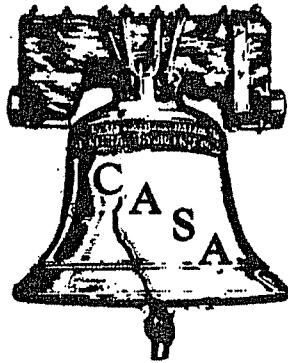


THE BELL RINGER

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

SPRING 2010



THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

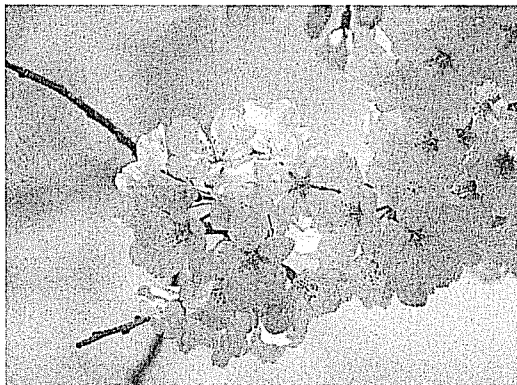
As my term comes to an end, I would like to thank the membership for your dedicated support to the Philadelphia Conference of CASA and me. I am confident that the next President will assist our organization in its mission to continue to provide the best training available. Always remember, it would be impossible for us to accomplish our mission without your participation, support and input.

As we endure another tough economic year, CASA will continue to provide highly informative training sessions at a very low cost. It is our mission and duty to provide you with invaluable training opportunities to assist you in accomplishing your goal of consumer protection. Although we all are facing tough financial times and cut backs in our work place, I applaud you for your continued support of CASA. Let us continue to remember those in need at every training meeting. Patricia Taylor will continue to coordinate this special program. **The following items are needed:** juice/drink mixes, tuna, peanut butter & jelly, Jell-O/ pudding, hamburger helper, rice, pancake mix & syrup, paper products- toilet paper, paper towels and tissues, condiments- ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, toiletries-soap, toothpaste, shampoo, and deodorant.

Thank you again for allowing me to be your President.

Respectfully,

Palak Raval-Nelson, PhD, MPH



FDA NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: March 3, 2010
Media Inquiries: Rita Chappelle, 301-796-4672, rita.chappelle@fda.hhs.gov
Consumer Inquiries: 888-INFO-FDA

FDA, FSIS, CDC Collaborate on Methods to Measure Success of Food Safety Programs

Public workshop scheduled for March 30

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) will host a joint public workshop on how best to measure progress in reducing food borne illnesses on March 30, in Washington, D.C.

The President's Food Safety Working Group has emphasized the need for improved metrics for evaluating the government's efforts to prevent food borne illness. The workshop will focus on current methods for evaluating food safety progress, the methodological and data challenges involved, and the potential for improved metrics.

"Being able to draw links between what we're doing to keep the food supply safe and the frequency of human illness is crucial for gauging the effectiveness of our programs – what changes are needed, and in what areas," said FDA Deputy Commissioner for Foods Michael Taylor.

"To make our food safer, we must know as quickly as possible which foods are making people ill and why," said USDA Deputy under Secretary for Food Safety Jerold R. Mande. "This meeting will help us develop the specific measures we need to see which policies work best to improve food safety."

The public workshop will include explanations, by CDC, of how rates of

foodborne illness are estimated for various purposes; for example, to determine overall rates of food borne illness and rates for specific pathogens. FDA, FSIS, and a state representative will describe other measurements they use to gauge the success of policies and other interventions for reducing food borne illness.

"The data we collect and analyze can provide critical insights to guide our food safety programs; all stakeholders should understand how this information is best applied to advance food safety in the United States." Dr. Rima Khabbaz, Deputy Director of Infectious Diseases, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For more information about the workshop, go to:
<http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-4110.pdf>¹

To register on-line, visit:
<http://www.fda.gov/Food/NewsEvents/WorkshopsMeetingsConferences/ucm201102.htm>
On-line pre-registration ends March 24.

