

CLASS I RECALL
HEALTH RISK: HIGH

Congressional and Public Affairs
Amanda Eamich (202) 720-9113
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CONNECTICUT FIRM RECALLS GROUND BEEF PRODUCTS FOR POSSIBLE *E. COLI* O157:H7 CONTAMINATION

WASHINGTON, October 23, 2006 - Omaha Beef Company, Inc., a Danbury, Conn., firm, is voluntarily recalling approximately 1,680 pounds of ground beef products that may be contaminated with *E. coli* O157:H7, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service announced today.

The products subject to recall include:

- 10-pound boxes of "HAMBURGER PATTIES, OMAHA BEEF CO., INC."
- Five- and 10-pound bags of "HAMBURGER, OMAHA BEEF CO., INC."

Each package bears the establishment number "Est. 2769" inside the USDA mark of inspection, as well as the case code, "101861."

The problem was discovered through routine FSIS microbiological testing. FSIS has received no reports of illnesses associated with consumption of these products.

The ground beef products were produced on October 18 and were distributed to restaurants in Connecticut and several counties in southern New York State.

E. coli O157:H7 is a potentially deadly bacterium that can cause bloody diarrhea and dehydration. The very young, seniors and persons with compromised immune systems are the most susceptible to foodborne illness.

Consumers with questions about the recall should contact company Chief Executive Officer Brian Street at (203) 248-2651. Media with questions should contact company Chief Financial Officer Dave LaJoie at (203) 248-2651.

PREPARING GROUND BEEF FOR SAFE CONSUMPTION

USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline
1-888-MPHOTLINE or visit
www.fsis.usda.gov

Although the product(s) being recalled should be returned to the point of purchase, consumers preparing other ground beef products should heed the following advice.

Consumers should only eat ground beef patties that have been cooked to a safe temperature of 160 °F. When a ground beef patty is cooked to 160 °F throughout, it can be safe and juicy, regardless of color.

The only way to be sure a ground beef patty is cooked to a high enough temperature to kill harmful bacteria is to use an accurate food thermometer.

Color is not a reliable indicator that ground beef patties have been cooked to a temperature high enough to kill harmful bacteria such as *E. coli* O157:H7.

Eating a pink or red ground beef patty without first verifying that the safe temperature of 160 °F has been reached is a significant risk factor for foodborne illness.

Thermometer use to ensure proper cooking temperature is especially important for those who cook or serve ground beef patties to people most at risk for foodborne illness because *E. coli* O157:H7 can lead to serious illness or even death. Those most at risk include young children, seniors, and those with compromised immune systems.

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Consumers with food safety questions can "Ask Karen," the FSIS virtual representative available 24 hours a day at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Safety_Education/Ask_Karen/index.asp#Question. The toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854) is available in English and Spanish and can be reached from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Eastern Time) Monday through Friday. Recorded food safety messages are available 24 hours a day.

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NOTE: Access news releases and other information on FSIS' Web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>

USDA RECALL CLASSIFICATIONS

Class I This is a health hazard situation where there is a reasonable probability that the use of the product will cause serious, adverse health consequences or death.

Class II This is a health hazard situation where there is a remote probability of adverse health consequences from the use of the product.

Class III This is a situation where the use of the product will not cause adverse health consequences.