

THE BELL RINGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PHILADELPHIA CONFERENCE OF THE
CENTRAL ATLANTIC STATES ASSOCIATION OF FOOD AND DRUG

SPRING 2008



THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As previous CASA Presidents have said, I have truly enjoyed my terms in the office of president. We have had many changes during my time of service and I hope that I have served both the Philadelphia Conference and you well. I also want to point out that without all of you, my time of service would not have been as rewarding and I would not have had the opportunity to meet such a diverse and professional group of people.

So in my last President's message, I want to share some more changes that are on the horizon with you. I would like to congratulate our new Conference Officers and wish them well in their new positions. I believe that Palak Raval-Nelson and Mary Beck, our newly elected president and vice-president, along with the remaining board members will be outstanding leaders for our conference and will clearly guide us through this ever-changing environment. As you may not be aware, Philadelphia will be hosting the Annual Conference in 2009. This is a mammoth task and preparations have already begun. Please help to make this conference a memorable one by volunteering your services. Even the smallest amount of help will provide our conference with what it needs to stage an outstanding annual conference.

I encourage your continued participation in our local conference and all CASA activities. The conference is what we make it, so go out there and encourage membership and support for CASA. Thank you again for all of your support over the years and I look forward to continue my work with CASA.

*Sincerely,
Bernie Finkel*



Federal News

Salmonella Illnesses in Multiple States may be Linked to Recently Recalled Cereal

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) today announced that at least 23 people in 14 states have been diagnosed with salmonellosis that was caused by the same strain of *Salmonella* that was found in the recently recalled unsweetened Puffed Rice and unsweetened Puffed Wheat Cereals produced by Malt-O-Meal.

The recalled products were distributed nationally under the Malt-O-Meal brand name as well as under private label brands including Acme, America's Choice, Food Club, Giant, Hannaford, Jewel, Laura Lynn, Pathmark, Shaw's, ShopRite, Tops and Weis Quality. The cereals have "Best If Used By" dates from April 8, 2008 (coded as "APR0808") through March 18, 2009 (coded as "MAR1809").

Consumers should throw out any product in their homes from these recalled lots. Grocery stores and other retailers should promptly remove the cereals from their shelves.

Salmonella is a type of bacteria that can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people,

and others with weakened immune systems. Symptoms of foodborne *Salmonella* infection include nausea, vomiting, fever, diarrhea, and abdominal cramps. In persons with poor health or weakened immune systems, *Salmonella* can invade the bloodstream and cause life-threatening infections.

Individuals who believe they may have experienced an illness consistent with the symptoms described above after consuming a puffed wheat or puffed rice cereal made by Malt-O-Meal should contact their health care practitioner immediately and report the illness to their state or local health authorities.

On April 5, 2008, [Malt-O-Meal voluntarily recalled](#) the cereals because the company's routine testing found *Salmonella* in a product produced on March 24, 2008.

The FDA is working with Malt-O-Meal to determine the cause of the contamination and with the states and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to identify and prevent additional illnesses.

A full list of recalled products can be found at www.malt-o-meal.com/recallinfo.



Federal News

Federal Agents Seize Nearly \$1.3 Million of Illegal Dietary Supplements

Products alleged to be adulterated under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act

At the request of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, on Wednesday U.S. Marshals seized more than \$1,301,712 of dietary supplements from LG Sciences, LLC, of Brighton, Mich., because the products contain unapproved food additives and/or new dietary ingredients that cause the products to violate the law. Labeled as dietary supplements, the products are marketed for use by body builders.

The dietary supplements seized were marketed and distributed on-line and in retail stores under the names "Methyl 1-D," "Methyl 1-D XL," and "Formadrol Extreme XL."

The seized products previously were tested and found to contain one or more unapproved food additives and/or new dietary ingredients for which there is inadequate information to provide reasonable assurance that the ingredients do not present a significant or unreasonable risk of illness or injury.

"The FDA takes seriously its responsibility to protect Americans from unsafe dietary supplements," said Margaret Glavin, FDA's Associate Commissioner of the Office of Regulatory Affairs. "Wednesday's action shows FDA's commitment to protecting consumers from potentially harmful products."

