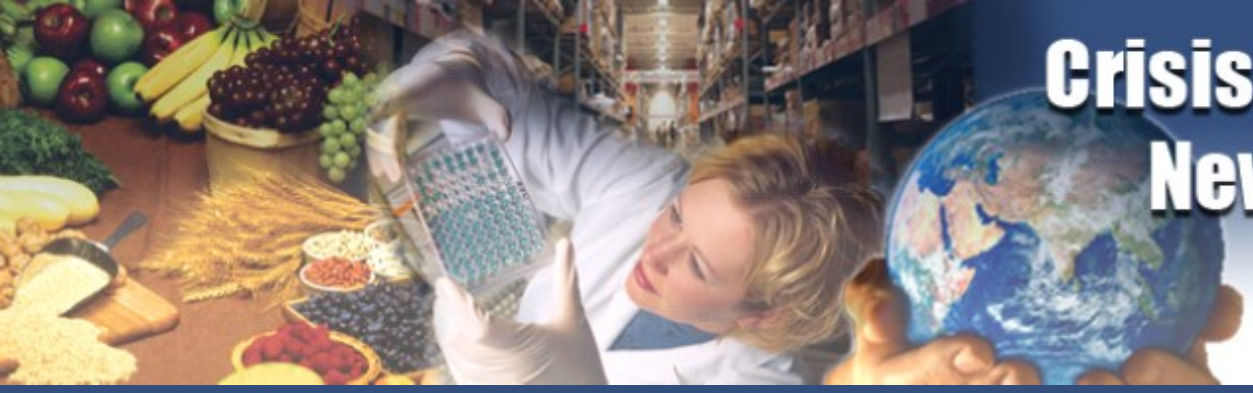


Crisis Control Newsletter

Crisis Control Newsletter from RQA, Inc.—A Catlin Preferred Provider to Foodservice, Food Processing and Consumer Products Industries

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Risk Assessment in the Food Industry

Risk assessments are a proactive approach in preventing food contamination and adulteration. Risk assessments in the food industry utilize new technologies and science to identify the points of food contamination that carry the most risk to public health. While risk assessments can be used to determine the potential impact of a known food contamination incident, the most effective use of risk assessments are in making decisions to implement controls for prevention.

Food scientists and researchers begin by gathering information about a contaminant – a bacterium or virus, for example – and about what conditions it needs to survive or grow in a given food. The scientists collect information about how that food is grown, transported, received, processed, stored, shipped, and sold, and about where in the process it's likely to become contaminated. They also gather information about different ways of preventing the contamination.

The scientists enter the data they've gathered into mathematical models they've created to determine the results. This scientific evidence and these calculations are used to predict what are the best ways of preventing contamination by a specific substance in a specific food and estimates how much contamination or illness from a given substance could be prevented if specific actions were taken at various points in the supply chain for a given food.

Risk assessments are valuable tools for food regulatory agencies who use risk assessments to determine where the risks of contamination are for specific foods in the numerous points along the supply chain from farm to table. This information aids in the writing and passing of laws that keep the food supply safe.

Food regulatory agencies have implemented major programs meant to keep food from getting contaminated and causing illness, including inspection of food facilities, establishing written food safety regulations and guidance for the food industry, and providing food safety guidance for the general public .

Risk assessments are an important step in developing such food safety programs as: Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP), Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) Food Safety Enhancement Program (FSEP) and other risk-based control systems.

Comprehensive data analytics systems have been developed by government agencies to assess the safety of the food supply such as the FDA's Reportable Food Registry (RFR), UDSA's Public Health Information Systems (PHIS) and many others,

With government, industry and the general public working together to identify and understand the risks in the food supply chain, preventative controls can be implemented to make our food safe from farm to table.

Sources: FDA, USDA, CFIA, Foodsafety.gov

How Government Responds to FBI

Even though the food industry implements and enforces various controls to prevent food contamination and adulteration that results in foodborne illness (FBI), it is still possible for foodborne illness to occur. The global and even local food supply chain is very complex with many points where food contamination can happen. It takes several steps to get food from the farm to the dining table. Contamination can occur at any step in this process—during production, processing, distribution, or preparation.

When two or more people get the same illness from the same contaminated food or drink, the event is called a foodborne outbreak. Public health officials investigate outbreaks to control them, so more people do not get sick in the outbreak, and to learn how to prevent similar outbreaks from happening in the future.

- **Local agencies**: Most foodborne outbreaks are local events. Public health officials in just one city or county health department investigate these outbreaks.
- **State agencies**: The state health department investigates outbreaks that spread across several cities or counties. This department often works with the state department of agriculture and with federal food safety agencies.
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**: For outbreaks that involve large numbers of people or severe or unusual illness, a state may ask for help from the CDC. The CDC usually leads investigations of widespread outbreaks—those that affect many states at once.
- **Federal regulatory agencies:** The CDC collaborates with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), or the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and even the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) throughout all phases of an outbreak investigation. In the case of an outbreak of foodborne illness, these federal agencies work to find out why it occurred, take steps to control it, and look for ways to prevent future outbreaks. They may trace foods to their origins, test foods, assess food safety measures in restaurants and food processing facilities, lead farm investigations, and announce food recalls.

