

THE BELL RINGER

The Newsletter of the Philadelphia Conference of the Central Atlantic States
Association of Food and Drug Officials

FALL 2008



THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I would like to begin by saying thanks to all of you for your participation in the fall training meeting. Next, I would like to welcome Rodney Rice as the new editor of the Bell Ringer and Chair of our Communications Committee. I am confident that he will continue the legacy of reporting timely food safety information with a new flair and more positive energy.

The Executive Board is continuing to work on providing informative training sessions and increase membership. It is important to mention that we cannot accomplish these tasks without your participation and support. Although we are facing rising costs of living, CASA will continue to provide highly informative training sessions at low cost. We must view it as our duty to inform our colleagues of the valuable training opportunities and encourage them to take advantage.

Jack Welte, our Education Committee Chair, is always available and open to ideas for new topics. You, the members, are the backbone of our organization. We would not exist without you. We need to know your interests, ideas and concerns to assist us in the development and implementation of training sessions which cover topics that you feel are pertinent. I encourage you to take an active role in our organization.

We will continue to accept canned goods and food donations at all training meetings for the less fortunate. Pat Taylor will be organizing this food donation program. Also, the Annual Conference will be held in Philadelphia in 2009 and our own Lynn Bonner is helping to plan the conference with Mama CASA. I encourage you to forward your ideas to her and volunteer to help.

*Respectfully,
Palak Raval-Nelson, PhD, MPH*



Federal News

FDA Issues Interim Safety and Risk Assessment of Melamine and Melamine-related Compounds in Food

October 3, 2008
Consumer Inquiries:
888-INFO-FDA

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) today issued the results of its interim safety and risk assessment of melamine and melamine-related compounds in food, including infant formula.

A safety/risk assessment is a scientifically based methodology used to estimate the risk to human health from exposure to specified compounds. It is based on available data and certain scientific assumptions in the absence of data. The purpose of the FDA interim safety/risk assessment was to identify the level of melamine and melamine-related compounds in food which would not raise public health concerns. The interim safety/risk assessment evaluated the melamine exposure in infant formula and in other foods.

The safety/risk assessment, prompted by reports of melamine contamination of milk-derived ingredients and finished food products containing milk manufactured in China, was conducted by scientists from FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition and the Center for Veterinary Medicine. The FDA reviewed scientific literature on melamine toxicity.

Infant Formula

FDA is currently unable to establish any level of melamine and melamine-related compounds in infant formula that does not raise public health concerns. In large part, this is because of gaps in our scientific

FDA continues to screen products, collaborate with foreign governments and their regulatory agencies, and monitor

knowledge about the toxicity of melamine and its analogues in infants, including:

- a. the consequences of the continuous use of infant formulas as the sole source of nutrition;
- b. the uncertainties associated with the possible presence and co-ingestion of more than one melamine analogue; and
- c. for premature infants with immature kidney function, the possibility that they may be fed these formulas as the sole source of nutrition and thus on a body weight basis experience greater levels of intake for a longer time than is experienced by term infants.

There is too much uncertainty to set a level in infant formula and rule out any public health concern. However, it is important to understand that this does not mean that any exposure to any detectable level of melamine and melamine-related compounds in formula will result in harm to infants.

Other Food Products

In food products other than infant formula, the FDA concludes that levels of melamine and melamine-related compounds below 2.5 parts per million (ppm) do not raise concerns. This conclusion assumes a worst case exposure scenario in which 50% of the diet is contaminated at this level, and applies a 10-fold safety factor to the Tolerable Daily Intake (TDI) to account for any uncertainties. The TDI is an estimate of the maximum amount of an agent to which an individual could be exposed on a daily basis over the course of a lifetime without an appreciable health risk.

reports of contamination from international sources to help ensure that potentially contaminated products from foreign sources

More FDA News

are examined if imported into the United States. If products are adulterated because they contain melamine and/or a melamine-related compound, the agency will take appropriate actions to prevent the products from entering commerce.

<http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2008/NEW01895.html> **Consumer Inquiries:** 888-INFO-FDA

FDA Proposes Label Requirements for Refused Imported Foods *Measure would further protect the nation's food supply*

September 18, 2008

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration today issued a proposed rule designed to reduce a practice known as "port shopping" which puts the safety of imported food at risk.

"This system will make it more difficult for food importers to evade import controls after being denied admission into the United States," said Randall Lutter, Ph.D., deputy commissioner for policy. "It will complement our ongoing efforts to monitor food imports."

When FDA refuses to admit a food into the United States, the food must be exported or destroyed. But some persons attempt to bring the refused food back into the United States in the same condition by shipping it to another U.S. port in hopes that the food will be admitted there.

The proposed regulation would require that shipping containers of food barred from entry, and any accompanying documents, be labeled as refused. The label would make it easier for FDA to detect previously-refused food.

