



Ohio Department of Agriculture  
and  
Ohio Department of Health



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**ODA Director** Fred L. Dailey  
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To: Health Commissioners, Environmental Health Directors, Nursing Directors,  
ODA Food Safety Specialists, and Other Interested Parties

Subject: Recall Announcement (ODA/ODH) 2002-17

Date: May 13, 2002

**Nationwide Recall of Susie Brand Imported Cantaloupe Due to Potential Health Risk**

The I. Kunik Company of McAllen, Texas is issuing a nationwide voluntary recall of its Susie brand cantaloupes because of their association with outbreaks of foodborne illness throughout the United States and Canada. The outbreaks of *Salmonella poona* that have infected dozens of people throughout parts of the United States and Canada are linked to the Susie brand of cantaloupe which is imported from Mexico and distributed in the United States and Canada.

*Salmonella poona* is an organism which can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. Healthy persons infected with *Salmonella poona* often experience fever, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. In rare circumstances, infection can result in the organism getting into the bloodstream and producing more severe illnesses such as arterial infections (i.e., infected aneurysms), endocarditis and arthritis.

The cantaloupe was sold in retail stores and restaurants and possibly used in other institutions. Fresh cantaloupe has a shelf life of 7-10 days.

This recall resulted from an FDA traceback of these foodborne outbreaks. As a result of this investigation, FDA has taken steps to prevent the importation of any other contaminated cantaloupe. FDA is detaining all cantaloupe imported by I. Kunik from Mexico. The agency is also working with the company, states and other government agencies to investigate this matter.

Retailers, restaurants and food service operations should determine if any of their existing stock of cantaloupe was purchased or sold under the Susie brand name, and if so, remove it from sale. Any cantaloupe bearing this brand name should not be consumed.

Although Susie brand is the only brand of cantaloupe associated with this outbreak, FDA continues to recommend that consumers take the following steps with cantaloupe and other produce to reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

- Purchase produce that is not bruised or damaged. If buying fresh cut produce, be sure it is refrigerated or surrounded by ice.

- After purchase, put produce that needs refrigeration away promptly. (Fresh whole produce such as bananas and potatoes do not need refrigeration.) Fresh produce should be refrigerated within two hours of peeling or cutting. Leftover cut produce should be discarded if left at room temperature for more than two hours.
- Wash hands often. Hands should be washed with hot soapy water before and after handling fresh produce, or raw meat, poultry, or seafood, as well as after using the bathroom, changing diapers, or handling pets.
- Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables with cool tap water immediately before eating. Don't use soap or detergents. Scrub firm produce, such as melons and cucumbers, with a clean produce brush. Cut away any bruised or damaged areas before eating.
- Wash surfaces often. Cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops should be washed with hot soapy water and sanitized after coming in contact with fresh produce, or raw meat, poultry, or seafood. Sanitize after use with a solution of 1 teaspoon of chlorine bleach in one quart of water.
- Wash surfaces often. Cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops should be washed with hot soapy water and sanitized after coming in contact with fresh produce, or raw meat, poultry, or seafood. Sanitize after use with a solution of 1 teaspoon of chlorine bleach in one quart of water.
- Don't cross contaminate. Use clean cutting boards and utensils when handling fresh produce. If possible, use one clean cutting board for fresh produce and a separate one for raw meat, poultry, and seafood. During food preparation, wash cutting boards, utensils or dishes that have come into contact with fresh produce, raw meat, poultry, or seafood. Do not consume ice that has come in contact with fresh produce or other raw products.
- Use a cooler with ice or use ice gel packs when transporting or storing perishable food outdoors, including cut fresh fruits and vegetables.

If consumers should have questions regarding this specific recall the contact person for the distributor, I. Kunik Company, is Lawrence Kroman at 956-686-4324.