FDA NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: March 11, 2010
Media Inquiries: Michael Herndon, 301-796-4673, Michael.Herndon@fda.hhs.gov
Consumer Inquiries: 888-INFO-FDA

FDA Update on the Investigation into the Salmonella Montevideo Outbreak

As part of the *Salmonella* Montevideo investigation, the Food and Drug Administration has been actively investigating the supply chain of black and red pepper supplied to Daniele International Inc., Pascoag, R.I.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports, that 249 people have been infected with a matching strain of

Salmonella Montevideo in at least 44 states and the District of Columbia. Analysis of an epidemiologic study comparing foods eaten by individuals who were sickened identified salami/salame as a possible source of illness: <http://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/montevideo/index.html>¹.

Daniele International Inc. recalled a variety of ready-to-eat Italian-style meats after *Salmonella* was associated with its products. A complete listing of the recalled products, which are regulated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service, can be found at: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Recall_006_2010_Products/index.asp.²

As a result of the investigation, a number of spice products are now being recalled by Mincing Overseas Spice Company, Dayton, N.J.; and Wholesome Spice Company, Brooklyn, N.Y. Both supply pepper to Daniele International Inc. Based on recent test results, Mincing Overseas Spice Company and Wholesome Spice Company are conducting new recalls.

Products Recalled by Mincing Overseas Spice Company

- Black Pepper Lot 3258 in 50-pound, 25-pound, and 20-pound cartons with Mincing Overseas Spice Company's name on the outside
- Black Pepper Lot 3309 in 50-pound, 25-pound, and 20-pound cartons with Mincing Overseas Spice Company's name on the outside.

Products Recalled by Wholesome Spice Company

- Ground Red Pepper sold to Daniele International Inc.
- Whole Black Pepper sold to Daniele International Inc.
- Crushed Red Pepper sold from April 6, 2009, to Jan. 20, 2010 in 25-pound boxes (Recalled on Feb. 25.)

Both Mincing Overseas Spice Company and Wholesome Spice Company sell products directly to commercial customers, who may have incorporated them into their own products.

To date, two of Mincing Overseas Spice Company's distributors, Dutch Valley Food Distributors, Inc. and Frontier Natural Products Co-Op, have announced voluntary recalls of potentially contaminated product.

Dutch Valley Food Distributors, Inc. is voluntarily recalling a variety of seasonings and dip mixes sold under the Bulk Foods Inc. label. The list of products being recalled can be found in the [Dutch Valley Food Distributors, Inc.](#)³ press release.

Frontier Natural Products Co-Op is voluntarily recalling several of its products manufactured with non-organic black pepper that were sold under the Frontier brand and under the Whole Foods Market brands. Please check [Frontier Natural Products Co-Op](#)⁴ press release for a listing of recalled products.

Restaurateurs, foodservice operators, and consumers should not use the products being recalled by either of these companies.

The FDA continues to work with Mincing Overseas Spice Company and Wholesome Spice Company to identify customers who

received the recalled product and determine if further recalls are necessary. Consumers are encouraged to frequently check FDA's website for the latest company recall information.

The FDA is working with CDC, USDA-FSIS, the state of Rhode Island and other states to determine the extent to which pepper played a role in the *Salmonella* Montevideo outbreak. The Agency has collected 153 composite pepper samples, which represent more than 3,600 sub-samples, at various locations in the supply chain. Samples from four products collected at Daniele International Inc. tested positive for *Salmonella*. Samples of crushed red pepper have tested positive for the outbreak strain; the FDA is working to determine if the type of *Salmonella* found in the other products also matches the outbreak strain.

As part of FDA's investigation, the Agency collected samples of pepper from other customers who received product from Mincing Overseas Spice Company and Wholesome Spice Company. Thus far, two of the samples collected have tested positive for types of *Salmonella* not associated with the current national *Salmonella* Montevideo outbreak. These findings prompted Heartland Foods Inc.⁵ to recall course ground pepper and Mincing Overseas Spice Company to recall black pepper lot 3309.

The FDA is in the process of taking a closer look at the handling of spices from farm to table and in the spring of 2009 began work on a spice risk profile. A risk profile is designed to capture the current state of knowledge related to an issue and identify any knowledge gaps. This particular risk profile focuses on microbiological contaminants and filth issues related to spices. Some members of the spice industry have already agreed to provide data to FDA for the risk profile. The risk profile will

provide vital information to risk management decision-makers and will help the agency determine the best way to mitigate food borne illness issues associated with spices. Specifically it can help FDA determine: how to allocate resources, whether guidance for industry or for FDA inspectors is appropriate, or even the need for new rulemaking.

