

Consumer Perceptions of Recalls

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Introduction

- Every American has a unique relationship and attitude towards food and food safety based on their personal life history.
- Today, to get the most out of our time together, try to leave your badge and job description at the door and just be a consumer.
- The scientific study of human behavior regarding recalls and the best communication strategies is a relatively new field and published data is scarce.
- Other speakers today are academic experts in this field and will cover current ongoing U.S. research.



Overview

- In attempting to understand how consumers react to recalls, where they go for information, and when and whether they return to purchasing and consuming the recalled product, this presentation will take two different approaches.
 - First, we will review a series of Canadian studies from 2004, 2006, and 2010 that present a novel perspective by segmenting consumer groups according to their relationship with food instead of along the usual demographic characteristics.
 - Second, the lessons and concerns learned will be highlighted from thousands of consumers for whom the current recall system has failed—those whose families have gotten sick and those who haven't been counted.



AAFC Research Projects

- Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) initiated a series of research projects entitled, “Consumer Perceptions of Food Safety & Quality.” The first wave was completed in 2004; wave two began in 2006 and completed in 2007; wave three was conducted in 2010.
 - Utilized telephone surveys of 1600, 1700, and 3200 consumers (main shoppers), respectively, and queried topics with the goal of contributing to policy development as well as instructing future messaging and targeting of information to consumers.
 - Measurements included considerations when making food purchases and dining choices, perceptions of food quality and confidence in food safety as well as comparisons to other countries and knowledge levels about production, safety and quality and what information sources they would use.
- I will restrict my discussion today to those research areas that specifically addressed food safety and have implications for understanding consumers perceptions of recalls.



Methods

- A combination of analytic techniques were used throughout the Canadian research series to shed light on the data.
 - **Correspondence Analysis:** a qualitative approach used to group top-of-mind responses in terms of their association with food purchases in general, home and dining out.
 - **Trade-off Analysis:** a measure of the stated importance of food quality and safety attributes using consumer choices.
 - **Penalty: Reward Analysis:** a technique used to determine the drivers of positive and negative perceptions of food quality and safety concerns.
 - **Convergent Cluster Analysis:** used to create consumer segments and profile each one in order to develop targeted communication strategies.



Segmenting, Wave 1

- I am going to concentrate on the extremely interesting results on food safety and recalls that relied on segmenting by using **convergent cluster analysis**. In wave 1 this type of analysis led to the identification of five Canadian consumer groups segmented into those who are most knowledgeable with food issues as well as those consumers who are most action oriented.
- Segmentation analysis makes the assumption that one must go beyond traditional demographic methods and look at attitudes and behaviors to define groups of consumers that will respond to messages and information a similar way. Segments of consumers are created using a statistical process that identifies clusters of responses to attitudinal questions.
- **There are 3 main advantages that segmentation analysis provides:**
 - **First, it identifies who can be reached (audiences)**
 - **Second, it helps identify how to reach that audience (best medium and format of messaging)**
 - **Third, it clarifies what messages that audience may respond to (what to tell them)**



General Demographic Profile Overview of Segments

Wave 1¹

	Conscientious Consumers	Uninvolved Trusters	Busy Family Shoppers	Social Activists	Informed Action Takers
	(n=514)	(n=214)	(n=461)	(n=247)	(n=149)
Age	Oldest with highest incidence of seniors	Middle age ranges	Youngest	2 nd Youngest	Middle to high age ranges
Education	Least educated overall	Most educated with highest levels	Most educated, but not highest	Polarized, between high and low	Polarized between high and low
Household Size	Larger Family	Smallest – Most likely to be single or couple	Largest – Most likely three or more in family	Single or couple and smaller families	Single or couple and smaller families
Family/Children in Home	Most children present in home	Least likely to have children	Very likely have children in home	Less likely to have children (Small family)	Less likely to have children (Small family)
Income	Lowest income in general	Middle income	Highest income (Likely a two income family)	2 nd Highest income	Middle income

Note: the Canadian studies are being reviewed to inform the panel discussion on consumer confidence in the food supply and are not research projects of Food Safety Partners, Ltd.

Note: These general observations are not the drivers of the segmentation, i.e., these were not defining the segments, but are instead used to profile the segments.



