

NEWS RELEASE



Date: Jan. 3, 2011

Contact: Christine Stone, 971-673-1282, desk; 503-602-8027, cell;
christine.l.stone@state.or.us

Salmonella outbreak prompts clover sprouts recall

Oregon Public Health officials warn consumers of health risk

Oregon Public Health Division officials today are warning consumers about a recall of clover sprouts produced by Sprouters Northwest, Inc. of Kent, Wash. These products have been sold in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Alaska, British Columbia and possibly other states. The sprouts have been identified as the source of a salmonellosis outbreak. All Sprouters Northwest-produced clover sprout products are covered in the recall.

To date, at least six people have been sickened: two in Oregon and four in Washington. Reported illnesses began between Dec. 4 and Dec. 17. No hospitalizations or deaths have been reported.

“Once again, sprouts have been identified as the cause of an outbreak of salmonellosis. Consumers who have sprouts at home should check to see if they have any of the recalled products and, if so, should discard them. Retailers should immediately check their stocks and pull any clover products from Sprouters Northwest,” said William E. Keene, a senior epidemiologist at Oregon Public Health Division.

The recalled sprouts were sold at retail stores in 4-ounce and 5-ounce plastic containers; larger 1-pound bags and 2-pound trays were sold to grocery stores and wholesale suppliers, which in turn supplied sprouts to restaurants and other outlets. The clover varieties include Clover, Clover & Onion, Spicy Sprouts and Deli Sprouts. All packages carry the Sprouters Northwest brand name.

Once they heard about the outbreak, Sprouters Northwest immediately decided to recall its clover sprouts. “They have been cooperating fully with the ongoing investigation,” Keene said.

(cont.)

Page 2 *Salmonella outbreak prompts clover sprouts recall*

State and federal agencies are working with Sprouters Northwest to remove potentially contaminated sprouts from distribution and to identify the source of the problem — usually contaminated seed. Retailers and wholesalers that have any of the recalled sprouts should segregate them from other produce and contact their distributor or Sprouters Northwest at 253-872-0577 for additional information. Restaurant and deli operators should check their stock immediately to identify and pull any of the recalled products, Keene said.

Salmonellosis is an acute bacterial infection that can cause diarrhea, fever and vomiting. Symptoms usually develop within one to five days after eating contaminated food. Most cases resolve without the need for medical attention, and antibiotics are not advised for people with uncomplicated illness. People who have eaten sprouts and developed severe symptoms should discuss this exposure with a health care provider. Some people with salmonellosis develop serious illness that can lead to hospitalization and even death, according to Keene.

Raw sprouts have been repeatedly identified as the cause of salmonellosis outbreaks, *E. coli* O157:H7 infections and other diseases.

“This is at least the 13th sprout-caused outbreak that has sickened Oregonians since 1995, when we first started warning consumers about the risks of eating sprouts. Anyone concerned about food-borne disease should consider this before eating sprouts,” Keene said. The risk of severe illness is particularly high among the elderly, the immunocompromised and the very young.

A photo of the recalled clover sprouts is attached.

#