Salmonella can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. Healthy persons infected with *Salmonella* often experience fever, diarrhea (which may be bloody), nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. In rare circumstances, infection with *Salmonella* can result in the organism getting into the bloodstream and producing more severe illnesses such as arterial infections (infected aneurysms), endocarditis and arthritis. Individuals having consumed any Italian sausage products and who may be experiencing these symptoms should contact a health professional immediately. For details on *Salmonella* sources, symptoms, and treatment, please refer to the Salmonella page on FoodSafety.gov: <http://www.foodsafety.gov/poisoning/cause/s/bacteriaviruses/salmonella.html>.⁶

Additional Information:

Company Recalls

Dutch Valley Food Distributors, Inc. Recall⁷

Frontier Natural Products Co-Op Recall⁸

Heartland Foods Inc. Recall⁹

Mincing Overseas Spice Company Recall¹⁰

Wholesome Spice Company Recall¹¹

FOR CONSUMERS: THE HVP RECALL

The FDA is taking steps to protect the public following the early identification of *Salmonella* in one company's supply of a common processed food ingredient.

At this time, no illnesses are known to be associated with this problem of contamination.

To prevent illnesses from occurring, FDA is advising industry about which products to recall and providing consumers with recommendations.

What is HVP?

HVP stands for hydrolyzed vegetable protein, a substance used in small amounts to add flavor to many commercially processed foods, such as soups, hot dogs, chilis, stews, dips, salad dressings, gravies, frozen dinners, and snack foods.

What products are affected?

FDA has posted a searchable website of products affected by the recall online at www.FoodSafety.gov¹. This website will be updated as more products are recalled.

What I can I do?

FDA is recommending that consumers should:

- Check www.FoodSafety.gov² for a list of recalled products;
- Remember to follow cooking instructions for all foods;
- Report symptoms of Salmonella or other food-related illness to your local health care professional.

Can I tell whether a product contains HVP from the ingredient list?

Consumers should not rely on the ingredient list to identify products that contain HVP. Consumers with questions about a particular product should contact the manufacturer or visit www.FoodSafety.gov³.

How did FDA identify this problem?

FDA learned of this problem before any disease outbreak occurred. The agency received a report of contamination, inspected the facility and worked to put in place measures to instruct industry and protect consumers. FDA is continuing to assess the situation and may make additional recommendations as more information becomes available.

What is Salmonella?

Salmonella is the name of a group of bacteria and is one of the most common causes of bacterial food borne illness in the United States. It most commonly fever, diarrhea (which may be blood), nausea, vomiting, and abdominal pain. Consumers who experience any of the symptoms of *Salmonella* should contact their health care professional.

For the basics on *Salmonella* (such as sources, symptoms, duration of illness), see the *Salmonella* page on FoodSafety.gov at: <http://www.foodsafety.gov/poisoning/causes/bacteriaviruses/salmonella.html>⁴.

FDA NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: Nov. 13, 2009

Media Inquiries: Michael Herndon 301-796-4673, Michael.Herndon@fda.hhs.gov

Consumer Inquiries: 888-INFO-FDA

FDA To Look Into Safety of Caffeinated Alcoholic Beverages

Agency Sends Letters to Nearly 30 Manufacturers

The Food and Drug Administration today notified nearly 30 manufacturers of caffeinated alcoholic beverages that it intends to look into the safety and legality of their products.

“The increasing popularity of consumption of caffeinated alcoholic beverages by

college students and reports of potential health and safety issues necessitates that we look seriously at the scientific evidence as soon as possible,” said Dr. Joshua Sharfstein, principal deputy commissioner of food and drugs.

Of the combined use of caffeine and alcohol among U.S. college students in the few studies on this topic, the prevalence was as high as 26 percent.

Under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, a substance added intentionally to food (such as caffeine in alcoholic beverages) is deemed “unsafe” and is unlawful unless its particular use has been approved by FDA regulation, the substance is subject to a prior sanction, or the substance is Generally Recognized As Safe (GRAS). FDA has not approved the use of caffeine in alcoholic beverages and thus such beverages can be lawfully marketed only if their use is subject to a prior sanction or is GRAS. For a substance to be GRAS, there must be evidence of its safety at the levels used and a basis to conclude that this evidence is generally known and accepted by qualified experts.