Segment Characteristics Related to Food Issues

Wave 1¹

	Conscientious Consumers	Uninvolved Trusters	Busy Family Shoppers	Social Activists	Informed Action Takers
Segment Size (% of Consumers)	32%	14%	29%	16%	9%
Impressions of Quality	High	High	Highest	Lowest	High
Confidence in Safety	High	Highest	High	Lowest	High
Knowledge of Standards	High	Minimal	Medium	Medium	Highest
Information Gathering	Medium	Minimal	Minimal	Selective	Highest
Issues of Concern	Diverse	Price	Nutrition	Nutrition Ingredients	Production Processing
Degree of Activism	Low	None	None	High	Highest



Note: the Canadian studies are being reviewed to inform the panel discussion on consumer confidence in the food supply and are not research projects of Food Safety Partners, Ltd.



Segment Summaries, *Wave 1*

- **Conscientious Consumers (CC):** Accounting for 32% of consumers surveyed, this is the largest group overall. While it does have consumers of all ages, it has the highest incidence of seniors (65 & older). This group tends to have the lowest overall education, lowest household income, and typically children living at home.
 - CC's are not as active as other groups are in dealing with food related issues. While they claim to have read articles or other information on food safety in the past year, few appear to take action on specific issues. This group is well-informed and well-meaning, but static because they have confidence in the food system.
- **Busy Family Shoppers (BFS):** Accounting for 29% of consumers, this is the second largest group. BFS's are the youngest respondents, with nearly 4 in 10 under 35. They have the lowest incidence of singles, highest incidence of larger households, and are likely to be dual income earning household. Along with Uninvolved Trusters, members of this group have higher levels of education than the other segments.
 - Food safety and quality issues are lower priorities for BFS's. Most follow proper food handling practices and they are less likely to spend time worrying about the safety of the food and take a very practical approach. Since they have very positive perceptions of Canadian food quality, they are not very active when it comes to food safety and quality issues, although slightly more so than Uninvolved Trusters.



Segment Summaries, *Wave 1* (continued)

- **Uninvolved Trusters (UI):** This is one of the smaller segments at 14% and tends to be in the middle age range with higher levels of education. This is likely a segment of singles or older couples as $\frac{2}{3}$ do not have children under 18 at home. They also have average household incomes.
 - UI's share a concern about nutritional value and place more importance on brand or company names and show an affinity for new and innovative foods. They appear to be very detached from food safety and quality issues and have the greatest confidence of all segments in the safety of food produced in Canada, while also admitting that they have the lowest levels of familiarity with food safety practices and guidelines. Being disengaged, UI's also have a low level of activism.
- **Social Activists (SA):** At 16%, this segment tends to be younger and education levels are split with about $\frac{1}{3}$ having attained high school or less and under half attended university. SA's are also likely to be singles, couples, or smaller families. They are self-reliant for food safety and quality information, looking at "best before" dates over retailer advice. This segment claims to be knowledgeable about food safety practices and guidelines while admitting a lack of knowledge in other areas. SA's are the least confident of the segments concerning the safety of food produced in Canada, with a higher level of activism such as discontinuing purchases of certain food products or boycotting a particular food product due to food safety issues. Recognizing their age and low levels of knowledge of food related issues, much of this activism may be based on emotion.



Segment Summaries, *Wave 1* (continued)

- **Informed Action Takers (IAT):** With 9% of consumers, this is the smallest of all the groups identified. They are slightly older and in more of the middle to high age brackets. Education levels are split and family units are smaller with a lot of singles and couples – many might be empty nesters. Household incomes are in the middle brackets.
 - IAT's may be considered a group of aging baby boomers who are sensitive to having high standards for food safety in Canada. They also appear to pick and choose among various food safety and quality issues, being knowledgeable about some and admitting less educated on others. While informed, this group is skeptical of the ability of Canada's system to respond to problems. This segment also takes action on their concerns and in the last year, they are likely to have discontinued purchasing certain foods, to have stopped eating at specific restaurant or to have stopped buying groceries from a particular retailer.
 - In summary, IAT's are the most receptive segment for direct communications about food quality and safety. They will seek information if available and a campaign targeted to this group will also resonate somewhat with SA's and CC's. This group will benefit most from information related to standards in the food chain of which they are least knowledgeable.
- BFS's & UI's do not actively seek food quality and safety information, so require the media to reach them (passive vs. active). Communications should be designed to reinforce currently held positive attributes that are top-of-mind and key drivers associated with confidence in the food system.



