



Government Updates Number of Reported Illnesses in Outbreak Tied to Romaine Lettuce from Salinas

December 4, 2019—The U.S. Food and Drug Administration and Centers for Disease Control have updated the number of illnesses involved in the outbreak of E. coli O157:H7 associated with romaine lettuce grown in Salinas, CA. All new illnesses are believed to be part of the current outbreak and public health agencies are not changing the consumer advisory which continues to focus on romaine lettuce from the Salinas growing region only.

According to the FDA, illness onset dates for all those sickened in this outbreak are prior to the public warning issued on November 22, 2019. They reiterate that romaine lettuce harvested outside the Salinas region is not part of the current consumer advisory.

Consumers should know that producers acted quickly working with their retail and foodservice customers to remove romaine harvested in Salinas from marketing channels. All shipments and harvest of romaine grown in Salinas have stopped and remaining romaine fields have been plowed under.

The California Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement encourages consumers to look for the Harvest Location Label printed on packages of romaine which indicate the region where the product was grown.

Consumers should look for packages with the words: Yuma, Phoenix, Southern Arizona, Northern Arizona, Northern California, Santa Maria, Southern California, Imperial Valley, Coachella and Central Valley. No romaine from these growing areas is part of the consumer advisory. Also not included in the advisory is romaine from Mexico and other states or romaine that is hydroponically or greenhouse grown.

If you are buying bulk romaine that is not in a package, ask your produce department personnel or waiter to confirm where the romaine is from.

The FDA continues to actively investigate the cause of this outbreak with the assistance of staff from the California Department of Public Health and the California Department of Food and Agriculture. Investigators have been deployed to farms in the Salinas area identified in the traceback investigation. On the farms, investigators have sampled soil, compost, water and other potential environmental sources. The samples and information collected are currently being analyzed.

The LGMA is hopeful we will learn important information that will help us identify how romaine came to be the source of this outbreak. The LGMA has already begun the process of thoroughly examining the mandatory food safety practices followed by 90 percent of the leafy greens grown in the U.S. that are regulated under the LGMA programs in California and Arizona. We pledge to take every possible action to prevent future outbreaks



To all of those sickened in this outbreak, we want you to know that we truly believed we were doing everything possible to prevent this outbreak. We take the food we grow home to our own families, and we are sincerely sorry for the heartbreak this situation has caused.

Updated information is available here:

<https://www.fda.gov/food/outbreaks-foodborne-illness/investigation-e-coli-o157h7-outbreak-linked-romaine-salinas-california-november-2019>

<https://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/2019/o157h7-11-19/index.html>

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