



A Division
of



US FOODSERVICE®

Your partner beyond the plate.®

F *ast* *acts* on **Iceberg Lettuce / E Coli** September 28, 2008

***At a Glance:* 26 confirmed illnesses of E. Coli in Michigan and other states are associated with consumption of bagged shredded or chopped industrial-sized iceberg lettuce distributed by Aunt Mid's Produce Company of Detroit MI.**

Our initial investigation shows that U.S. Foodservice does not purchase lettuce from this supplier.

The Issue: The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) has issued a public health alert due to illnesses from the 26 cases of E. coli strain O157:H7 that are thought to be associated with bagged, industrial-sized packages of iceberg lettuce sold through wholesale venues to restaurants and institutions. There is no evidence that the bagged lettuce at grocery stores is affected. There are also cases in Illinois, Ohio, Oregon, and New York. Aunt Mid's is the only distributor identified thus far. The USF Division in Michigan does not purchase lettuce from Aunt Mid's. We are confirming that no other Divisions distribute lettuce from this company.

US Foodservice Position: There is no way at present to absolutely guarantee produce safety. However, it is possible to ensure that every available step is taken to grow and pack lettuce safely. Cross Valley Farms Produce is grown and packed by farmers and packing companies who have committed to rigid adherence to the latest Good Agricultural Practices. US Foodservice annually publishes an "Expectations Manual" for our suppliers, requiring, among other practices, a verifiable commitment to food safety standards. Industry-leading 3rd party auditing firms inspect our suppliers frequently to measure compliance. And USF works nationally with industry and trade associations to improve produce safety standards.

Next, a set of detailed standard operating procedures (SOPs) for all aspects of produce handling governs every division, ensuring our practices keep all the food we deliver to you as safe as it can be.

Finally, we have one of the best recall programs in the country, so if a problem occurs, we will help get it off of your menu immediately.

What can you do? The farm-to-table continuum includes a critical final step- YOU! Avoid cross-contamination in the refrigerator or the prep table. Stress hand washing and employee hygiene. Keep fresh produce cold to reduce bacterial growth. Buy from a supplier that you trust- that has the resources and the knowledge to help you succeed- and that cares as much about food safety as you do. Food safety isn't free. Saving a buck or two on produce seems like a good idea, until you realize where those savings may come from. US Foodservice is a company working to ensure food safety from the source to the table – your table. Count on us to be your *Partners Beyond the Plate*.

This "fast facts" will be updated as news becomes available. Please contact Greg Pallaske, Director of Regulatory Compliance (847.232.5884) for additional information.