



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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DISEASE CONTROL UNIT

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY October 30, 2006

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| Communicable Disease: | E. coli O157:H7 |
| Principle Investigator: | Poki Stewart Namkung, MD, MPH, Health Officer |
| Contact: | 831-227-8901 |
| Press Release#: | ecoli5 |

On Friday, Oct. 27, 2006, the deputy director for the California Department of Health Services, Kevin Reilly, stated that the E. coli outbreak associated with tainted spinach appears to be over.

INCIDENT

- Investigators searching for the source of the multi-state outbreak of E. coli found the suspect strain in the gut of a wild pig killed on the Salinas Valley ranch where the spinach was grown. Earlier, evidence was found that wild pigs had broken through fencing around the spinach fields.
- The same strain had already been found in cattle that were pastured on land surrounding the spinach fields, in other cow manure samples and in creek water downslope from the spinach fields.
- Samples from wells used to irrigate the spinach are also being tested for the same strain of E. coli.

INFORMATION

- 204 people in 26 states became ill after eating spinach contaminated with a particular strain of E. coli. 104 were hospitalized and 3 people died.
- The tainted spinach was traced to four farms in San Benito and Monterey Counties.
- No reports of new illness due to contaminated spinach have been received since Sept. 25, 2006.
- At this time, fresh spinach seems to be free of contamination from E. coli O157:H7 and may be purchased for consumption.

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.