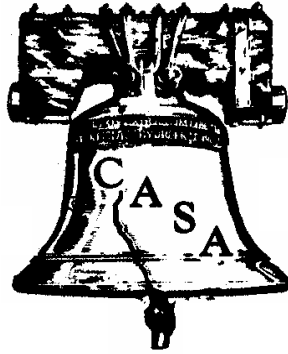


THE BELL RINGER

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

SUMMER 2008



THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I would like to begin by saying that I am honored to be your president. The executive board and I are working diligently to provide informative training sessions and increase membership, but we cannot accomplish these tasks without your participation and support. During these times of limited resources, CASA continues to provide great training sessions at low cost. You should encourage your organization to take advantage of these training opportunities. Jack Welte our Education Committee chair he is doing a great job, please feel free to provide him with suggestions for topics.

Our organization could not and would not exist without our members. We need to know your ideas for potential training topics and your interests, as well as any concerns you may have. Please feel to email or call me. I encourage you to take an active role in our organization.

As an organization that promotes public health and safety, we will also be accepting can goods and food donations at all training meetings for those who are 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

Federal News

U.S. Grown Jalapeño and Serrano Peppers Not Connected to Salmonella Saintpaul Outbreak

July 25, 2008
Consumer Inquiries:
888-INFO-FDA

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is advising consumers that jalapeño and Serrano peppers grown in the United States are not connected with the current Salmonella Saintpaul outbreak.

However, the FDA continues to advise consumers to avoid raw jalapeño peppers--and the food that contains them--if they have been grown, harvested or packed in Mexico.

In addition to domestically grown raw jalapeño peppers, commercially canned, pickled and cooked jalapeño peppers from any and all geographic locations also are not connected with the current Salmonella Saintpaul outbreak.

The FDA is working with state regulatory agencies and food industry groups that represent restaurants, grocery stores and wholesalers to ensure everyone clearly understands this new, more narrow, advisory. The FDA will continue to refine its consumer guidance as the agency's investigation continues.

The more narrow advisory the FDA is issuing today is based on evidence gathered during a multi-week, intensive investigation conducted in partnership with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and public health authorities in several U.S. states to find the source of the contamination that led to the outbreak. The collective review of the current traceback investigation and harvesting dates, matched with the dates that people became ill, have combined to

indicate that the contaminated jalapeño pepper originated in Mexico.

Additional traceback and traceforward information obtained this week has led to the determination that the Agricola Zaragoza produce-distribution center in McAllen, Texas--from where FDA took the positive jalapeño pepper sample--was not the original source of the contamination.

The FDA is continuing to advise that people in high-risk populations, such as elderly persons, infants and people with impaired immune systems, avoid eating raw Serrano peppers from Mexico or food made from raw Serrano peppers from Mexico until further notice.

Photos of Jalapeno and Serrano Peppers



More Federal News

FDA Advises Against Consumption of Tomalley from American Lobster (also known as “Maine Lobster”)

Regulators find dangerous levels of toxins that cause Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning in tomalley of American Lobsters. This advisory applies only to tomalley and not to lobster meat.

July 28, 2008 Consumer Inquiries:
888-INFO-FDA

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration today warned consumers to avoid eating tomalley from American Lobster, regardless of where the lobster was harvested, because of potential contamination with dangerous levels of the toxins that cause Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP).

American lobster are harvested from the waters of the Atlantic Ocean from Northeastern Canada to South Carolina, inclusive.

The FDA advisory applies only to tomalley, the soft, green substance found in the body cavity of the lobster that functions as the liver and pancreas. Cooking does not eliminate the PSP toxins. However, studies have shown that, even when high levels of PSP toxins are present in lobster tomalley, lobster meat itself is typically unaffected. There is no indication that consumers need to be concerned about PSP toxicity in lobster meat.

Symptoms of PSP include tingling and/or numbness of the mouth, face or neck; muscle weakness; headache; and nausea. In extreme cases, when large amounts of the toxin are consumed, these symptoms can lead to respiratory failure and death. Symptoms usually occur within two hours of exposure to the toxin. Anyone experiencing these symptoms should seek medical attention.

