

Minnesota
Department
of Education

To: School District Superintendents

From: Chas Anderson
Deputy Commissioner

Date: February 7, 2008

Subject: Additional Information for Beef HOLD

Last week, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that it indefinitely suspended Westland Hallmark Meat Company as a supplier to federal food and nutrition programs pending an investigation into the inhumane handling of non-ambulatory disabled cattle. Following USDA directions, we placed a hold on all beef products from this supplier and asked school districts to do the same.

Here are some important updates on that hold:

- No instances of illness have been reported in connection to this product and there is also no other evidence at this time that this product represents an increased health risk. If impacted districts become aware of illness potentially related to this product, we encourage them to contact the Minnesota Department of Health immediately at: 651-201-5414.
- On Monday, the Minnesota Department of Education released a list of schools and organizations that have potentially received Westland beef. As a result of our efforts to contact school districts, distributors and processors to identify the location of this product, we have been able to narrow that list down to 374 schools and organizations that likely received Westland beef. (Attachment #1)
- Of the schools and organizations that received Westland beef, we have identified 120 that currently have unused product. (Attachment #2) We have contacted those schools and organizations and instructed them on how to isolate the product.
- The majority of the Westland beef that was sent to Minnesota was likely served to students before the USDA issued its advisory. Based on the information that has been gathered by the Minnesota Department of Education, approximately 60,000 pounds of the initial 240,000 pounds of Westland raw beef sent to Minnesota has not been used and has been isolated.
- The Department of Education has also been able to identify approximately 15,500 pounds of Westland beef that was delivered to Minnesota schools as processed products, including beef crumbles and hamburger patties. That identified product has also been isolated.

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- Today, we will be reporting the information we have collected to the USDA, which is compiling information by region to determine how much of the product remains in the food distribution supply chain.
- Based on its investigation, the USDA will make a decision, regarding the status of unused product. We expect their decision within the next several days and will keep you up-to-date.

We appreciate the cooperation and diligence of all of those who have helped us to identify and isolate this product. It is that kind of commitment that makes our school lunch programs safe and healthy.