

Food Safety Alert – 9/27/06

The AP is reporting the first lawsuit has been filed in THIS E Coli outbreak. The suit was filed by an Ohio family against Natural Selection Foods, LLC in federal court. The family claims symptoms of diarrhea, cramping and headaches, while the 1 year daughter has permanent kidney damage and will require lifelong care. Damages are claimed to be in excess of \$100,000.

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/T/TAINTED_SPINACH_LAWSUIT?SITE=TXCOR&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT

Earthbound Farms is claiming that reports that the tainted bags of Dole spinach which were found in New Mexico and Utah were NOT processed during the same Aug. 15 shift, but were processed on separate dates. Earthbound Spokeswoman Samantha Cabaluna is also proclaiming that E Coli tests and FDA tests on the processing plant have come back clean, "so everyone's looking at what farms it came from."

<http://www.freelancenews.com/news/contentview.asp?c=195838>

The Monterey Herald is running an article showing the growing tension between local growers (including those not included in the "nine farms") and out of area growers. The FDA warning against San Benito, Monterey, and Santa Clara spinach is implicating local growers who have nothing to do with the outbreak. Out of area growers are now putting labels on their spinach products for differentiation. However, by September 30, 2008, country of origin labels will be mandatory – but the industry is encouraging voluntary labeling.

<http://www.montereyherald.com/mld/montereyherald/15618683.htm>

An article in the *Californian* describes the latest attempt of organic farmers to separate themselves from conventional growers of spinach. The California Organic Certified Farmers, a Santa Cruz trade association issued a statement that organic farming is mistakenly being blamed for the outbreak because of the involvement of Earthbound Farms, which is mostly known for organic produce. However, neither the FDA nor Earthbound themselves have excused organic farming from the list of causes. The major difference is in the growing, whereas the major differences in processing is that they are processed completely separate and apart from each other and organic spinach must be washed more thoroughly, leaving less chlorine residue on organic. Organic growers and processors also must abide by tougher guidelines.

<http://www.californianonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060927/NEWS01/609270341/1002>

The AP is reporting that Giant Food Stores is putting bagged spinach grown in Colorado and Canada back on their shelves.

http://www.wusatv9.com/news/news_article.aspx?storyid=52371

The number of illnesses due to the E Coli outbreak has reached 183.

<http://www.californianonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060927/NEWS01/609270341/1002>

Shares of Chiquita, which owns Dole, dropped 14% yesterday.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/LAC.20060926.IBCHIQUITA26/TPStory/Business>