

Food Safety Alert – 12/06/06

The California Farm Bureau Federation has announced on their website that Mexican agricultural officials have completed their tour of processing plants and spinach farms in the Salinas Valley. The officials spent a week meeting with growers, food-safety officials and processors. There is no word yet on The Mexican government lifting the ban they imposed on spinach.

<http://cc.msnsnscache.com/cache.aspx?q=4873438302192&lang=en-US&mkt=en-US&FORM=CVRE2>

According to an AP news article, Taco Bell has ordered the removal of green onions from all of its restaurants. Currently it operates 5,800 nationwide. Although it is not known for certain if green onions are the cause, they have been pulled until it can be determined from all who were sickened if they were the root cause. Federal and state officials visited a food distribution facility in Burlington, New Jersey, that supplied the New Jersey and Long Island restaurants with their produce. The last case to be reported was Nov. 29, so many believe the danger from infection may be over. The number of people affected has risen to 39. Nine remain hospitalized.

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/E/E_COLI_OUTBREAK?SITE=DCTMS&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT

Jamba Juice is reporting that a Salinas-based processor (Cleugh's Frozen Foods) of strawberries has received a positive test for listeria. The areas affected are Arizona, Southern Nevada and Southern California. It is not yet known if the strawberries were grown in the area. They are farmed from Santa Cruz county southward to San Diego County. They are also grown in Latin America. Bob Perkins, executive director of the Monterey County Farm Bureau, says "we don't know the source of the berries. Even though there's a Salinas connection doesn't mean there's a product connection." However, the company has halted shipments from the Salinas plant. Jamba Juice has alerted the FDA and is in the process of alerting state and local health officials. According to the article, between 1200 and 1800 pounds of strawberries were served between November 25 and December 1.

<http://www.mercurynews.com/mld/mercurynews/living/food/16175033.htm>