PSP toxins normally occur from time to time in clams and other shellfish and are carefully monitored by state regulatory authorities. The FDA learned of this problem after routine sampling conducted by regulatory authorities in Maine and New Hampshire found dangerous levels of the toxins in lobster tomalley. Some shellfish beds have been closed in recent months due to elevated levels of PSP toxins.

Lobster tomalley normally does not contain dangerous levels of PSP toxins. The current high levels of PSP toxins likely are associated with an ongoing red tide episode in northern New England and eastern Canada. Canadian authorities recommend limited consumption of lobster tomalley. However, authorities in Maine, Massachusetts and New Hampshire have issued advisories cautioning against eating any tomalley.

For more on seafood safety, please refer to <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/seafood1.html>.



More Federal News

FDA Food Protection Plan Shows Significant Progress

The agency unveiled the plan just months ago to help keep Americans enjoying one of the safest food supplies in the world

July 2, 2008

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Food Protection Plan Progress Report, released today in conjunction with the Interagency Working Group on Import Safety Action Plan Update, shows significant areas of activity to further improve the safety of America's food supply since unveiling its Food Protection Plan in November 2007.

The improvements highlight the agency's efforts to address domestic and global changes in our food supply to help keep consumers enjoying one of the safest food supplies in the world.

"The Food Protection Plan is the comprehensive framework the agency needs to enhance the protection of our nation's food supply," said Commissioner of Food and Drugs Andrew C. von Eschenbach, M.D. "Implementing the strategic approaches outlined in the plan is essential if we are to enhance our ability to respond and intervene in foodborne outbreaks. But there is much more that needs to be done. We are hopeful that Congress will support these efforts by providing the proposed new authorities that we requested in the Food Protection Plan."

The FDA Food Protection Plan focuses on prevention (building safety in from the start), intervention (using targeted risk-based inspections and testing), and response (responding rapidly when problems are identified).

The FDA has been working collaboratively across the agency and with Federal, State

and local partners as well as foreign governments to execute a number of the action steps laid out by the Food Protection Plan. Listed below are select accomplishments of the plan:

PREVENTION

- In an effort to increase foreign capacity, the FDA "Beyond our Borders" initiative is underway.
- FDA is implementing its landmark China Memoranda of Agreement (MOA).
- FDA has provided registration materials to the Chinese government, identified points of contact for the MOA, and drafted the first five-year work plan.
- FDA held its first bilateral meeting in March 2008 in Beijing, China. The meeting solidified the relationship with the General Administration of Quality, Supervision, Inspection, and Quarantine (AQSIQ). Verbal agreements were made to focus the present efforts in fulfilling the MOA to aquaculture (five species plus Tilapia) and ingredients (wheat gluten, corn gluten, and rice protein).
- FDA is moving forward to establish an FDA presence in China.
- FDA delegation visited Indian counterparts to discuss requirements for an FDA presence in India.
- In 2007, FDA began working in collaboration with the State Health and Agriculture departments in Virginia and Florida, several universities, and the produce industry on a multi-year Tomato Safety Initiative. As part of the initiative, FDA has led assessments of grower practices focusing on the factors believed to be associated with contamination of tomatoes with *Salmonella*. FDA has

More Federal News

conducted assessments in Virginia and began assessments in Florida in April.

- FDA is exploring current existing third-party certification programs.
- FDA is developing ingredient, processing, and labeling standards for pet food. We are also developing ingredient and processing standards for animal feed.

