

Listeria vs Dry Ice: 2011



CDC: Deadliest listeria outbreak in 25 years.

WASHINGTON – An outbreak of listeria in cantaloupe is now linked to 23 deaths, making it the deadliest known outbreak of foodborne illness in the USA in more than 25 years.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Wednesday that 116 people have been sickened in the outbreak, including those who died. The number of deaths has now surpassed a 1998 outbreak of listeria in processed meats that was linked to 21 deaths. A 1985 listeria outbreak in Mexican-style soft cheeses killed 52 people.

The tainted Colorado cantaloupes should be off store shelves by now; they were recalled in mid-September and their shelf life is about two weeks. But the number of deaths may continue to grow, because the symptoms of listeria can take up to two months to appear.

The CDC on Wednesday confirmed two more deaths in Louisiana that the state had said it was investigating last week. Other deaths have been reported in Colorado, Indiana, Kansas, Maryland, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Texas and Wyoming. Colorado and New Mexico reported five deaths each.

The outbreak has been linked to Rocky Ford-brand cantaloupes sold by Jensen Farms near Holly, Colo. The cantaloupes were recalled Sept. 14. The CDC and the Food and Drug Administration said any cantaloupes not from Jensen Farms are safe to eat.

The first illnesses began after July 31. Symptoms of listeriosis can take up to two months to develop in someone who has eaten contaminated food, so illnesses could continue to show up into November, the CDC said.

The FDA and CDC have had teams in Jensen Farms fields and packing sheds, testing the soil, water and surfaces for clues. A report on the FDA's findings is anticipated in the coming weeks. In the past, listeria has been most strongly linked to deli meats and soft cheeses, not produce.

Listeria bacteria grow in moist, muddy conditions and live in the guts of animals, which can transport them into fields. When humans are infected with the bacteria, they develop listeriosis, which is a rare but dangerous illness that kills approximately 30% of its victims. It can send up to 90% of elderly people who get it to the hospital.

It is especially dangerous for pregnant women, in whom it can cause a mild illness, but it can also result in stillbirths or miscarriages.

The CDC has reported illnesses in Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

Wednesday

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The Dry Ice Solution.

For food processors, dry ice cleaning has been documented by the Food Standards Agency to effectively decontaminate surfaces of Salmonella, E.coli, and Listeria.

FSA Project Code: B02006

The Cold Jet Advantage.

The Cold Jet system effectively decontaminated surfaces of Salmonella enteritidis, Escherichia coli, and Listeria monocytogenes such that these microorganisms were not detectable using conventional microbiological methods after a defined Cold Jet treatment.

*Independent Contractors
Report to the Food Standards
Agency (submitted by Dr Ian
Millar, Microchem Bioscience
Limited)*