Top Defining Variables of the Segmentation, *Wave 1*¹ (Slide 1)

First, I'll read you a series of statements that might relate to your experience with food. I want you tell me how much you agree or disagree with each statement on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means you strongly disagree and 7 means you strongly agree.

Percentage Responding 6 or 7 (on a 7-point scale)	Concerned Consumers (n=514) A		Uninvolved Trusters (n=214) B		Busy Family Shoppers (n=461) C		Social Activists (n=247) D		Informed Action Takers (n=149) E	
	I have separate cutting boards for raw meats & vegetables	88%	BDE	7%	D	86%	BD	-		78%
I throw food out if it is past the expiry date	87%	BDE	50%	E	88%	BDE	78%	BE	-	
I buy organic food products only if they are certified organics	64%	BCDE	7%		7%		31%	BC	23%	BC
I spend time worrying about the safety of the food I eat	60%	BC	7%		17%	B	52%	BC	54%	BC
I have asked my retailer for advice on food quality or safety	35%	BCDE	4%		5%		12%	BC	19%	BC



Top Defining Variables of the Segmentation, *Wave 1*¹ (Slide 2)

Percentage Responding 6 or 7 (on a 7-point scale)	Concerned Consumers (n=514) A		Uninvolved Trusters (n=214) B		Busy Family Shoppers (n=461) C		Social Activists (n=247) D		Informed Action Takers (n=149) E	
	I have thought about my grocery store's practices in the way they handle food	64%	BCDE	11%		38%	B	41%	B	43%
Whenever possible, I eat food that is locally produced	74%	BCD	32%		54%	B	61%	B	68%	BC
I am the main person responsible for preparing food at home	82%	BCD	53%		74%	BD	61%		74%	BD
I pay attention to the farms where the food comes from	71%	BCD	19%		36%	B	50%	BC	65%	BCD
I have control over what's in the food I buy	53%	BC	22%		32%	B	46%	BC	51%	BC

NOTE: Letters in the cells indicate where there is a significant difference. For example, if a cell in column B is flagged with a D, then the percentages recorded in columns B and D are different from one another at a statistically different level. Cells highlighted in yellow indicate the strongest agreement among the segments with a specific statement. Those highlighted in turquoise indicate the lowest agreement and those in tan indicate a difference in the level of agreement that is neither the strongest nor the weakest, but worthy of note nonetheless.



Implications, *Wave 1*

- Important: this survey used mostly open-ended questions.
- For more detail on the methodology of the segmentation and the convergent cluster analysis, go to section 4.2 of the wave 1 study in the reference section.¹
- Implications for communication strategies from wave 1 of the research indicates that all segments rely on the media for their main source of information; although nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ do not actively seek information regarding food safety and quality, 12% don't turn to any source of information.
- IAF's are most likely to report multiple sources of information gathering as well as numerous topics of interest— they are the ideal target for government initiated communication campaigns. They actively seek out what they believe to be the most factual and salient information. Furthermore, this will have a trickle down effect on the CC's and SA's.
- BFS's representing nearly a third of consumers at 29% represent a segment that will be difficult to target.
- UI's will also be very hard to reach. "They are simply looking for a good price on tasty food in a nice restaurant."¹
- Many UI's will become BFS's once they have children. Since these two groups also report the most likelihood of having suffered from foodborne illness in the past year, this may be a way to target these groups.



