

Food Safety Alert – 11/20/06

KSBWchannel.com is reporting that government delays early in the E. coli outbreak may have cost the life of the two-year-old toddler from Idaho (the article misspoke and said he died in Wisconsin). "KSBW has learned that Wisconsin officials alerted the Centers for Disease Control just after 4 p.m. Central time on Friday, Sept. 8 using PulseNet -- a nationwide computer alert system used to notify health officials of dangerous outbreaks." Apparently CDC workers in Atlanta had already gone home for the weekend. (This confirms and makes public what we already know timeline-wise about this outbreak). Dr. Brackett from the FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition testified before a senate committee about the government's response to the outbreak, but made no mention of the CDC delay. Jim Prevor, an industry analyst, stated, "Unfortunately, people get sick 24 hours a day, seven days a week. So really, state health authorities and the PulseNet have to function on that schedule, and that's just the reality of illness," Prevor said. "It's very possible people got sick and for all we know died in this outbreak cause they didn't move faster."

<http://www.theksbwchannel.com/news/10345674/detail.html>

The Journal of American Veterinary Medical Association (JAVMA) reports that scientists will be starting a four year study on the sources of E. coli O157:H7 in the Salinas Valley. Dr. Rob Atwill, co-principal investigator and an expert in waterborne infectious diseases at the University of California-Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, says that they will focus on livestock and wildlife on rangeland that are the benches to fields on the valley floor. Crows will gather samples of manure and scat, check creek and irrigation water, farm soil and lettuce. The goal will be to determine if certain farming practices or environmental factors are associated with the contamination of produce. To that end, the study will also assess climate, landscape and irrigation methods. The USDA will be funding the \$1.2 million grant. The USDA Agricultural Research Service will work in conjunction with the University of California-Davis and the CDHS.

<http://www.avma.org/onlnews/javma/dec06/061201k.asp>