



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Sponsors

FROM: Paul F. Flinter, Chief
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education

DATE: February 22, 2008

**SUBJECT: Operational Memorandum #04C-08 and #04H-08
United States Department of Agriculture Beef Recall**

On February 17, 2008 the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued a recall of Hallmark/Westland Meat Company products dating back to February 1, 2006. The Connecticut Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Food Distribution Program is in the process of notifying those Connecticut school districts that were issued government commodity products containing Hallmark/Westland meat. Enclosed is an excerpt from the USDA Question and Answer information sheet that addresses pertinent information concerning the government commodity beef recall. For a complete text of this information sheet, go to the following website: http://www.usda.gov/documents/usda_action_QA.pdf

Additionally, Hallmark/Westland Meat Company products may have been distributed to local stores. **Child Nutrition Program sponsors purchasing any beef products directly from local stores must put those products on hold and contact the store to determine if the product was part of the recall.** If there is locally purchased beef that was part of the recall on inventory in your establishment, destroy the product according to the guidelines provided in the USDA Question and Answer information sheet. As a reminder, *written records must be maintained for any product that has been destroyed as part of this recall.*

If there are any questions about this information, contacts are as follows:

Child and Adult Day Care Center Sponsors: Susan Boyle at (860) 807-2074, Celia Cordero at (860) 807-2076 or Benedict Onye at (860) 807-2080.

Day Care Home Sponsors: Susan Bohuslaw at (860) 807-2073.

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Enclosure

Important: This is a numbered Operational Memorandum that contains important program information. Please read carefully and retain in a binder for your future reference. Operational Memoranda are also posted on the Child Nutrition website at the following link: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=321576>

**Excerpt of the USDA Questions and Answers
Hallmark/Westland Meat Packing Co.
February 17, 2008**

(For the full USDA Q and A go to: http://www.usda.gov/documents/usda_action_QA.pdf)

Q. What is a recall?

A. Recalls are voluntary actions undertaken by manufacturers or distributors to remove from commerce products that are adulterated or misbranded from commerce.

Q. How did FSIS reach the decision to issue a recall?

A. As a result of USDA's ongoing investigation, FSIS obtained evidence that the establishment had the practice of occasionally slaughtering cattle that, although the cattle passed ante-mortem inspection, became non-ambulatory prior to entering the slaughter operation. This action is not compliant with FSIS regulations.

FSIS regulations require that plant personnel notify the FSIS public health veterinarian if an animal becomes non-ambulatory after being passed during ante-mortem inspection. The public health veterinarian then would be able to determine if the animal was unable to walk due to an acute injury, such as due to a broken leg, and would therefore be eligible to move on to slaughter.

Q. How does the public know when a product has been recalled?

A. The public is notified through a recall release that is posted on the FSIS Web site and distributed to media in the affected area as well as through public health partners and stakeholders. FSIS might issue a public health alert if a product is not considered adulterated but there are illnesses involved or if illnesses are associated with a meat or poultry product from an unidentifiable source.

Recall and the Federal Food and Nutrition Programs

Q. Relative to Federal food and nutrition programs, what products are covered by the recall?

A. All ground beef products produced by Hallmark/Westland Meat Packing Company and delivered directly to Federal food and nutrition programs and further processed products that contain Westland products are covered by the recall. The direct delivered products include fine ground beef and one-pound chubs of ground beef. In most cases, coarse ground beef was delivered to firms that further process the product into end items. The recall applies to all Westland products delivered since February 1, 2006. State and local food program operators will need to work closely with their further processors to identify products derived from Westland coarse ground beef.

Q. How can the Westland products be identified?

A. Westland supplied fine and coarse ground beef directly to Federal food and nutrition programs. Its Federal establishment number (EST 336) will be on the shipping containers and immediate containers (i.e., chubs) of fine ground beef, as well as, a date of pack. For coarse ground beef that was further processed, the further processing firm will be able to provide information to identify and trace affected products.

Q. How does the recall impact the Federal food and nutrition programs?

A. When products subject to a recall have been distributed to Federal food and nutrition programs, USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) participates in the recall process to enable them to rapidly notify their customers at the time a recall release is issued. Some of the Westland Meat Co. branded products were purchased for Federal food and nutrition programs and, since Jan. 30, 2008, USDA has had an administrative hold on all products from Westland Meat Co. in all of these outlets including, in the National School Lunch Program, the Emergency Food Assistance Program and the Food Assistance Program on Indian Reservations. Based on this Class II recall, officials of the Food and Nutrition Service and Agricultural Marketing Service will work closely with State food and nutrition officials to minimize any disruptions caused by the removal and disposal of recalled Westland Meat Co. products.

**Excerpt of the USDA Questions and Answers
Hallmark/Westland Meat Packing Co.**

Q. What must be done with any Hallmark/Westland products or processed items containing Hallmark/Westland products in the Federal food and nutrition programs?

A. Any Hallmark/Westland Meat Packing Co. products in the Federal food and nutrition programs, or its derivatives, must be destroyed and cannot be used or reconditioned for human consumption. All disposal methods must be fully documented regarding type of product and destruction method and witnessed with two signatures. Entities holding 50 cases or less may destroy the product on-site by rendering the product unfit for human consumption according to destruction guidance from the State or local health authority. Quantities greater than 50 cases must be taken to a landfill, incinerated, or sent for inedible rendering. FNS has provided destruction verification forms to all affected States.

Q. Who is responsible for ensuring that product in the Federal food and nutrition programs is properly disposed?

A. For quantities destroyed on-site, an appropriate person of authority (e.g. food service director) and one other person are required to witness the destruction using approved methods to render the product inedible. In the case of incineration or landfill destruction, two witnesses must be present, one of whom must be an official from the local health department or authority.

Q. If Westland product in the Federal food and nutrition programs was commingled with other supplier's products during further processing, will these products have to be destroyed?

A. Yes. All products that contain the recalled Westland product in the Federal food and nutrition programs must be destroyed.

Q. Can the recalled product in the Federal food and nutrition programs be further donated or used as pet food?

A. No. The Federal food and nutrition program product must be destroyed by placing it in a landfill, incinerating or by inedible rendering.

Q. How soon can State and local program operators start disposing of recalled Westland products in the Federal food and nutrition programs?

A. The disposal may begin as soon as preparations can be made with a disposal site and State or local health officials for certification of destruction. It is important that local program operators work closely with their SDAs to ensure proper documentation is submitted for reimbursement of expenses and replacement of product in the Federal food and nutrition programs.

Q. How soon will USDA start putting product in the distribution system to make up for shortfalls to State and local food and nutrition programs caused by the recall?

A. USDA will start immediately to purchase replacement products for Federal food and nutrition programs that must destroy product that is currently in inventory. Additionally, on-going planned purchases will continue. FNS and AMS will work together to prioritize product deliveries to ensure State and local programs have ground beef items to meet their needs.