

Food Safety Alert – 9/26/06

It appears that the E. coli scare is finding its way further and further from the front page. There are very few articles today, and excluding the local news outlets, most of them are buried.

The biggest news is that the two tainted bags of Dole spinach that have been located in Utah and New Mexico were bagged at Natural Selection Foods' San Juan Bautista plant during the same Aug. 15 shift, California health officials said Monday. A Portland and a Seattle produce company have recalled their products which include Natural Selection Foods Spinach.

<http://www.californianonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060926/NEWS01/609260345/1002>

There has been a third bag of tainted Dole spinach found in western Pennsylvania is the third one in the nation tied to a deadly E. coli strain. The bag was purchased on or around Sept. 8 in Indiana County. Samples from the individual who was believed to be sickened by eating the spinach are still being tested.

<http://www.pennlive.com/newsflash/pa/index.ssf?/base/news-42/1159284245157430.xml&storylist=penn>

The *Californian* printed estimated financial losses. The Produce Marketing Association estimated losses at between \$37 million and \$74 million if the outbreak is identified and contained within one month, which equates to \$1 million a day. Monterey County provides the state with 73 percent of its spinach, and the crop was valued at \$188 million in 2005, according to the county Crop Report. The epidemic is now international. Yesterday, Canadian health officials confirmed that an eastern Ontario woman had contacted the E Coli 0157:H7 virus from consuming tainted spinach.

<http://www.canada.com/topics/news/agriculture/story.html?id=1c576beb-027b-4b6b-b086-9731cdf8429f&k=93645>

The *Herald* ran an article today about the disposal of spinach. Grocers have disposed of approximately \$50 million in spinach since the nationwide embargo on spinach. Steve Johnson of Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority said that Johnson Canyon and Crazy Horse Canyon landfills have taken in 400 tons of spinach. Ocean Mist, who has not been implicated in the scare, is now dealing with customers for refunds on 140,000 pounds of returned and discarded spinach.

<http://www.montereyherald.com/mld/montereyherald/news/local/15610321.htm>

The *New York Times* printed an article today noting that the current E Coli scare has provided useful insight on the potential for agro-terrorism. Not only does the product find its way into national markets, but it is also shipped internationally, making it a worldwide tool for terror.

<http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/business/AP-Farm-Scene.html? r=1&oref=slogin>