Food and Drug Administration Recalls (www.fda.gov)

Product: Ravioli Entrée's
Incident: Possible Health Risk–Foreign Material

A Solon, OH firm has announced a voluntary recall of two production codes of their ravioli entrée's because the meals may contain fragments of glass. The company is taking action after three consumers reported they had found small fragments of glass in the ravioli portion of the entrée. No injuries were reported by any of the consumers. The recalled products were distributed nationwide and no other production dates, sizes or varieties are affected by this recall. The entrée being recalled was produced during early November 2012. Consumers should examine their freezer inventory for this product. Consumers who may have purchased this product should not consume it and should contact the company for further instructions. The company will provide a replacement coupon to reporting consumers and may also make arrangements to retrieve the product for further examination. For more information, contact the company directly.

Product: Dried Coconut
Incident: Possible Health Risk–Undeclared Allergen

A Brooklyn, NY company is recalling it's brand of dried coconut because it contains undeclared sulfites. People who have severe sensitivity to sulfites run the risk of serious or life-threatening allergic reactions if they consume this product. The dried coconut is a product of China and comes in a 3-oz, clear plastic bag. It was sold in the New York Metro area. The recall was initiated after routine sampling by New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Food Inspectors and a subsequent analysis of the product by Food Laboratory personnel revealed the presence of sulfites in packages of the dried coconut which did not declare sulfites on the label. The consumption of 10 milligrams of sulfites per serving has been reported to elicit severe reactions in some asthmatics. Anaphylactic shock could occur in certain sulfite sensitive individuals upon ingesting 10 milligrams or more of the sulfites. No illnesses have been reported to date. Consumers should return the product for a refund.

United States Department of Agriculture Recalls (www.usda.gov)

Product: Frozen Country Fried Steak Products
Incident: Possible Health Risk–Foreign Material

An Enid, OK establishment is recalling approximately 15,328 pounds of frozen, fully cooked country fried steak products because they may contain foreign materials believed to be pieces of plastic. Products included in the recall are 22.75-oz pouches of country fried steaks and 8.5-lb cases containing six pouches of country fried steaks. All products were produced on Dec. 21, 2012 and were distributed to one retail chain in AL, AR, CA, CO, FL, GA, IA, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MN, MO, MS, MT, NC, ND, NE, NM, NV, OK, SC, SD, TN, TX, VA and WY. The firm alerted FSIS after the company received complaints from two consumers who each received complaints from two customers who each received an oral injury upon eating the product. The problem was a result of a piece of plastic bin being introduced into the production process and then being broken into smaller pieces. Consumers with questions should contact the company directly.

Product: Ready-To-Eat Roast Beef
Incident: Possible Health Risk–Listeria Monocytogenes

An Addison, IL establishment is recalling approximately 315 pounds of ready-to-eat roast beef products due to possible contamination with *Listeria monocytogenes*. The products subject to recall were sold in 5-lb. packages of fully cooked roast beef with seasoned juice. The products were produced on February 6, 2013 and distributed to institutions in Chicago. The problem was discovered by FSIS through microbiological testing by the Agency. After the company received a positive sample for *Listeria monocytogenes*, most of its products were held but a portion may have been cross-contaminated as a result of equipment not being cleaned between production shifts and shipped into commerce. FSIS and the company have not received any reports of illnesses due to consumption of these products. Consumers and media with questions regarding the recall should contact the company directly.

Consumer Product Safety Commission Recalls (www.cpsc.gov)

Product: Canning Jar Lifters
Incident: Possible Risk-Laceration Hazard

A Kent, WA importer in cooperation with the US CPSC is recalling approximately 22,700 canning jar lifters in the United States (about 3,800 units in Canada). The one handed jar lifter was manufactured in China and sold at retailers and online from February 2012 to October 2012. The jar lifter is a pair of tongs designed for lifting canning jars out of boiling water. The lifter is red with white handles and is made of plastic and metal with a nylon coating. The jar lifter handle can detach over time due to a missing stainless steel core in the hinge. This can cause the tongs to fail to grip and allow a jar being lifted to fall, posing a laceration hazard to the user. The company has not received any reports of injury or property damage related to the use of this product. Consumers should immediately stop using the jar lifter and contact the company for a free replacement. Consumers with questions should contact the company directly or visit their website.

Product: Wall Ovens
Incident: Possible Risk-Fire Hazard

A Reading, PA manufacturer in cooperation with the US CPSC is recalling about 940 units of three models of gas powered stainless steel wall ovens. The ovens were manufactured in the United States prior to November 23, 2012 and were sold at appliance stores and dealers nationwide from January 2008 through November 2012. Each of the three oven sizes (24, 30 and 36 inch wide) were available for use with natural gas or liquid propane. Some of the wall ovens may have been improperly installed and/or have damaged flexible gas appliance connectors, posing a fire hazard. The firm has received one report of a fire, resulting in property damage to the cabinet that held the oven. No injuries have been reported. Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled ovens and contact the company for instructions on identifying affected units and to schedule a repair. For more information contact the company.

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