground Beef 81/19 Fine Grind, 8-10# Chubs" with the case code "42499"; and
ConAgra Beef," "Ground Beef 73/27 Coarse Grind, 8-10# Chubs" with the case code "42410."

The following ground beef product being recalled is marked with a package code "Freeze or Sell by 06 18 02" and is packaged in cases, with each one containing 12 five-pound chubs.

Consumers with questions about this ConAgra recall may contact Jim Herlihy, vice president of communications and consumer affairs, ConAgra Beef, at (970) 506-8052.

Carneco Foods, LLC, a Columbus, Neb., firm is voluntarily recalling approximately 131,000 pounds of frozen ground beef patties produced on Feb. 22, 2002, and distributed to retail establishments nationwide. The recall is only for one day's production. Consumers with questions about this recall may contact the Carneco Foods Customer Hotline at 1-866-824-6243.

6 pound bags of "NORTHERN PLAINS Beef Sirloin AND BEEF PATTIES 85/15." Each bag bears a code of "0205321P."

6 pound bags of "NORTHERN PLAINS Ground Beef PATTIES 80/20." Each bag bears a code of "02053A1P" or "0205321P."

10 pound boxes of "NORTHERN PLAINS Gourmet Beef PATTIES." Each box bears a production code between "20020531317" and "20020530500."

7 pound boxes of "SEASONED BEEF PATTIES (MISFORMED)." Each box bears a production code between "20020531317" and "20020530500."

Each bag or box also bears "EST.245P" inside the USDA seal of inspection.

7/18/02