The proposed rule implements a provision of the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism

Preparedness and Response Act of 2002, which provided the FDA with new authority to protect the nation's food supply.

Under the proposed rule, all owners or consignees of refused food would be required to affix a label to the shipping container that reads: "UNITED STATES: REFUSED ENTRY" in clear, conspicuous, print. A label would also have to be affixed to all documents accompanying the imported food such as invoices, bills of lading, and electronic documents. proposed regulation for 75 days following its publication in the Federal Register. Written

The FDA will accept comment on the comments may be submitted to:

<http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=FDA-2007-N-0465> **Consumer Inquiries:** 888-INFO-FDA

FDA Detects Melamine Contamination in Flavored Drink

October 6, 2008

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has increased inspections and product testing efforts in response to the melamine contamination problem which originated in Chinese dairy products. As a result of the FDA's on-going testing program, the agency has detected melamine contamination in Blue Cat Flavor Drinks. The distributor of the product, Tristar Food Wholesale Co. Inc., initiated a recall of several flavors of Blue Cat Flavor Drink, based on the FDA's findings. The FDA advises the public not to consume this product and recommends that retailers and food service operators remove the product from sale or service.

Other Recalls

On September 26, the FDA issued an alert to consumers that seven Mr. Brown instant coffee and milk tea products were being

More FDA News

recalled by the Taiwanese company, King Car Food Industrial Co. Ltd., due to possible contamination with melamine. King Car Food Industrial Co. used a non-dairy creamer manufactured by Shandong Duqing Inc., China, which was found to be contaminated with melamine. The recalled products are:

1. Mr. Brown Mandheling Blend Instant Coffee (3-in-1)
2. Mr. Brown Arabica Instant Coffee (3-in-1)
3. Mr. Brown Blue Mountain Blend Instant Coffee (3-in-1)
4. Mr. Brown Caramel Macchiato Instant Coffee (3-in-1)
5. Mr. Brown French Vanilla Instant Coffee (3-in-1)
6. Mr. Brown Mandhling Blend instant Coffee (2-in-1)
7. Mr. Brown Milk Tea (3-in-1)

The FDA recommends that consumers not consume any of the above Mr. Brown instant coffee and milk tea products. The FDA also recommends that retailers and foodservice operators remove the products from sale or service.

Sunny Maid Corp. Monterey Park, Calif., who is an importer and distributor of Mr. Brown Instant Coffee products, is recalling the products in the United States.

The FDA is working with regulatory agencies in the United States as well as with other countries. The California Department of Public Health and the New Zealand Food Safety Authority reported that its testing of White Rabbit Creamy Candies has shown melamine contamination at high levels. In light of the widespread contamination of milk and milk-based products in China and the New Zealand Food Safety Authority's finding, the FDA continues to recommend that consumers not eat White Rabbit Creamy Candy and that retailers and foodservice

operations remove the product from sale or service.

A recall by QFCO Inc., Burlingame, Calif., of the White Rabbit Creamy Candies, is underway in the United States.

The FDA is closely monitoring these recalls and will continue to perform follow up activities of other recalls that may develop.

To date, the FDA is not aware of any illnesses in the United States stemming from consumption of Blue Cat Flavor Drinks, White Rabbit Creamy Candy, or the Mr. Brown instant coffee and milk tea products.

Individuals who have experienced any health problems after consuming Blue Cat Flavor Drinks, White Rabbit Creamy Candy, or any of the identified Mr. Brown coffee and tea products are advised to contact their health care professional.

Background

On September 12, 2008, in light of reports from China of melamine contaminated infant formula, the FDA issued a Health Information Advisory to assure the American public that there is no known threat of contamination in infant formula manufactured by companies that have met the requirements to sell such products in the United States. That advisory also warned members of Chinese communities in the United States that infant formula manufactured in China, possibly available for purchase at Asian markets, could pose a risk to infants.

The FDA had contacted the companies who manufacture infant formula for distribution in the United States and received, from the companies, information that they are not importing formula or sourcing milk-based materials from China.

More FDA News

At the same time, the FDA—in conjunction with state and local officials—began a nation-wide investigation to check Asian markets for Chinese manufactured infant formula that may have been brought into the United States. In particular, this effort focused on areas of the country with large Chinese communities, such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle and New York. To date, investigators have visited more than 1,800 retail markets and have not found Chinese infant formula present on shelves in these markets.

The FDA also advises consumers not to purchase infant formula manufactured in China from Internet sites or from other sources.

The FDA has taken, and will continue to take, proactive measures to help ensure the safety of the American food supply. In conjunction with state and local officials, the FDA will continue to visit Asian markets for food items that are imported from China and that could contain a significant amount of milk or milk proteins. In addition, the FDA has broadened its domestic and import sampling and testing of milk-derived ingredients and finished food products containing milk, such as candies, desserts, and beverages that could contain these ingredients from Chinese sources. Milk-derived ingredients include whole milk powder, non-fat milk powder, whey powder, lactose powder, and casein.

