

Romaine Lettuce Update

Consumers, Restaurants and Retailers

ISSUE:

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and state authorities, continues to investigate a multi-state outbreak of E. coli O157:H7 infections associated with consumption of romaine lettuce in the U.S. As they continue to investigate this outbreak, the FDA has narrowed its warning and announced new steps to help consumers identify where their romaine is grown, and therefore what is safe to purchase, through product harvest location and date labeling.

FDA's investigation at this point suggests that romaine lettuce associated with the outbreak comes from the central coastal growing regions of central and northern California.

IMPACT:

The FDA has urged growers, distributors and retailers to clearly and prominently label all individually packaged romaine products to identify growing region and harvest date. For loose romaine products, such as whole heads of lettuce, retail stores should clearly and prominently display the growing region and harvest date at the point of sale.

ACTION:

The CDC has narrowed its warning to consumers. Romaine lettuce products will be labeled with a harvest location and date. Romaine lettuce labeled with a harvest region such as Florida, the desert region near Yuma, the California desert growing region near Imperial County, Riverside County, Mexico and hydroponic and/or greenhouse that is harvested on or after November 23, 2018 is NOT linked to this outbreak. Consumers are advised not to purchase romaine harvested from the central coastal growing regions of northern and central California.



Jaime Jerrels

jaime.jerrels@ffbf.org

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FFBF POLICY:

114. Food Safety: “We support the USDA, FDA, FDACS and similar agencies in other states as the appropriate agencies for testing food to ensure wholesomeness. We encourage all state and federal agencies and industry efforts to establish public confidence that the American food supply is wholesome and safe.”

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Florida Farm Bureau (FFB) is the state's largest general agriculture membership organization, with 147,000 member-families. Florida Farm Bureau's Agricultural Policy Department facilitates the policy development process initiated by its active membership and ratified annually by the organization's voting delegates. FFB National Affairs works to advance policies through Florida's congressional delegation and federal regulatory agencies.