The FDA alerted manufacturers to the fact that the agency is considering whether caffeine can lawfully be added to alcoholic beverages. The FDA noted that it is unaware of the basis upon which manufacturers may have concluded that the use of caffeine in alcoholic beverages is GRAS or prior sanctioned. To date, the FDA has only approved caffeine as an additive for use in soft drinks in concentrations of no greater than 200 parts per million. It has not approved caffeine for use at any level in alcoholic beverages.

The FDA requested that, within 30 days, the companies produce evidence of their rationale, with supporting data and information, for concluding that the use of

caffeine in their product is GRAS or prior sanctioned. FDA's letter informed each company that if FDA determines that the use of caffeine in the firm's alcoholic beverages is not GRAS or prior sanctioned, FDA will take appropriate action to ensure that the products are removed from the marketplace.

In the past year, Anheuser-Busch and Miller agreed to discontinue their popular caffeinated alcoholic beverages, Tilt and Bud Extra and Sparks, and agreed to not produce any caffeinated alcoholic beverages in the future.

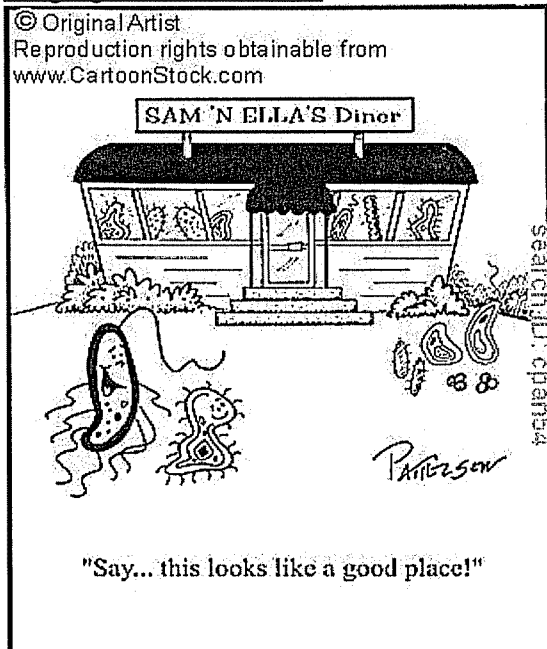
The federal agency with primary responsibility for regulating alcoholic beverages, the Treasury Department's Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, requires that alcoholic beverages contain only ingredients that satisfy FDA's requirements for use.

In late September, the FDA received a letter from 18 Attorneys General and one city attorney expressing concerns about caffeinated alcoholic beverages.

For more information visit:

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodIngredientsPa>

ckaging/ucm190366.htm¹



SLIM-FAST RECALL Q&A

On Dec. 3, Unilever United States, Inc., announced a nationwide voluntary recall of all of its Slim-Fast ready-to-drink products in cans due to the risk of contamination with *Bacillus cereus*. The Questions and Answers below provide additional information about *Bacillus cereus*, the recalled products, and the FDA's investigation of the situation.

What is *Bacillus cereus*?

Bacillus cereus is a bacterium that can cause foodborne illness.

What are the symptoms of illness caused by *Bacillus cereus*?

Bacillus cereus can cause two types of foodborne illness -- a diarrheal illness and a vomiting illness.

- Symptoms of *Bacillus cereus* diarrheal illness include watery diarrhea, abdominal cramps, and pain beginning six to 15 hours after consumption of contaminated food. Nausea may accompany these

symptoms, but vomiting rarely occurs. Symptoms for the diarrheal illness typically persist for 24 hours.

- Symptoms of *Bacillus cereus* vomiting type of illness include nausea and vomiting within 30 minutes to six hours after consumption of contaminated foods. Occasionally, abdominal cramps and/or diarrhea may also occur. Duration of the symptoms for the vomiting type of illness is generally less than 24 hours.
- More information on *Bacillus cereus* and the illness it causes is available at this link to [FDA's Bad Bug Book](#)¹.

How can I tell if the product I have is the same as the product under recall?

