



Ohio Department of Agriculture
and
Ohio Department of Health



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Lieutenant Governor Jennette Bradley

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ODH Director J. Nick Baird, M.D.

To: Health Commissioners, Environmental Health Directors, Nursing Directors,
ODA Food Safety Specialists, and Other Interested Parties

Subject: Recall Announcement (ODA/ODH) 2004-20

Date: May 19, 2004

Paramount Farms Announces Nationwide Recall of Whole National Raw Almonds

Lost Hills, CA - Paramount Farms announced that it is voluntarily recalling from distribution whole natural raw almonds sold under the Kirkland Signature, Trader Joe's and Sunkist brands. The almonds sold under the Kirkland Signature brand, available exclusively at Costco Wholesale Inc., were marked "raw almonds" and were packaged in three-pound, lay-flat plastic bags stamped with a "best before" date from 8/21/04 through 2/8/05. For Trader Joe's and Sunkist, the packages bear the "best before" dates of 8/21/04 through 3/15/05. The almonds sold by Trader Joe's are in a one-pound lay-flat plastic bag marked "nonpareil variety raw almonds" and the almonds sold by Sunkist are in a 10-ounce lay-flat plastic bag marked "raw natural whole almonds."

Paramount is taking this precautionary action after learning from the Food and Drug Administration that there are seven cases of illnesses from *Salmonella Enteritidis* in Alaska, Arizona, Oregon, Washington and Utah. In all of these cases, the individuals who consumed California whole natural raw almonds recovered, and, in five of these cases, the individuals purchased the almonds from Costco Wholesale Inc. in Oregon.

Salmonella 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* often experience fever, diarrhea (which may be bloody), nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. In rare circumstances, infection with *Salmonella* 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.

"While no *salmonella* has been found in Paramount products, we have taken this aggressive step out of an abundance of caution and to assure our customers and consumers of the quality and safety of our products," said David Szefflin, vice president, Operations. "We're working diligently with the FDA and state health officials to make sure that any product that has not yet been consumed is returned."

This is the first ever almond recall for Paramount Farms and there have never been any incidences of salmonellosis in the company's history. Committed to quality product and customer safety, Paramount Farms employs state-of-the-industry equipment, procedures and sanitation methods that it believes comply with guidelines and regulations of the Food and Drug Administration, the California Department of Health Services and other appropriate state and federal regulatory bodies. The company is cooperating fully with the investigation.

“We’ve worked hard for more than 20 years to gain the loyalty and confidence of our customers,” Szeflin added, “and we intend to safeguard that trust.”

Consumers who purchased products with these best buy dates should return them to their local point of purchase for a full refund. Beginning Wednesday, May 19 at approximately noon PDT, consumers who have questions about the recall may call Paramount Farms toll free hotline at 800-496-5168.