Summary, Wave 2

- The second part of the Canadian research, or wave 2, looked deeper into attitudes towards specific foods by segmenting into six consumer groups, initiating a series of focus groups on various topics (including nutrition and organics), and exploring the reactions of those surveyed to a defined recall situation and delineating what information sources these consumers used during the recall.
- **The segmented groups are as follows:**
 - **Concerned Natural Food Buyers (CNFB) 16% of sample**
 - **Cautious Information Seekers (CIS) 27% of sample**
 - **Prudent Family Shoppers (PFS) 17% of sample**
 - **Unengaged Nutrition Focused Followers (UNFF) 18% of sample**
 - **Self-Assured Habitualists (SAH) 10% of sample**
 - **Uninvolved Blind Trusters (UBT) 12% of sample**
- In regards to the recall part of the study, all consumer groups generally receive food-related information from the media and most consumers said they would dispose of or return the food and stop buying it. Among consumers who would look for further information, they would turn first to government websites, mainly federal, and general internet searches first. A much smaller number of consumers would speak with a retailer, talk to family and friends and search out further stories. Interestingly, while farmers and food producers are often thought to be good sources of information about food quality, they are the least likely source of information sought for food recalls.



Segment Reaction to a Food Recall, *Wave 2* (slide 1)²

	Concerned Natural Food Buyers	Cautious Information Seekers	Prudent Family Shoppers	Unengaged Nutrition Focused Followers	Self-assured Habitualists	Uninvolved Blind Trusters
Dispose of or return the product affected	59%	57%	62%	57%	57%	68%
Stop buying that product	44%	39%	44%	45%	38%	34%
Check my groceries to see if I have that product	16%	7%	13%	13%	10%	6%
Ask my retailer about it	9%	10%	7%	10%	13%	8%
Talk to family and friends about it	10%	8%	6%	9%	4%	8%
Look for more news stories about it	7%	5%	4%	4%	5%	3%
Look for information on the Internet	6%	3%	3%	5%	5%	4%
Contact Health Canada directly	1%	4%	2%	2%	4%	1%
Talk to a professional (doctor, nurse)	1%	2%	3%	1%	4%	1%
Complain to/call the company directly	1%	3%	3%	2%	1%	1%
Check a Government of Canada website	<1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	<1%

Segment Reaction to a Food Recall, *Wave 2* (slide 2)²

	Concerned Natural Food Buyers	Cautious Information Seekers	Prudent Family Shoppers	Unengaged Nutrition Focused Followers	Self-assured Habitualists	Uninvolved Blind Trusters
Contact the Canadian Inspection Agency (CFIA) directly	2%	1%	1%	<1%	1%	<1%
Look for more information	1%	1%	-	1%	2%	1%
Other websites	1%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	-
Contact Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada directly	<1%	1%	<1%	-	-	1%
Check a provincial government website	-	-	<1%	1%	1%	-
Other	8%	14%	6%	9%	11%	6%
Nothing/nothing else	1%	4%	3%	4%	5%	5%
Don't know/Refused	1%	4%	3%	1%	2%	3%

Policy Implications, *Wave 2*

- Every consumer surveyed was asked, in an open-ended format, why they would choose a particular information source first from the list presented. Most responded that they choose a source that is responsible in some way for the food and therefore for the recall at the same time balancing that with trustworthiness and reliability.
- Similar to wave 1, wave 2 segmenting provided insight for communication strategies.
- CNFB's appear most inclined to seek out information from many sources. They will take action more than other consumer groups. When seeking more information about a recall, government websites are their strong first followed by general internet searches.
- CIS's would look to multiple sources and appear to be the most likely to look to specific government sources. They are less likely to check their groceries to see if they have a recalled product as they have confidence they have screened and dealt with it. They turn to government websites first and health professionals second.
- PFS's would get rid of the product and may look for more information, but not as a priority.
- UNFF's did not stand out in terms of their reactions to a food recall and fit the definition of a group of followers, not leaders.
- SAH's are less likely to stop buying a suspect product or check their groceries, more likely to talk to their retailer and due to their self-reliance they feel they know best and don't need advice.
- UIB's are least likely to take any actions beyond stopping buying a product, and are least likely to seek further information.
- CNFB's & CIS's are key targets for developing communication strategies as they seek more information and are responsive to it. They also act as influencers to members of other segments who are less engaged.