INTERVENTION

- FDA is working with the New Mexico State University to develop a prototype system for improving electronic screening, using open-source intelligence, of imported products offered for entry into the U.S. The evaluation of the prototype system, PREDICT (Predictive Risk-Based Evaluation of Dynamic Import Compliance Targeting) has been completed and the final pilot evaluation document is under review.
- FDA has developed a rapid detection method using flow cytometry to identify *E. coli* and *Salmonella* in food. This system is being used in poultry processing facilities to detect and prevent bacterial contamination during food processing.
- FDA has completed a three-year plan to increase state inspections and will hire at least an additional 130 employees to conduct food field exams, inspections and sample collections using FY 2008 appropriated dollars.
- FDA plans to conduct an additional 327 state contract food inspections in FY 2009 over the FY 2008 estimate.
- In FY 2009, FDA also will conduct an additional 20,000 food import field exams above the FY 2008 performance goal.

RESPONSE

- FDA is working with industry to identify best practices for traceability.
- FDA is collaborating with other Federal agencies; State, local, tribal, and foreign governments and industry to develop the science and tools necessary to better understand the current risks of the food supply and to develop new detection technologies and improved response systems that rapidly react to food safety threats.
- FDA issued a Request for Applications (RFA) for funding to establish state Rapid Response Teams to investigate foodborne illness outbreaks, perform trace backs of implicated foods and evaluate data from investigations to identify trends.
- FDA is currently exploring the use of multiple and targeted channels to quickly alert consumers of a threat to food safety.

Please view all the accomplishments listed in the Food Protection Plan Progress Report www.fda.gov/oc/initiatives/advance/food/progressreport.html and the FDA's Food Protection Plan: www.fda.gov/oc/initiatives/advance/food/plan.html. For additional information on FDA's activities under the Action Plan for Import Safety, please visit: www.fda.gov/oc/initiatives/advance/imports/activities.html.
Consumer Inquiries:
888-INFO-FDA



More Federal News

FDA Warns Consumers Not to Eat Certain Mussel Products from Bantry Bay Seafood

August 15, 2008

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is warning consumers against eating certain frozen cooked mussel products made by Bantry Bay Seafoods, imported from Ireland, because they may be contaminated with azaspiracid toxins, a group of naturally occurring marine toxins known to cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach cramps.

Azaspiracid toxins are odorless, tasteless, and cannot be destroyed or neutralized by freezing or cooking, including boiling. Individuals who have experienced gastrointestinal symptoms such as those noted above after eating any of the products listed below should consult their health care professional. Symptoms typically occur within hours of consumption and persist for two to three days.

In July, two people in Washington state became ill after eating the company's "Mussels in a Garlic Butter Sauce." FDA tested unopened product from the same production lot and found that it contained the azaspiracid toxins.

Consumers should throw out the following Bantry Bay Seafood frozen cooked products with "Best before end" dates ranging from January 23, 2009, to November 15, 2009:

- Mussels in a Garlic Butter Sauce
- Mussels in White Wine Sauce
- Mussels in Tomato and Garlic Sauce

The "Best before end" dates are displayed on the side of the box in the following format: MM:DD:YY. Products to be thrown

out are marked with dates 01:23:09 through 11:15:09.

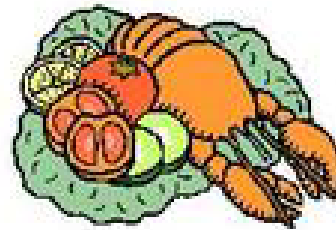
These products are sold frozen in 1 pound cardboard packages in stores throughout the United States.

The FDA also recommends that retailers and foodservice operators remove these products, and any food in which these products were used as an ingredient, from sale or service.

Azaspiracid toxins were an unknown marine toxin until 1995, when they were identified and linked to an outbreak of foodborne illnesses associated with consumption of Irish shellfish. The toxins have since been identified in other shellfish from the west coast of Europe. They have never been detected in shellfish harvested from U.S. waters.

For more information on food safety, please visit the Web site for FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition at: <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/list.html>.

Consumer Inquiries:
888-INFO-FDA





From the Editor



Summer is already over! 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 summer before the temperature changes.

Fall: September 19th

Save the Date for the Annual Conference in May!

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

**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!**

**The time has come for AFDO to request award
nominations/applications for 2009.**

Please contact, Randy Young, at 717-757-2888 or
ryoung@afdo.org with any questions or concerns.