

Food Safety Alert – 10/06/06

Idaho health officials have confirmed that the death of a 2 year-old boy from kidney failure last month is attributable to the 0157:H7 strain of E Coli. This marks the second confirmed death in the latest E Coli outbreak. The confirmation comes after health officials received results matching the genetic strain of the bacteria to the 0157 strain. The death of an Ohio and Maryland resident are still under investigation.

<http://www.californianonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20061006/NEWS01/610060337>

The parents of a 23 month old child who was hospitalized in Lindon, Utah with HUS (Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome, which is specific to E Coli, characterized by the destruction of red blood cells and platelets and acute renal failure), after eating tainted spinach has sued Natural Selection Foods in federal court. The parents also have sued Delta, whom they claim served the child spinach 4 days after the FDA warning. Apparently, NSF has been very responsive in offering assistance to the family.

<http://www.heraldextra.com/content/view/195316/3/>

Ontario officials are investigating 6 E Coli outbreaks in 2 Ontario cities – Hamilton and Sudbury, and 12 additional potential cases in the area.

http://www.thestar.com/NASApp/cs/ContentServer?pagename=thestar/Layout/Article_Type1&c=Article&pubid=968163964505&cid=1160132229077&col=968705899037&call_page=TS_Canada&call_pageid=968332188774&call_pagepath=News/Canada

Details of the FBI raids are slowly starting to come out. According to the *Californian*, FBI and FDA agents spent 11 hours searching facilities of NSF and Grower's Express, sifting through records for evidence of a paper trail indicating spinach handlers skirted proper food-handling procedures. An FBI spokesman said that their investigation could also spread to other spinach producers. Charles Sweat, CEO of Natural Selection Foods said that the FDA and FBI investigators took "documents including agricultural testing results, sales information, business process information, regulatory compliance information, regulatory and environmental training records, meeting logs, employment records, and document storage records."

<http://www.californianonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20061006/NEWS01/610060337>

Woody Johnson, Growers Express vice president of sales and marketing, said the company provides food-safety guidelines and facilitates food-safety audits to third-party growers, but doesn't process spinach. The company also maintains databases of audit reports. Johnson told the *Californian* that it's possible Growers Express provides food-safety assistance to a farmer who also sells spinach and other produce to Natural Selection Foods. "We are the gatekeepers for the records, or a repository, for the third-party audit," Johnson said.

<http://www.californianonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20061006/NEWS01/610060337>

The *Californian* also listed some details of a similar investigation and conviction of Odwalla Inc. In 1996, Odwalla was the first criminal conviction stemming from mass food poisoning. Although investigators never determined how the E. coli entered the apple juice, the company was held criminally liable because its juice was unpasteurized, which allowed the bacteria to thrive. Odwalla pleaded guilty and paid a \$1.5 million fine - at the time, the largest food injury fine in FDA history. The outbreak also led to new pasteurization and labeling requirements for fruit juices.

<http://www.californianonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20061006/NEWS01/610060337>