

Food Safety Alert – 10/02/06

The big news on spinach this weekend was that the FDA lifted the ban on eating spinach grown in San Benito, Monterey, and Santa Clara Counties – limiting the warning only to that recalled by Natural Selection Foods (“NSF”). Sunday’s Herald also includes an article detailing the marketing strategies proposed by Salinas Area marketers which could get the public confidence back in spinach, including restaurant promotions, sales floor demonstrations, and frequent status reports.

<http://www.montereyherald.com/mld/montereyherald/news/local/15653815.htm>

Farmers are now playing the waiting game, to see if they will get any orders for spinach. Although the FDA endorsement of spinach consumption was a less than complete assurance, they announced that spinach coming from the market in the next few weeks will be as safe as it was before the outbreak.

<http://www.thecalifornian.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20061002/NEWS01/610020315/1002>

See also:

<http://www.mercurynews.com/mld/mercurynews/living/health/15647079.htm>

The AP has an article, which was printed in the *Californian* noting that despite the press coverage of E Coli, food-borne illnesses are on the decline. “In 2005, compared with the 1996-98 period when the CDC’s FoodNet tracking system began, illnesses had dropped for virtually every major germ. CDC estimates the declines as follows: yersinia, 49 percent; shigella, 43 percent; listeria, 32 percent; campylobacter, 30 percent; the dangerous O1:57 strain of E. coli, 29 percent; and salmonella, 9 percent.” However, it was also noted that there was a sharp decline over the first half of the last decade but a significant increase of late.

<http://www.thecalifornian.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20061002/NEWS01/610020316/1002>

An odd article in the *Californian* discusses the proximity of cattle ranching and produce fields in the Salinas Valley. However, no mention of E Coli or spinach...

<http://www.thecalifornian.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20061002/BUSINESS/610020337>

NSF is announcing new safety precautions in handling spinach at their processing plant. Based on the beef industry standards, NSF plans on inspecting test samples of each batch of spinach prior to processing. The company plans on sharing their procedures with other processors interested in increasing safety at their plants.

<http://www.freelancenews.com/news/contentview.asp?c=196012>

This week’s People magazine has a somewhat biographical 2-page article on the Idaho infant and the Maryland and Wisconsin women who have recently passed due to the E Coli outbreak, although only the Wisconsin woman’s death has officially been linked to E Coli which was grown in “three California counties.” Neither the three counties nor NSF is named in the article.