"Working with the FDA, we are taking prompt civil action to protect the public health by seizing these illegal products and forestalling their shipment into the stream of commerce in any manner that

could create harm to the public," said U.S. Attorney Stephen J. Murphy. "I commend the professionalism and swift action of the FDA investigators who discovered and investigated this serious problem, and I am glad our lawyers could provide the legal muscle needed to support the seizure."

FDA has not received scientific information on the safety of the seized products and cannot determine, at this time, whether they represent a hazard to consumers. Therefore, consumers who still have the products should strongly consider discussing the use of these products with their health care professionals. FDA also recommends that consumers consult their health care professionals if they have experienced any adverse events that they suspect are related to the products' use. Consumers and health care professionals can report adverse events to the FDA's MedWatch program at 800-FDA-1088 or online at www.FDA.gov/medwatch/report.htm.

On March 2006, the FDA warned Legal Gear (the predecessor of LG Sciences) to cease distribution of a different product that was marketed as a dietary supplement but was actually an unapproved new drug containing synthetic steroids.



Federal News

FDA Warns of Salmonella Risk with Cantaloupes from Agropecuaria Montelibano

The agency detains products from the Honduran manufacturer

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has issued an import alert regarding entry of cantaloupe from Agropecuaria Montelibano, a Honduran grower and packer, because, based on current information, fruit from this company appears to be associated with a Salmonella Litchfield outbreak in the United States and Canada. The import alert advises FDA field offices that all cantaloupes shipped to the United States by this company are to be detained.

In addition, the FDA has contacted importers about this action and is advising U.S. grocers, food service operators, and produce processors to remove from their stock any cantaloupes from this company. The FDA also advises consumers who have recently bought cantaloupes to check with the place of purchase to determine if the fruit came from this specific grower and packer. If so, consumers should throw away the cantaloupes.

To date, the FDA has received reports of 50 illnesses in 16 states and nine illnesses in Canada linked to the consumption of cantaloupes. No deaths have been reported; however, 14 people have been hospitalized. The states are Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin.

The FDA is taking this preventive measure while the agency continues to investigate this outbreak in cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention and state partners. Such intervention is a key component of FDA's [Food Protection Plan](#).

Symptoms of foodborne Salmonella infection include nausea, vomiting, fever, diarrhea, and abdominal cramps. In persons with poor health or weakened immune systems, Salmonella can invade the bloodstream and cause life-threatening infections. Individuals who have recently eaten cantaloupe and experienced any of these symptoms should contact their health care professional.

The FDA recommends that consumers take the following steps to reduce the risk of contracting Salmonella or other foodborne illnesses from cantaloupes:

- Purchase cantaloupes that are not bruised or damaged. If buying fresh-cut cantaloupe, be sure it is refrigerated or surrounded by ice.
- After purchase, refrigerate cantaloupes promptly.
- Wash hands with hot, soapy water before and after handling fresh cantaloupes.
- Scrub whole cantaloupes by using a clean produce brush and cool tap water immediately before eating. Don't use soap or detergents.
- Use clean cutting surfaces and utensils when cutting cantaloupes. Wash cutting boards, countertops, dishes, and utensils with hot water and soap between the preparation of raw meat, poultry, or seafood and the preparation of cantaloupe.

Federal News

- If there happens to be a bruised or damaged area on a cantaloupe, cut away those parts before eating it.
- Leftover cut cantaloupe should be discarded if left at room temperature for more than two hours.
- Use a cooler with ice or use ice gel packs when transporting or storing cantaloupes outdoors.

For more information on produce safety, please visit: <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/prodsafe.html>.



U.S. Importers and Food Manufacturers That Received Cantaloupe From Agropecuaria Montelibano

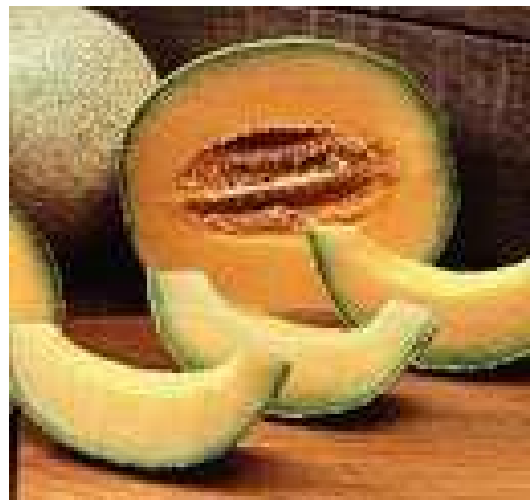
The 10 importers listed below received cantaloupes from Honduran grower and packer Agropecuaria Montelibano. Next to each importer listed are the brand names under which the cantaloupe is marketed. For example, the importer Bounty Fresh, LLC, sold cantaloupe from Agropecuaria Montelibano under the brand names "Chestnut Hill Farms" and "Perfect Melon." Please note that many of the companies have initiated voluntary recalls of their products. It is also important to note that cantaloupes

