

Sammy Lightsey

From: Lynchburg Office [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 12, 2009 3:19 AM
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Subject: Salmonella Investigation

Dear all:

Late last week, public health officials in Minnesota, while looking around a nursing home kitchen for the source of a salmonella food-sickness case, found salmonella in an already opened tub of our peanut butter made in Blakely and sold by King Nut under their brand. We suspect the salmonella could have been introduced by cross-contamination after the tub was opened. We do not believe the salmonella came from our facility. As you probably know, we send hourly PB samples to an independent lab to test for salmonella during production of peanut butter, and we have never found any salmonella at all.

No salmonella has been found anywhere else in our products or in our plants, or in any unopened containers of our product. It was found ONLY in an already opened container. The investigating agencies, the Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, have NOT said they believe there is salmonella in any of our other product. They also have NOT stated that they believe we were the source of the salmonella found in the partially-used tub.

However, it is their responsibility to investigate thoroughly, and they are doing that right now.

Despite these minimal facts, news agencies are looking for a news story where there currently isn't one.

Please everyone: Media have the power to turn this open container misunderstanding into a disaster for this company's good name if we handle this wrong. If you get calls from media outlets (newspaper, TV, radio, etc.) DO NOT answer any questions, even though the urge is nearly irresistible. Here's what to do if the news media call and you answer:

1. Politely tell them that PCA is eager to answer their questions.
2. Do not give your name.
3. Inform them that Stewart Parnell or his designee will be the only point of contact, per PCA company policy.
4. Offer to fax them our official press release on the matter. This press release is attached to this email and is also available on our Website at www.peanutcorp.com.
5. Tell them that you would be happy to jot down their questions and they can be assured they will be FIRST to receive those answers from our single point of contact.

If possible, try to determine their deadline. When do they need these answers by? Please make good notes of their questions; we will use them to issue a Q&A document to answer all similar questions.

ALSO:

1. Never say "no comment." There's no worse thing to say to the media, ever. We DO have comments. We just want them to be accurate and from a single source.
2. Please inform all subordinates and coworkers that no one is to answer any media questions about anything, but politely send questioners to the Corporate Office or Stewart Parnell directly.
3. Media DO NOT have the right to enter our facility, or even to be on our property, unless specifically permitted by Stewart Parnell. We must, however, be polite to them.

4. Government investigators DO have the right to enter our facility.
5. DO make notes of what you notice we are doing right and wrong to handle this issue. We may face a similar misunderstanding again in the future and we want to use these lessons next time. Please keep and share your notes with the Lynchburg Office in the coming days.
6. Don't worry. We are well positioned to deal with this event no matter what happens. The most important thing for you to know is that we don't expect any surprises; our testing and safety procedures allow us to have great confidence that the opened container in Minnesota was contaminated long after it left our plant. That's all the government agencies have found after 3 days (so far) of examining our operations closely with Q-tips and magnifying glasses. PCA's products are well-tested and safe; we were not the cause of this food-sickness outbreak.

Thanks for your predictable professionalism in a challenging situation.

I look forward to talking with all of you as soon as we have more information.

Please email me (stewart.parnell@) with any media phone numbers or email addresses and their questions I need to answer.

Stewart Parnell, Gloria, Grey, and
everyone in the Lynchburg Office.
/SA