



Food Safety / QA Department

Costco Consumer Advisory 11-04-10

E. coli O157:H7 Foodborne Outbreak Potentially Linked to Cheese

Multiple cases and hospitalizations in four states

Costco Wholesale Corporation is issuing an alert to consumers about an outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7 in five states: Colorado, New Mexico, California (San Diego Area), Arizona and Nevada. Based on current information, there is a preliminary link with the consumption of one of several cheeses offered for sampling and sale at the “cheese road show” that was held at Costco Warehouses between October 5 and November 1 in those states. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 25 cases of people infected with the outbreak strain have been reported. Dates of onset of the illnesses coincide with the same time period cheeses were offered for promotion and sale at Costco Warehouses within this geographic area.

Costco advises consumers not to eat the following cheese purchased from October 5 – November 1 at warehouses in Colorado, New Mexico, California (San Diego area), Nevada and Arizona.

Bravo Farms Dutch Style Raw Milk Gouda Cheese (Costco Item 40654) Manufactured by Bravo Farms, Traver CA.

Consumers should return any remaining Bravo Farms Gouda to Costco for a full refund. Costco has removed this product from its stores.

Further, if consumers ate the Bravo Farms Gouda during the sampling events at Costco held from October 5-November 1, or purchased and ate the cheese at home and are feeling ill, CDC advises them to consult their healthcare providers immediately and to report the illness through their local public health authority.

Costco continues to notify by phone and mail members, who according to their membership records purchased the Bravo Farms Gouda during the time period of concern.

According to CDC, *E. coli* O157:H7 causes diarrhea, often with bloody stools, and abdominal cramps. People of any age can become infected. While most people recover within a week, very young children and the elderly are more likely to develop severe illness and hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) than others; but even healthy older children and young adults can become seriously ill.

At this time, sampling and testing of this product offered during the sampling event is underway by Costco as well as FDA and state laboratories. Costco will keep consumers informed of the progress of this investigation, including results of testing as more information becomes available.