imported to the United States from other countries and from other Honduran companies may still enter the U.S. as before. Only cantaloupe originating from Agropecuaria Montelibano should be discarded.

Also listed are food manufacturers that market cut fruit products from Agropecuaria Montelibano.

Some importers and food manufacturers may receive cantaloupe from multiple sources, including other countries, so it is important for companies to check with their suppliers to determine the exact source of their cantaloupe. Again, only cantaloupe originating from Agropecuaria Montelibano should be discarded.

Consumers who have bought cantaloupes or products containing cantaloupe should check with the place of purchase to determine if their cantaloupe came from Agropecuaria Montelibano.



Federal News

CDC Report Points to Need for New Foodborne Illness Strategies

A 10-state report released Thursday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showed little change in the incidence of some foodborne infections after a period of decline.

The findings are from 2007 data reported to the CDC as part of the agency's Foodborne Diseases Active Surveillance Network, FoodNet. FoodNet monitors foodborne disease and conducts related epidemiologic studies to help health officials better understand the epidemiology of foodborne diseases in the United States. Although the FoodNet population is similar to the U.S. population, the findings are used to detect trends in foodborne illness and should not be generalized for the entire U.S. population.

Campylobacter, *Listeria*, *Salmonella*, *Shigella*, *E.coli O157*, *Vibrio*, and *Yersinia* did not decline significantly, and the estimated incidence of *Cryptosporidium* increased when compared with the previous three years (2004-2006). Although there have been significant declines in the incidence of some foodborne infections since surveillance began in 1996, these declines all occurred before 2004.

“The results show that prevention efforts have been partly successful, but there has been little further progress in the most recent years,” said Dr. Robert Tauxe, deputy director of CDC's Division of Foodborne, Bacterial and Mycotic Diseases. “More needs to be done to make our food safer. We are constantly working to help our public health system better detect, investigate and control outbreaks and to understand how to prevent foodborne illnesses from happening in the first place. FoodNet is an important part of our food safety system and is how we measure progress.”

“FoodNet is an important public health surveillance tool,” according to Faye Feldstein, acting director of the Federal Drug Administration's (FDA) Office of Food Defense. “FDA will continue to support this important endeavor and is committed to pursuing strategies to reduce all foodborne illness. FDA's Food Protection Plan represents a major new initiative that is heavily focused on prevention linked to targeted intervention and rapid response that is taking a production to consumption approach to addressing protection of the food supply”

Consumers can reduce their risk for foodborne illness by following safe food-handling recommendations and by avoiding the consumption of unpasteurized milk, raw or undercooked oysters, raw or undercooked eggs, raw or undercooked ground beef, and undercooked poultry. The risk for foodborne illness can also be decreased by choosing in-shell pasteurized eggs, irradiated ground meat, and high pressure-treated oysters.

The full report, “Preliminary FoodNet Data on the Incidence of Infection with Pathogens Transmitted Commonly Through Food – 10 States, United States, 2007” appears in this week's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (April 11, 2008) and is available online at www.cdc.gov/mmwr. To learn more about FoodNet, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/foodnet/>. To learn more about foodborne infections, visit http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/foodborneinfections_g.htm





From the Editor



The Spring Season is here. 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 palak.raval-nelson@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. Enjoy the Spring flowers and don't forget about the upcoming elections and the Annual Conference!

Tentative Schedule of Meetings

Summer: June 20, 2008

**Make sure to register your email on the CASA website:
<http://www.casafdo.org/>**

**Mark your
calendars!
Annual
Conference will be
May 5th to 9th**

**Hey, do you know some
one that would make a
great CASA member?**

**Bring them to a meeting!
Tell them about CASA!
Get them to join!**