Peanut Products Recall

January – April 2009

LeeAnne Jackson, Ph.D.
Health Science Policy Advisor
Office of Food Defense, Communication, and Emergency Response
Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
Background

- Initial reports of a *Salmonella* outbreak in September 2008
  - CDC, FDA, State and local public health officials initially identified illnesses in 12 states which ultimately expanded to 46 states.

- FDA, CDC, state and local public health officials identified peanut butter and other products manufactured by Peanut Corporation of America as the source of contamination in January 2009.
Background

Peanut products manufactured by the Peanut Corporation of America for institutional use and for ingredients in other products such as snacks were contaminated with *Salmonella*.

Nearly 700 people had been infected with *Salmonella Typhimurium* in 46 states by March 15 – with the bacterial infection contributing to nine deaths from peanut products from the Peanut Corporation of America’s processing facility in Blakely, GA and Plainview, TX.

Read more at: http://www.foodpolicy.rutgers.edu/news.asp?id=24
Salmonella Typhimurium Outbreak
Peanut Butter and Peanut Containing Products
Content Source: National Center for Zoonotic, Vector-Borne and Enteric Diseases
Timeline: *Salmonella* Typhimurium Investigation

**Overview of the investigation into the source of contamination in peanut products: March 2009**

---

**December 3 - January 6**
- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) coordinates with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) amid reports of illnesses caused by *Salmonella* Typhimurium. During this time, there is no substantial evidence that a product primarily regulated by FDA is suspected.

---

**January 7**
- CDC reports 388 people infected with *Salmonella* Typhimurium in 42 states.
- CDC, FDA, and the Minnesota Department of Health participate in a conference call to discuss peanut butter as a possible source of the outbreak.

---

**January 8**
- Based on preliminary data from CDC and an investigation of illnesses in Minnesota by the Minnesota Department of Health, FDA initiates inspection and collects samples at a peanut butter distributor, King Nut.
- FDA determines that the manufacturer of King Nut brand peanut butter is Peanut Corporation of America (PCA) in Blakely, Ga.

---

**January 9**
- FDA initiates inspection and sample collections at PCA in Georgia, and continues to follow the distribution points for products.
- PCA ceases production and shipment of peanut paste and peanut butter.

---

**January 10**
- King Nut announces a recall of peanut butter distributed under the King Nut and Parnell’s Pride labels.
- The Minnesota Department of Agriculture Laboratory isolates the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Typhimurium from an open 5-pound container of King Nut brand creamy peanut butter.

---

**January 12**
- FDA announces its collaboration with CDC, USDA, and state public health officials to investigate a multi-state outbreak of infections due to *Salmonella* Typhimurium.
- FDA begins to post company press releases about recalls on its Web site.

---

**January 13**
- PCA announces a voluntary recall of 21 specific lots of peanut butter and peanut paste produced in its Blakely, Ga. facility on or after July 1, 2008.
Timeline: *Salmonella* Typhimurium Investigation

Overview of the investigation into the source of contamination in peanut products: March 2009

**January 16**
- PCA expands its recall to include all peanut butter produced on or after August 8, 2008, and all peanut paste produced on or after September 26, 2008.
- Connecticut Department of Public Health Laboratory and the Georgia Department of Agriculture independently isolate and report finding *Salmonella* in unopened 5-pound containers of King Nut brand peanut butter.

**January 17**
- FDA announces that it notified PCA that product samples originating from its Blakely, Ga., processing plant have been tested and found positive for *Salmonella* by labs in Minnesota and Georgia.

**January 18**
- PCA expands its recall to include more peanut butter and peanut paste produced on or after July 1, 2008.

**January 19**
- FDA posts a searchable database so that consumers can search for recalled products.
- Connecticut Department of Public Health announces its King Nut sample is a genetic match to the outbreak strain.

**January 20**
- FDA completes investigation at Blakely Georgia facility and issues a Form 483 containing inspectional observations.

**January 21**
- FDA announces that a combination of epidemiological analysis and laboratory testing by state officials in Minnesota and Connecticut, FDA, and CDC have enabled the Agency to confirm that the sources of the outbreak of illnesses caused by *Salmonella* Typhimurium are peanut butter and peanut paste produced by the Peanut Corporation of America (PCA) at its Blakely, Georgia processing plant.
- FDA announces that some of the recalls now include pet food products that contain peanut paste that was made by PCA.
- FDA initiates inspection at PCA facility in Texas, and continues inspections at PCA facilities in Georgia and Virginia.

**January 27**
- FDA completes investigation at Blakely Georgia facility and issues a Form 483 containing inspectional observations.