In addition to state and local governments, the FDA is working in close cooperation with Customs and Border Protection within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, other federal agencies, and foreign governments.

<http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2008/News01896.html> **Consumer Inquiries:**
888-INFO-FDA

"Dear Colleague" Letter to the United States Food Manufacturing Industry, Regarding Melamine

October 10, 2008

This letter is intended to ensure that members of the United States food manufacturing industry are aware of the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) serious concern about the possibility that foods or food ingredients produced in China and exported to the United States may be contaminated with melamine or its analogues. FDA has information indicating that melamine and its analogues have been added to milk produced in China and that milk contaminated in such a fashion has been used to manufacture infant formulas and other dairy-based products. As of this writing, Chinese authorities are reporting that in China approximately 53,000 infants have suffered illnesses, with 13,000 hospitalizations and four deaths.

Approximately 158 of the victims thus far have suffered acute kidney failure. Chinese authorities have disclosed that, in addition to discovering contaminated infant formulas, melamine has been discovered in 24 of 1202 samples of milk and yogurt. There is little information at this stage to determine when the contamination might have begun or how widespread the contamination might be. However, Chinese authorities report that melamine was found in infant formula, milk, yogurt, and ice cream manufactured by 22 companies in China. The Chinese investigation into this matter is ongoing.

There are currently two recalls for products in the United States related to this situation. Tristar Food Wholesale Co., Inc. has issued a recall of Blue Cat Flavor Drink (Lanmao), manufactured in China, due to possible contamination with melamine. Also, seven Mr. Brown brand instant coffee and milk tea products manufactured in China are being recalled by the King Car Food Industrial Co., Ltd. due to possible contamination with

More FDA News

melamine. In addition, California and Connecticut report that their testing of White Rabbit Creamy Candies manufactured in China has shown melamine contamination.

Further, other countries (South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, Australia, Indonesia, Canada and New Zealand) have all identified products containing melamine including flavored milks, cakes, candies, crackers, rice snacks, coffee creamer, lactoferrin, and cereal.

Milk and milk products that could originate from China include condensed, dried, and non-fat milk, condensed and dried whey, lactose powder, permeate powder, demineralized and partially demineralized whey powders, caseins, yogurt, ice cream, cheese, whey protein concentrate, and milk protein concentrate.

In light of current circumstances, there are several useful steps to help protect the public health available to manufacturers of products containing milk-derived ingredients, including the following:

1. Know the precise origin of each milk-derived ingredient. For example, milk-derived ingredients that are sourced from countries other than China could actually originate from China.
2. Determine that milk-derived ingredients originating from China are free of melamine and its analogues prior to usage.
3. For food manufactured in the last twelve months which might still be on the shelf at retail or in stock elsewhere, determine whether the food might contain any milk-derived ingredients

from China. If any such foods exist, verify that they do not contain melamine or its analogues.

In addition, it would be useful for manufacturers to be alert to the possibility that non-milk-derived ingredients from China that are or may be sold on the basis of protein content, such as soy protein, also could be contaminated with melamine.

Should firms decide to recall any of their products because of the presence of melamine, please follow FDA's guidelines in 21 CFR Part 7 Subpart C. We encourage you to communicate any concerns to your local FDA district office.

A gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) as well as a liquid chromatograph-tandem mass spectrometry (LC-MS/MS) method for determining melamine and its analogues is available at the following link to the FDA website:

<http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/melamine.html#testing>.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, you may contact John F. Sheehan, J.D. at (301)436-2367 or Benson M. Silverman, M.D. (301)436-1459.

Sincerely,

Nega Beru, Ph.D.
Director
Office of Food Safety
Center for Food Safety And Applied Nutrition

From the Editor

The time has come for the proverbial “changing of the guard”. Rodney Rice has agreed to be the new Editor and I take this opportunity to thank you for all of your support over the years. I am sure that Rodney will do a great job, please support his efforts.

*Best,
Palak Raval-Nelson, PhD, MPH*

From Rodney Rice:

I am excited and humbled by this opportunity. With your support I will do my best to report pertinent news from reliable sources. As you know we are continuing our efforts to encourage participation in the Bell Ringer, so if you have a story idea, an announcement, or information, please email it to me at Rodney.rice@phila.gov. Also, feel free to provide feedback on the articles in the issues or write a letter to the Editor. Lastly, space is available for advertising in the Bell Ringer, just send me the information in an email and I will contact you. I look forward to your feedback and participation.

Tentative Schedule of Meetings

Winter: December 5, 2008

Save the Date for the Annual Conference in May!

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website:**

**[http://www.casafdo.
org/](http://www.casafdo.org/)**

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one that would make a
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