The recalled products are packaged in paperboard cartons and contain 4, 6 or 12 steel cans that are labeled as containing 11 FL OZ (325 mL) each. Individual cans are also sold in certain retail outlets. The recall involves all Slim-Fast ready-to-drink products in cans, regardless of flavor, Best-By date, lot code, or UPC number. A listing of all recalled Slim-Fast ready-to-drink products in cans and a photograph of a recalled product are attached to the firm's press release, which is available on the [FDA's Safety Alerts Page](#)².

Are all Slim-Fast products affected by this recall?

No. Only Slim-Fast ready-to-drink products in cans are affected by this recall.

I recently drank some of the recalled product and feel sick. What should I do?

If you are experiencing symptoms described above and have recently ingested some of the recalled product, FDA advises that you see a doctor.

I have some of the recalled product in my home. What should I do with it?

Consumers who have any of the recalled products on hand should throw them away immediately.

I drank some of the recalled product but did not get sick. Can I continue to drink the product I have on hand?

No. The product is under voluntary recall and consumers should not drink any of the recalled Slim-Fast products.

I feel sick but haven't drunk any of the recalled products for several days. Could it be the product that made me sick?

Its highly unlikely. The onset of symptoms of *Bacillus cereus* illness normally occurs within a 1/2 hour to 15 hours after a contaminated food product has been consumed, but, if you are unsure, then you should see a doctor.

What is the FDA doing about this recall?
FDA is investigating at the processing plant where the recalled products were manufactured, and working directly with the company to ensure that all suspect products are removed from the marketplace and that the public and the media are informed about this product recall and the potential risk to consumers.

Can I get my money back for recalled product I have already purchased?

Unilever has advised customers to call 1-800-896-9479 for a full refund.

FDA NOTE TO CORRESPONDENTS

For Immediate Release: March 2, 2010
Media Inquiries: Ira Allen, 301-796-5349, ira.allen@fda.hhs.gov
Consumer Inquiries: 888-INFO-FDA

FDA Survey Finds More Americans Read Information on Food Labels

Majority doubt claims such as 'low fat,' 'high fiber,' or 'cholesterol free'

A majority of consumers read food labels and are increasingly aware of the link between good nutrition and reducing the risk of disease, according to the latest survey of dietary habits released today by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

The 2008 U.S. Health and Diet Survey of more than 2,500 adults from all 50 states and the District of Columbia found that, for the first time, more than half of those surveyed "often" read a label the first time they buy a product. Yet, while the number of consumers reading a food label the first time they buy a product has risen, consumers are skeptical of industry claims such as "low fat," "high fiber," or "cholesterol free" on the front of packages.

The 2008 survey is the 10th such survey since 1982. It was based on a random-digit-dialing telephone survey weighted for the number of phone lines and adults in a household, gender, race/ethnicity, and education. Calls for the survey were made between Sept. 6, 2008, and Dec. 7, 2008. The overall 95 percent confidence level is plus or minus 2 percentage points.

For more information:

- [Fact Sheet: Key Findings from 2002 and 2008 U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Health and Diet Survey](#)¹
- [Consumer Updates: Survey Shows Gains in Food-Label Use, Health/Diet Awareness](#)²
- [2008 Health and Diet Survey](#)³

From the Editor

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www.flickr.com
Well, we made it! Spring is almost here. Time to dust off the lawn mowers and get the grills cleaned up. While we enjoy our liberties and good fortune, let's not forget those still enduring hardship in Haiti. Donations are still being accepted through various charities.

The next training meeting is right around the corner (March 20, 2010). Jack Welte, our Education Committee Chair, is looking for new training topics. We need to know your interests, ideas and concerns to assist us in the development and implementation of new training sessions which cover topics that you feel are pertinent. I encourage you to take an active role in our organization. If you really want to make an impact on the organization, run for Representative to the Executive Board of Mama CASA. Election will be held this March.

Do you have information that needs to be heard? 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 Kinger; simply send me the information in an email and I will contact you. I look forward to your feedback and participation. Enjoy the Holiday Season.



Rodney D. Rice, MBA

CASA Upcoming Training Meetings

"Dues will be accepted"

Spring Meeting	March 12, 2010
Summer Meeting	June 11, 2010
Fall Meeting	September 17, 2010
Winter Meeting	December 10, 2010

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Election will be held this March...