

FDA PRESS RELEASE

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Media Inquiries: Siobhan DeLancey, 301-796-4668, siobhan.delancey@fda.hhs.gov

Consumer Inquiries: 888-INFO-FDA

FDA warns consumers not to eat Rocky Ford Cantaloupes shipped by Jensen Farms

Jensen Farms recalls Rocky Ford cantaloupe due to potential link to a multi-state outbreak of listeriosis

Fast Facts

- The FDA is warning consumers not to eat Rocky Ford Cantaloupe shipped by Jensen Farms and to throw away recalled product that may still be in their home.
- Jensen Farms is voluntarily recalling Rocky Ford Cantaloupe shipped from July 29 through September 10, 2011, and distributed to at least 17 states with possible further distribution.
- The recalled cantaloupes have the potential to be contaminated with *Listeria* and may be linked to a multi-state outbreak of listeriosis.
- The CDC reports that at least 22 people in seven states have been infected with the outbreak-associated strains of *Listeria monocytogenes* as of September 14.
- Patients reported eating whole cantaloupes they purchased from grocery stores marketed from the Rocky Ford growing region of Colorado.
- While all people are susceptible to *Listeria*, older adults, persons with weakened immune systems and pregnant women are at particular risk.

What is the Problem?

The FDA is warning consumers not to eat Rocky Ford Cantaloupe shipped by Jensen Farms of Granada, Colo. The majority of the patients reported eating cantaloupe marketed from the Rocky Ford growing region. FDA's traceback data from the State of Colorado about their confirmed cases of *Listeria monocytogenes* have identified a common producer of Rocky Ford cantaloupes. That producer is Jensen Farms. Although the investigation is ongoing, no other Rocky Ford cantaloupe producer has been found in common in the Colorado traceback.

Jensen Farms is voluntarily recalling Rocky Ford Cantaloupe. The recalled cantaloupes were shipped from the Rocky Ford growing region of Colorado from July 29 through September 10 and are potentially linked to a multi-state outbreak of listeriosis. The recalled cantaloupes were distributed to at least 17 states with possible further distribution.

What are the Symptoms of Listeriosis?

Listeriosis is a rare and serious illness caused by eating food contaminated with bacteria called *Listeria*. Persons who think they might have become ill should consult their doctor. A person with listeriosis usually has fever and muscle aches.

Who is at Risk?

Listeriosis can be fatal, especially in certain high-risk groups. These groups include older adults, people with compromised immune systems and certain chronic medical conditions (such as

cancer), and unborn babies and newborns. In pregnant women, listeriosis can cause miscarriage, stillbirth, and serious illness or death in newborn babies, though the mother herself rarely becomes seriously ill.

What Do Consumers Need To Do?

Consumers should not eat Rocky Ford Cantaloupe shipped by Jensen Farms and should immediately discard the recalled cantaloupes in the trash in a sealed container so that children and animals, such as wildlife, cannot access them. Consumers who are concerned about illness from *Listeria monocytogenes* should consult their healthcare professionals.

What Does the Product Look Like?

<http://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/ucm271882.htm>

The cantaloupe may be labeled: Colorado Grown, Distributed by Frontera Produce, USA, Pesticide Free, Jensenfarms.com, Sweet Rocky Fords.

The cantaloupes are packed in cartons that are labeled: Frontera Produce, www.fronteraproduce.com or with Frontera Produce, Rocky Ford Cantaloupes. Both cartons also include: Grown and packed by Jensen Farms Granada, CO and Shipped by Frontera Produce LTD, Edinburg, Texas.

Not all of the recalled cantaloupes are labeled with a sticker. Consumers should consult the retailer if they have questions about the origin of a cantaloupe.

Where is it Distributed?

The recalled cantaloupes were distributed to the following states: IL, WY, TN, UT, TX, CO, MN, KS, NM, NC, MO, NE, OK, AZ, NJ, NY, PA. Further distribution is possible.

What is Being Done about the Problem?

Jensen Farms is working with the FDA and the State of Colorado to remove its Rocky Ford Cantaloupe from the marketplace. The FDA is also working with CDC, the states and other regulatory partners to investigate where in the supply chain the contamination occurred.

This is the first time a *Listeria monocytogenes* outbreak has been reportedly linked to whole cantaloupe. Foods that typically have been associated with foodborne outbreaks of Listeriosis are deli meats, hot dogs, and Mexican-style soft cheeses made with unpasteurized milk. Listeriosis has not often been associated with the consumption of fresh produce with the exception of two foodborne illness outbreaks related to consumption of [sprouts in 2009](#) and [fresh-cut celery in 2010](#).

Because of this unusual circumstance, FDA's newly formed Coordinated Outbreak Response and Evaluation (CORE) Network is working with FDA Districts, CDC, the States and other regulatory partners on a root cause analysis to determine where in the supply chain and what circumstances likely caused the implicated cantaloupe to be contaminated. FDA is exploring whether harvesting and/or postharvest practices may have contributed to this contamination, as well as what could be done differently to prevent future occurrences.

For more information:

CDC Investigation on multi-state listeriosis outbreak:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nczved/divisions/dfbmd/diseases/listeriosis/091211.html>

Listeria page on FS.gov

<http://www.foodsafety.gov/poisoning/causes/bacteriaviruses/listeria/index.html>

Produce Safety page on FDA

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm114299>

Coordinated Outbreak Response and Evaluation (CORE) Network

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/CORENetwork/default.htm>

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