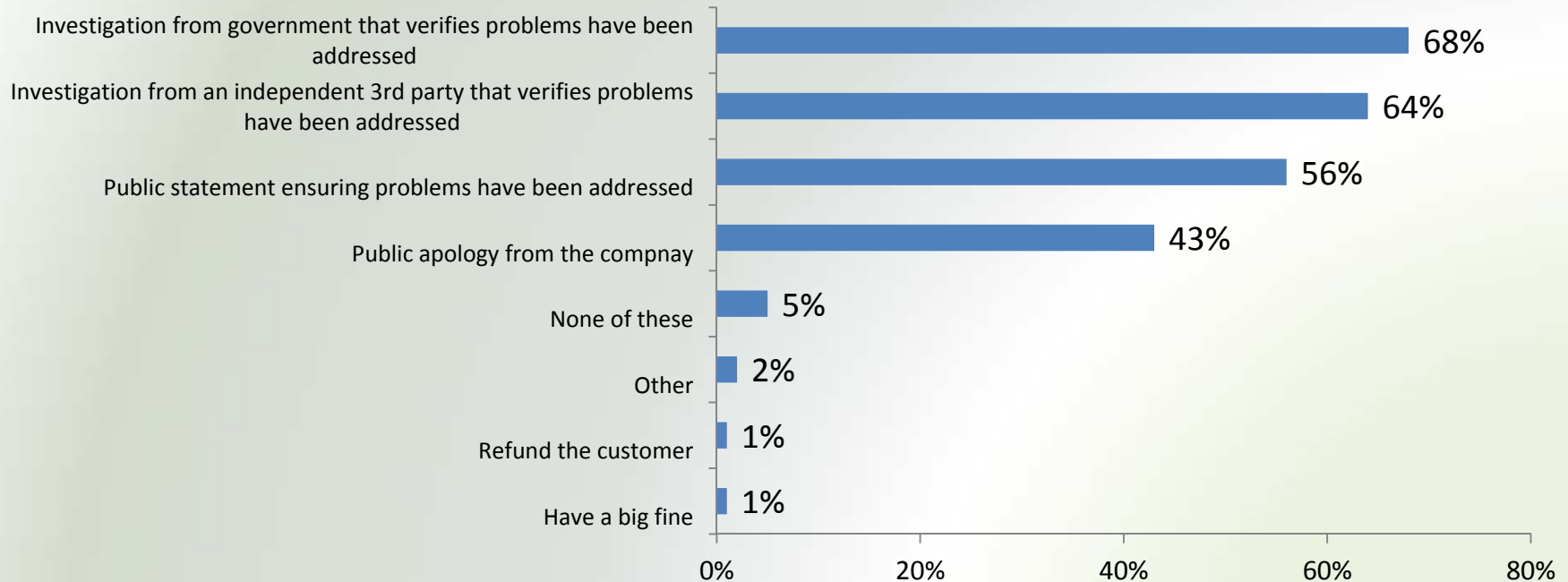
Summary, Wave 3

- Wave 3 of the Canadian research series in 2010 looked more in depth at food confidence, attitudes, and issues of concern, but did not use segmentation analysis techniques. It utilized more typical geographic and demographic categories; the sample survey size doubled and **queried specific habits around food avoidance and boycotting after recalls.**
- Nearly 1 in 5 Canadians report they had a foodborne illness during the past 12 months and only 14% of those indicated it was from food prepared in their homes.
- More than 1/3 of Canadians have avoided purchasing either a specific brand or type of food during the past 12 months, with some variation based on geography. Food safety concerns were the dominant reasons for avoiding certain foods, while *Listeria* and *Salmonella* were listed as the most frequent for avoiding certain brands.
- Confidence in the food supply varied geographically and by the type of food, with meats being lowest and bread and packaged goods highest.
- Consumers in urban areas are significantly more likely to avoid a specific restaurant or grocery store than those from rural areas ; those attending or who have a university degree were much more likely to have avoided specific types of foods, brands of foods as well as specific dining establishments and retailers. There were no differences among income levels, except higher levels avoided specific restaurants. Ages 18-35 were more likely to have avoided a store or restaurant, while those 55 and older were more likely to have avoided a specific type of food in the past 12 months.



Ways to Restore Confidence in a Company's Products After a Food Safety Issue, *Wave 3*³

After a food safety incident, $\frac{2}{3}$ would want a government or independent third party investigation explaining the incident and clearing any ongoing problems; more than 50% would require a public statement and 40% would require an apology, in order to restore their confidence.



