



Environmental
Health

County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

Food Safety	Recall of Frozen Ground Beef from Topps Meat Company
Principal Investigator:	Jerry LeMoine
Date:	September 26, 2007
Release #:	2007-Frozen Ground Beef

INCIDENT

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service announced yesterday, Topps Meat Company, LLC, an Elizabeth, NJ, establishment, is voluntarily recalling approximately 331,582 pounds of frozen ground beef products because they may be contaminated with *E. coli* O157:H7. The products subject to recall include:
 - 10-pound boxes of "BUTCHER'S BEST 100% ALL BEEF PATTIES 75/25, 6 OZ. FLAT, 27 PIECES." Each box bears a sell-by date of "JUL 23 08."
 - 10-pound boxes of "BUTCHER'S BEST 100% ALL BEEF PATTIES 75/25, 4 OZ. (4-1), 40 PIECES." Each box bears a sell-by date of "JUL 23 08."
 - 10-pound boxes of "KOHLER FOODS 4 OZ. FLAT HAMBURGER, CODE: 60100, 40 PCS." Each box bears a sell-by date of "JUL 23 08."
 - 10-pound boxes of "KOHLER FOODS 6 OZ. FLAT HAMBURGER, CODE: 60200, 27 PCS." Each box bears a sell-by date of "JUL 23 08."
 - 10-pound boxes of "KOHLER FOODS 8 OZ. FLAT HAMBURGER, CODE: 60300, 20 PCS." Each box bears a sell-by date of "JUL 23 08."
 - 10-pound boxes of "SAND CASTLE FINE MEAT, 100% PREMIUM BEEF HAMBURGERS 80/20, 8 OZ. FLAT, 20 COUNT." Each box bears a packed-on date of "JUN 22 07."
 - 10-pound boxes of "SAND CASTLE FINE MEAT, 100% PREMIUM BEEF HAMBURGERS 85/15, 6 OZ. FLAT, 27 COUNT." Each box bears a packed-on date of "JUN 22 07."
 - 2-pound boxes of "Topps 100% Pure Ground Beef Hamburgers, 8 Quarter Pounders." Each box bears a sell-by date of "JUL 12 08."
 - 2-pound boxes of "Topps 100% Pure Ground Beef Hamburgers, 3 OZ., 10 COUNT." Each box bears a sell-by date of "JUL 12 08."
 - 3-pound boxes of "Topps 100% Pure Ground Beef Hamburgers, 6 OZ. PUB Burgers." Each box bears a sell-by date of "JUN 22 08."
 - 3-pound boxes of "Topps 100% Pure Ground Beef Hamburgers, 12 Quarter Pounders." Each box bears a sell-by date of "JUN 22 08," "JUL 12 08" or "JUL 23 08."
 - 3-pound boxes of "Topps 100% Pure Ground Beef Hamburgers, 16 Hamburgers." Each box bears a sell-by date of "JUL 23 08."
 - 5-pound boxes of "Topps 100% Pure Ground Beef Hamburgers, 20 Quarter Pounders." Each box bears a sell-by date of "JUN 22 08," "JUL 12 08" or "JUL 23 08."



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

- **Health Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.
- **Health Advisory:** provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
- **Health Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

- 8-pound boxes of “*Topps 100% Pure Ground Beef Hamburgers, 32 Quarter Pounders.*” Each box bears a sell-by date of “JUN 22 08.”
- 10-pound boxes of “*Topps 100% PREMIUM HAMBURGERS 5 OZ. (1/2”).*” Each box bears a sell-by date of “JUN 22 08.”
- 10-pound boxes of “*Topps HAMBURGERS, 3.2 OZ, 50 COUNT.*” Each box bears a sell-by date of “JUL 12 08.”
- 10-pound boxes of “*Topps 100% PREMIUM HAMBURGERS, 8 OZ. (Pub Burger).*” Each box bears a sell-by date of “JUL 23 08.”
- 10-pound boxes of “*Topps 100% PREMIUM HAMBURGERS, 4 OZ. (4-1) Homestyle.*” Each box bears a sell-by date of “JUL 23 08.”
- 10-pound boxes of “*WESTSIDE, 100% PREMIUM HAMBURGER, 8 OZ FLAT, 20 COUNT.*” Each box bears a sell-by date of “JUN 22 08.”
- 10-pound boxes of “*WESTSIDE, 100% PREMIUM HAMBURGER, 6 OZ FLAT, 27 COUNT.*” Each box bears a sell-by date of “JUN 22 08.”
- 10-pound boxes of “*WESTSIDE, 100% PREMIUM HAMBURGER, 5 OZ FLAT, 32 COUNT.*” Each box bears a sell-by date of “JUN 22 08.”
- Each package also bears the establishment number “Est. 9748” inside the USDA mark of inspection.
- The frozen ground beef products were produced on June 22, July 12 or July 23 and were distributed to food service institutions in the New York metropolitan area and to retail establishments nationwide.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT ACTION

- Santa Cruz County Environmental Health Staff has contacted retail stores that may have the product to verify that the recalled product was pulled from shelves.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consumers who purchased these products should immediately discard them or return them to the point of purchase. Consumers and media with questions about the recall should contact company Vice President of Finance and Administration Jeffrey Rohach at (908) 351-0500 ext. 50.

INFORMATION

- *E. coli* O157:H7 is a potentially deadly bacterium that can cause bloody diarrhea and dehydration. The very young, seniors and persons with compromised immune systems are the most susceptible to foodborne illness.
- An investigation into a cluster of illnesses in the Northeast region carried out by the New York State Department of Health in coordination with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention led to a positive product sample collected by the New York Department of Health.

PREPARING GROUND BEEF FOR SAFE CONSUMPTION

USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline
1-888-MPHOTLINE or visit
www.fsis.usda.gov

Although the product(s) being recalled should be returned to the point of purchase, consumers preparing other ground beef products should heed the following advice.

Consumers should only eat ground beef patties that have been cooked to a safe temperature of 160 °F. When a ground beef patty is cooked to 160 °F throughout, it can be safe and juicy, regardless of color.

The only way to be sure a ground beef patty is cooked to a high enough temperature to kill harmful bacteria is to use an accurate food thermometer.

Color is not a reliable indicator that ground beef patties have been cooked to a temperature high enough to kill harmful bacteria such as *E. coli* O157:H7.

Eating a pink or red ground beef patty without first verifying that the safe temperature of 160 °F has been reached is a significant risk factor for foodborne illness.

Thermometer use to ensure proper cooking temperature is especially important for those who cook or serve ground beef patties to people most at risk for foodborne illness because *E. coli* O157:H7 can lead to serious illness or even death. Those most at risk include young children, seniors, and those with compromised immune systems.

Additional Information

- Consumers with food safety questions can “Ask Karen,” the FSIS virtual representative available 24 hours a day at AskKaren.gov. The toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854) is available in English and Spanish and can be reached from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Eastern Time) Monday through Friday. Recorded food safety messages are available 24 hours a day.
- www.santacruzhealth.org/alerts for informational updates and other alerts