



# County of Santa Cruz

## HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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### DISEASE CONTROL UNIT

### PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY September 29, 2006

<b>Communicable Disease:</b>	<b>E. coli O157:H7</b>
<b>Principle Investigator:</b>	<b>Poki Stewart Namkung, MD, MPH, Health Officer</b>
<b>Contact:</b>	<b>Fritzi Nelson, PHN, Communicable Disease Control Manager</b>
<b>Press Release#:</b>	<b>ecoli42006</b>

### INCIDENT

Raw milk, raw cream, and raw colostrum produced by Organic Pastures of Fresno County were recalled Friday, September 22. The California State Veterinarian, Dr. Richard Breitmeyer, announced a quarantine order. These products are sold in Santa Cruz County. The Environmental Health Department has notified local retailers and they have removed these products from their shelves.

Consumers should dispose of any of these products in their refrigerators immediately.

This action was prompted by a bacterial illness, E. coli O157:H7 diagnosed in three children who consumed raw milk. Epidemiologic data collected by the California Department of Health Services points to a link between the illness in the children and the consumption of Organic Pastures raw milk. Additional laboratory testing of the raw milk is being done and results are pending.

### INFORMATION

- **This is not a voluntary recall.**
- Organic Pastures may not produce raw milk, raw cream or raw colostrum for the retail market until further notice.
- It is not believed that there is a connection with the recent E. coli O157:H7 outbreak associated with raw spinach.
- Raw milk products are not pasteurized. Pasteurization eliminates the risk of bacterial illness, if the product is refrigerated at the appropriate temperature.
- Some consumers may believe that these products taste better, provide greater nutrition, and/or decrease the risk of various medical conditions, but the benefits of consuming unpasteurized milk and milk products have never been validated scientifically.
- "Certified" unpasteurized milk from a "licensed" dairy remains inherently unsafe. It is certified to be unpasteurized, not to be safe. Obtaining a license to sell raw milk does not remove the risk of infection.
- E. coli O157:H7 is just one of a number of infections that can be transmitted to humans from unpasteurized dairy products. Others include Salmonella, Campylobacter, staphylococcal food poisoning, Q fever, listeriosis, brucellosis, and bovine tuberculosis. In addition, Brainerd diarrhea, a chronic diarrheal process of unknown etiology, is also associated with raw milk ingestion.

- E. coli O157:H7 can cause a gastrointestinal infection of varying severity. Symptoms may include abdominal cramps, tenderness and bloody diarrhea. The illness resolves in 5 to 10 days.
- In some persons, particularly children under 5 years of age and the elderly, the infection can also cause a complication called hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). HUS is a life-threatening condition usually treated in an intensive care unit. Blood transfusions and kidney dialysis are often required. With intensive care, the death rate for hemolytic uremic syndrome is 3%-5%.
- About one-third of persons with HUS have abnormal kidney function many years later, and a few require long-term dialysis. Another 8% of persons with hemolytic uremic syndrome have other lifelong complications, such as high blood pressure, seizures, blindness, paralysis, and the effects of having part of their bowel removed.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Consumers are advised to dispose of any Organic Pastures raw milk, raw cream or raw colostrum remaining in their refrigerators.
- Bacteria in diarrheal stools of infected persons can be passed from one person to another if hygiene or handwashing habits are inadequate.
- Make sure that persons with diarrhea, especially children, wash their hands carefully with soap after bowel movements to reduce the risk of spreading infection, and that persons wash hands after changing soiled diapers.
- If you have consumed these products and have abdominal cramps and bloody diarrhea, please consult your physician.

**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.