



Consumer Federation of America

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Consumer Federation of America Statement on FDA Findings of Potential Causes of Listeria Outbreak Linked to Cantaloupe

Today's [report](#) by the Food and Drug Administration on the factors potentially contributing to the contamination of whole cantaloupes that were linked to a multistate outbreak of *Listeria monocytogenes* underscores the importance of ensuring the FDA has the resources necessary to develop and enforce strong produce safety standards.

According to the FDA, unsanitary conditions in the packing facility of Jensen Farms contributed to the outbreak, which caused 123 illnesses, 25 deaths and 1 miscarriage across 26 states. The outbreak is the deadliest foodborne illness outbreak in 25 years. FDA identified conditions in the packing facility that could contribute to the growth or spread of *Listeria monocytogenes*, such as pooling water on the packing facility floor; equipment used to wash and dry the cantaloupe that was not adequately cleaned and sanitized; and postharvest washing procedures that did not adequately cool cantaloupes before placing them in cold storage. Good sanitation practices are essential components of ensuring food safety on the farm and in packing facilities.

CFA expects that FDA will incorporate these types of sanitation measures into its pending proposed regulations for produce safety which are required as part of the Food Safety Modernization Act. It is critical that FDA is provided the necessary resources to continue developing these regulations and release the agency's proposal in a timely manner. Further, once the regulations are finalized, FDA will need adequate resources to assure compliance with the new standards. As Congress considers appropriations legislation for the FDA, it is critical that the agency be provided with sufficient resources to implement the Food Safety Modernization Act and carry out its important public health mission of protecting the food supply.

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Consumer Federation of America is a non-profit association of over 300 organizations, with a combined membership of over 50 million Americans. CFA's Food Policy Institute was created in 1999 and engages in research, education and advocacy on food and agricultural policy, agricultural biotechnology, food safety and nutrition.