

E. coli O157 Multi-State Oct. 2009 -- Lettuce

Investigation Summary

MDA was contacted 10/21/2009 about a multi-state outbreak of E. coli O157 in 6 states (NE, CO, NC, CT, MO, and MN). There have been 10 cases with onset dates ranging from 9/9 – 10/3. MN has three cases; however, 2 of the cases traveled prior to illness.

The leading hypothesis is lettuce consumption—perhaps Romaine lettuce specifically. Three cases ate at the same restaurant in Omaha, NE prior to illness and two cases ate at the same restaurant in Colorado. From comparing the invoices of these two restaurants, they both use Cross Valley Farms romaine in salads that the cases ate.

The lead epidemiologist at MDH on this investigation is Trisha Robinson (phone: 651-201-5639; email: trisha.robinson@state.mn.us).

Table of Contents	Page
<i>Narrative Update – Oct. 21, 2009 – Carrie Rigdon</i>	1
<i>Narrative Update – Oct. 22, 2009 – Carrie Rigdon</i>	2
<i>Narrative Update – Oct. 23, 2009 – Carrie Rigdon</i>	2
<i>Narrative Update – Oct. 26, 2009 – Carrie Rigdon</i>	2
<i>Narrative Update – Oct. 27th, 2009 – Kristin Viger</i>	2
<i>Narrative Update – Oct. 28th, 2009 – Kristin Viger</i>	3
<i>Narrative Update – Oct. 30th, 2009 – Carrie Rigdon</i>	3
<i>Next Steps in Investigation</i>	3

Narrative Update – Oct. 21, 2009 – Carrie Rigdon

MDA was notified Wednesday, Oct. 21st of the multi-state outbreak and MDH requested assistance in tracing back lettuce connected to the most recent MN case (onset 10/3).

We are working with CDC and other state partners on an investigation of a cluster of E. coli O157 cases; there have been 10 cases with onset dates ranging from 9/9 – 10/3. We have 3 cases in MN; however, 2 of the cases traveled prior to illness. The leading hypothesis is lettuce consumption. Three cases ate at the same restaurant in Omaha, NE prior to illness and two cases ate at the same restaurant in Colorado. From comparing the invoices of these two restaurants, they both use Cross Valley Farms romaine in salads that the cases ate.

We have a new case in MN with an onset date of 10/3. ■ reported eating out at several restaurants prior to illness. St. Cloud Health & Inspection Department was able to get the ingredient and supplier information for the foods that ■ ate at the two restaurants in their jurisdiction; we are still waiting on information from Stearns County on a third restaurant. The information provided from St. Cloud indicates that the chicken sandwich ■ ate at ING Direct Café on September 30th (catered by Shortstop Catering) used Leaf Lettuce, Ready to Serve, product #2688 purchased from Apperts Foodservice (phone #320-251-3200).

Can we please traceback this lettuce? I'll let you know when we receive information from Stearns County on his other restaurant exposure. Please let me know if you need any additional information.

Narrative Update – Oct. 22, 2009 – Carrie Rigdon

I contacted Adam Skeate, Perishable Category Manager at Appert's Food Service, to request copies of the invoices/orders/BOLs that you have of the Leaf Lettuce product #2688 from Mann Packing between the dates of Sept. 14, 2009 and Sept. 28, 2009. Adam's contact information is Askeate@apperts.com and Ph 320-257-3226.

Trisha Robinson from MDH also gave more information about the investigation.

Cross Valley Farms, [the firm that supplied romaine to both the NE and CO] appears to be a brand of lettuce. Tanimura & Antle, Inc. of Salinas had a recall in the middle of July this year that included romaine under the Cross Valley Farms label. It said it was packed for distributors under several different brand names. It was recalled because of Salmonella found during routine sampling done by the WI Dept of Ag. Also of interest, US Foodservice was the one who put out the notice I found.

Trisha doesn't know at this time what farm supplied the romaine to Cross Valley Farms.

Narrative Update – Oct. 23, 2009 – Carrie Rigdon

Adam from Appert's sent the invoices on the Leaf Lettuce (see Apperts invoices from Manns 20091023.pdf). They get their Leaf Lettuce as individual fillets (leaves) in 10 lb. bags from Mann Packing Co., Inc., PO Box 690, Salinas CA.

Trisha from MDH said they had just received information on a more likely exposure for our case: [redacted] ate at an event at Mulligan's Stake House, Sartell, MN (Stearns Co.) on 10/1/2009. Food at the event included romaine lettuce supplied by Sysco (see Mulligans invoices from Sysco 20091023.pdf). The romaine lettuce is SYS IMP LETTUCE ROMAINE CHOP—Item No. 8950701. Trisha also said that the other states were continuing to work on gathering romaine (and other lettuce) information.

Narrative Update – Oct. 26, 2009 – Carrie Rigdon

I contacted Jeff Larson at Sysco (phone: 763.785.7329; email: Larson.Jeffrey@min.sysco.com) and asked for invoices relating to the SYS IMP LETTUCE ROMAINE CHOP—Item No. 8950701 supplied to Mulligans in the week prior to the 10/1 event. He sent the invoices (see Sysco invoices from GO Fresh Binder1.pdf) along with this information:

Carrie- attached are the invoices on the romaine we received. The product comes from GO Fresh here in Minneapolis. Their address is 2521 Hennepin Ave E Mpls 55413.

Contact their would be Mary Lou Owen- one of the owners. I will let them know of the inquiry.

Narrative Update – Oct. 27th, 2009 – Kristin Viger

I contacted Scott Grow (QA manager at GO Fresh at 2521 Hennepin Ave E, Minneapolis 55413, Scott's Direct Phone: 612-256-1772, Email: scott@gofresh-precut.com or mightymicrobes@yahoo.com). I

forwarded Scott the Sysco invoices and requested supplier information for the Romaine Lettuce product of interest (Item 8950701).

The following are the purchase order numbers from GO Fresh. These PO numbers are the numbers that correspond to the raw romaine purchased from Bengard Ranch.

GO Fresh PO#:

110073
110111
110113
110115
110170
110260
110174

Sales contact at Bengard Ranch is:
Joe Kaslin
387 West Market street
Salinas, CA 93901
831-422-9021

I replied to Scott's email and asked him to correspond these PO's with the Sysco invoices we already have. I will add that information when it is received.

Narrative Update – Oct. 28th, 2009 – Kristin Viger

I received a reply from Joe Kaslin at Bengard Ranch. I forwarded him the PO numbers we are tracing back. I requested that he provide the ranch name where the romaine product corresponding to the PO number came from. He said all of their ranches are in Salinas, CA.

Narrative Update – Oct. 30th, 2009 – Carrie Rigdon

I talked with Trisha at MDH about the investigation. The restaurants in CO and in NE that are associated with the cases in those states served Cross Valley Farms whole romaine lettuce heads. Cross Valley Farms is a label of U.S. Foodservice. The romaine for CO came from a U.S. Foodservice distributor in Denver; the romaine for NE came from a U.S. Foodservice distributor in Omaha. There has been no further information on the source of the romaine product.

Next Steps in Investigation

- Use the information from Bengard Ranch to create a chart linking the Sysco Invoice #'s with the GO Fresh PO #'s