**January 28**
- PCA expands its recall to all dry- and oil-roasted peanuts and peanut products (including peanut butter and peanut paste) processed in its Blakely, Georgia facility since Jan. 1, 2007. All production stops at PCA’s Blakely facility.

**February 4**
- After obtaining additional information related to the transfer of products between PCA Georgia and PCA Texas, FDA returns to initiate a comprehensive inspection of PCA’s facility in Plainview, Texas.
Timeline: *Salmonella Typhimurium* Investigation

Overview of the investigation into the source of contamination in peanut products: March 2009

**February 10**  
- PCA voluntarily ceases operations at its Plainview, TX plant.

**February 12**  
- The State of Texas issues emergency and recall orders directing PCA to cease the manufacture and distribution of all food products from the Texas plant and to recall all products manufactured at the plant.

**February 13**  
- PCA files for bankruptcy protection.

**February 18**  
- FDA confirms outbreak strain of *Salmonella Typhimurium* in two consumer samples of fresh-ground (in-store) peanut butter from Vitamin Cottage.

**February 19**  
- FDA confirms Salmonella (later identified as the outbreak strain) in a sample of peanut meal collected at the PCA Texas facility.

**February 20**  
- PCA issues a statement informing customers who received products from its Georgia or Texas plants not to distribute or further use those products and, in light of PCA’s bankruptcy, to contact FDA regarding matters related to the recall.

**February 26**  
- FDA announces that it is coordinating its efforts with the State of Texas to notify companies that received product from PCA’s Plainview, Texas facility from January 1, 2007 forward.

**Ongoing**  
- FDA continues to conduct follow-up audits and inspections, work with state and local regulatory authorities, and notify foreign regulatory counterparts.

**March 3**  
- FDA completes inspection of PCA’s Plainview, Texas facility and issues a Form 483 containing inspectional observations.
Timeline – *Salmonella Typhimurium* investigation

- **March 23, 2009** – FDA asked Irvington, N.J.-based Westco Fruit and Nut Co., Inc. (Westco/Westcott) to voluntarily recall all of its products containing peanuts from PCA because of the contamination threat. Westco/Westcott refused.

- **April 8, 2009** - the FDA served Westco/Westcott with an inspection warrant in an attempt to gain access to the company’s distribution records.

- **April 27, 2009** - at the request of the FDA, U.S. Marshals seized $34,500 worth of PCA peanuts and products containing PCA peanuts at Westco/Westcott because of possible *Salmonella* contamination.
Simplified Peanut Product Distribution Pattern From Peanut Corporation of America (PCA) to Point of Sale

This chart illustrates some of the many paths a peanut product produced by the Peanut Corporation of America (PCA) might have taken before reaching the consumer. From the time a product left PCA, it could pass through multiple points, sometimes being processed into new, widely distributed food products for consumers and pets. Actual distribution patterns may be more extensive and complex than what is illustrated here.

The length of the distribution chain, the number of finished products the peanut material is incorporated into, and the breadth of the distribution chain are all factors contributing to the length of time it takes to conduct a recall.

PCA shipped peanut products to hundreds of establishments, including numerous distributors and manufacturers. As of February 9, 2009, over 1,800 products have been recalled and more than 250 brands affected.

The circled numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) represent products that were made using at least one ingredient originating from PCA's peanut processing facility in Blakely, Georgia.
FDA Calls to Industry

Outreach to affected industries was initiated on January 12, 2009

- 42 Food/Feed industry trade groups
- 6 Restaurant/convenience store trade groups
- 2 Dietary supplement trade groups
- 13 Institutional/healthcare/food bank groups
Industry Conference Calls

Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition

- Jan. 12, 2009
- Jan. 15, 2009
- Jan. 17, 2009
- Jan. 21, 2009
- February 13, 2009
- February 26, 2009
Media Teleconferences

FDA/CDC Joint Media Teleconferences

- January 16, 2009
- January 17, 2009
- January 21, 2009
- January 27, 2009
- January 28, 2009
Listserv Updates

CFSAN Provided 5 Email Updates to its Listserv

- Jan. 13, 2009
- Jan. 15, 2009
- Jan. 16, 2009
- Jan. 17, 2009
- Jan. 18, 2009
FDA Outreach to Consumers

Outreach to the affected consumer groups was initiated on Jan. 16, 2009

- Conference call updates
  - Jan. 16, 2009
- Listen-only invite to media calls
  - Jan. 21, 2009
- Email updates
  - Jan. 16, 2009
  - Jan. 18, 2009
Federal-State Relations

- 50-State Calls - Weekly
- All information faxed and e-mailed to state, local, county-level entities
- Information relayed to the National Public Health Information Coalition members for their distribution
- Information relayed to Communication Officers of State Departments of Agriculture for their distribution.