Canadian Studies, Review

- The 3 Canadian reports are lengthy and provide much more detail than can be covered today.
- The material presented has given a new perspective on segmenting consumers in ways that present opportunities for better communication and ultimately better health and safety by keeping people from consuming and getting sick from recalled foods.
- Complete references for all of the reports for this discussion are found at the end of this slide presentation and will be available on the JIFSAN meeting site.

Now let's look at recalls from a different perspective and learn lessons from the bottom up instead of the top down by reviewing the experiences of those consumers for whom recalls have failed – they have either had extreme difficulty getting needed information from available sources or have gotten ill when recalls didn't work.



Real Life Recall Lessons

- **Issue #1: All of the parties involved in recalls have different goals**
 - Government – federal vs. local (protective?), companies (minimizing language) and the media
 - For example, media goals are ratings and headlines, not public health. So, everyone will report large national outbreaks and recalls and this can be helpful in keeping potentially dangerous food from being eaten. But, when was the last time you remember hearing an all-clear in the media on the tail end of a recall. One of the biggest reasons consumers have told me that they just avoid a whole commodity after several similar recalls is that they don't know when the recall ends.
- **Issue #2: Language used is counter productive and categorizations are confusing**
 - “Voluntary” recall, class I, II, & III recalls and advisories
- **Issue #3: Lag time**
 - There is a lot of time lost where people fall ill
- **Issue #4: Inconsistent information from different agencies and even within the same agency recall to recall**
 - Geographic information, quantities, stores/retailers involved
- **Issue #5: Action items very insignificant**
 - Unclear messaging with no differentiation between those who have just bought the product vs. those who have eaten the product



Real Life Recall Lessons (continued)

- **Issue #6: No updates given and misleading information in “company” press releases**
- **Issue #7: No agreement on benchmarks for the various sectors involved in recall**
 - Time-based goals and written reviews of performance
- **Issue #8: General education on food safety has to be done in advance**
 - Recalls don’t happen in a vacuum: need to make sure segments can be mobilized and vulnerable populations reached in a timely manner
- **Issue #9: Recall overload and fighting messages**
- **Issue #10: Consumer motivation/education to enter the system**
- **Issue #11: Most consumers believe they’ve fallen ill away from home – very little information on recalled products at restaurants and institutions... consumers get nervous**
- **Issue #12: Consumers want (*crave!!!*) personal attention**
 - Companies need to make the recall relevant to their customers
 - MUST do outreach
 - Current research supports and current lawsuit demands outreach by retailers



Recent FDA Recall Notice for Analysis

Recall -- Firm Press Release

FDA posts press releases and other notices of recalls and market withdrawals from the firms involved as a service to consumers, the media, and other interested parties. FDA does not endorse either the product or the company.

Arko Foods International Recalls Angelina Brand Smoked Roundscad Because Of Possible Health Risk

Contact:

Arko Foods International
323-257-1888

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - March 31, 2011 - **Arko Foods International** of **Los Angeles, CA** is recalling **Angelina Brand Smoked Roundscad, 8oz packs**, because it has the **potential** to be contaminated with Clostridium botulinum, a bacterium which can cause life-threatening illness or death. Consumers are warned not to consume the product even if it does not look or smell spoiled.

Botulism, a potentially fatal form of food poisoning, can cause the following symptoms: general weakness, dizziness, double-vision and trouble with speaking or swallowing. Difficulty in breathing, weakness of other muscles, abdominal distension and constipation may also be common symptoms. People experiencing these problems should seek immediate medical attention.

Angelina Brand Smoked Roundscad was distributed in California, Nevada, Arizona, Washington, New York, Texas, Maryland, and Florida through retail stores, supermarkets, and wholesale distributors.

The product is in 8 oz bags with header indicating Angelina brand which were distributed to the market from 2009 to January 2011.

The product is imported from the Philippines and is uneviscerated. It may have the potential to cause Botulism. However, note that no illnesses have been reported to date.

Consumers who have purchased and who still has Angelina Brand Smoked Roundscad in stock are urged to return it to the place of purchase for a full refund. Consumers who have questions may contact the company at (323) 257-1888 from Monday to Friday at 9am to 6pm (PST).

###



Recent USDA Recall Notice for Analysis

News Releases

Kansas Firm Recalls Ground Beef Products Due To Possible *E. coli* O157:H7 Contamination

Congressional and Public Affairs
(202) 720-9113
Atiya Khan

Recall Release
FSIS-RC-017-2011

CLASS I RECALL
HEALTH RISK: HIGH

WASHINGTON, March 8, 2011 - Creekstone Farms Premium Beef, an Arkansas City, Kan., establishment, is recalling approximately 14,158 pounds of ground beef products that may be contaminated with *E. coli* O157:H7, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) announced today.

The products subject to recall include: [View Labels](#) (PDF Only)]

- Approx. 40-pound cases of "BEEF FINE GRIND 81/19 NATURAL," containing 10-pound chubs. These products have an identifying product code of "80185."
- Approx. 40-pound cases of "BEEF CHUCK FINE GRIND 81/19 NATURAL," containing 10-pound chubs. These products have an identifying product code of "80285."
- Approx. 40-pound cases of "BEEF SIRLOIN FINE GRIND 91/9 NATURAL," containing 10-pound chubs. These products have an identifying product code of "80495."
- Approx. 40-pound cases of "BEEF FINE GRIND 90/10 NATURAL," containing 5-pound chubs. These products have an identifying product code of "85165."
- Approx. 60-pound cases of "BEEF FINE GROUND 93/7," containing 10-pound chubs. These products have an identifying product code of "86191."

PREPARING GROUND BEEF FOR SAFE CONSUMPTION

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

Wash hands with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling raw meat and poultry. Wash cutting boards, dishes and utensils with hot, soapy water. Immediately clean spills.

Keep raw meat, fish and poultry away from other food that will not be cooked. Use separate cutting boards for raw meat, poultry and egg products and cooked foods.

Consumers should only eat ground beef or ground beef patties that have been cooked to a safe internal temperature of 160° F.

(continued)



Recent USDA Recall Notice for Analysis, continued

Each case label bears the establishment number "EST. 27" inside the USDA mark of inspection. These products were produced on Feb. 22, 2011, and were shipped to firms in Ariz., Calif., Ga., Ind., Iowa, Mo., N.C., Ohio, Pa. and Wash. for further processing and/or distribution. It is important to note that the above listed products may have been repackaged into consumer-size packages and sold under different retail brand names. When available, the retail distribution list(s) will be posted on FSIS' website at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/FSIS_Recalls/Open_Federal_Cases/index.asp.

The problem was discovered through third party lab results which confirmed a positive result for *E. coli* O157:H7. FSIS and the company have received no reports of illnesses associated with consumption of these products. Individuals concerned about an illness should contact a healthcare provider.

FSIS routinely conducts recall effectiveness checks to verify recalling firms notify their customers of the recall and that steps are taken to make certain that the product is no longer available to consumers.

E. coli O157:H7 is a potentially deadly bacterium that can cause bloody diarrhea, dehydration, and in the most severe cases, kidney failure. The very young, seniors and persons with weak immune systems are the most susceptible to foodborne illness.

FSIS advises all consumers to safely prepare their raw meat products, including fresh and frozen, and only consume ground beef that has been cooked to a temperature of 160° F. The only way to confirm that ground beef is cooked to a temperature high enough to kill harmful bacteria is to use a food thermometer that measures internal temperature.

Consumer and media with questions regarding the recall should contact the company's Vice President of Marketing, Jim Rogers at (620) 741-3352.

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.

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

The only way to be sure ground beef is cooked to a high enough temperature to kill harmful bacteria is to use a thermometer to measure the internal temperature.

Refrigerate raw meat and poultry within two hours after purchase or one hour if temperatures exceed 90° F. Refrigerate cooked meat and poultry within two hours after cooking.



Summary

- Some things have to change if we want to have effective food recalls in the U.S.
- Top down – we need to learn to differentiate between consumers based on their relationship and attitudes to food safety.
- Bottom up – we need to constantly evaluate what has gone wrong in recalls and correct the problems in a timely manner so it doesn't happen again.



Food Safety Chuckle...

The public has very little tolerance for companies causing harm to the vulnerable—and other than children, there is no more vulnerable population than pets. In my experience, the outrage expressed by pet owners far exceeds, in numbers and passionate response, any other recall—a fact corroborated by FDA reporting a record number of inquiries in the 2007 pet food recall.



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