

Grassfields Cheese Recall Affects Select Whole Foods Market Locations; Grocer Recalls Product from Cheese Departments

For Immediate Release

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Contact

Consumers

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Announcement

AUSTIN, Texas - In response to Grassfields Cheese LLC's organic cheese recall, Whole Foods Market is voluntarily recalling the product from select stores in the Midwest and South out of an abundance of caution. Grassfields Cheese issued the recall due to possible contamination with Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC), a bacteria that can cause serious illness in humans.

E. coli infection symptoms vary by individual, but often include severe stomach cramps, diarrhea (often bloody), and vomiting. If there is fever, it usually is not very high (less than 101°F/less than 38.5°C). Most people get better within 5–7 days. Some infections are very mild, but others are severe or even life-threatening. Around 5–10% of those diagnosed with Shiga-toxin producing *E. coli* infections develop a potentially life-threatening complication known as hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). Signs that a person is developing HUS include decreased frequency of urination, feeling very tired, and losing pink color in cheeks and inside the lower eyelids.

The recall includes the following types of Grassfields Cheeses: Gouda, Onion 'n Garlic, Country Dill, Leyden, Edam, Lamont Cheddar, Fait Gras and Polkton Corners which were cut and packaged in clear plastic wrap with scale labels beginning with PLU codes that ranged from 0206151 to 0206159 and "sell by" dates through 9/2/2016. The products were sold at Whole Foods Market stores in the following states: Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Wisconsin. Not all products were sold in all stores.

The potential for contamination was identified during an ongoing investigation of seven cases of human illnesses occurring between March and July 2016 caused by a same type of STEC. The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Geagley Laboratory confirmed the presence of STEC bacteria in a sample of Grassfields cheese collected by MDARD food and dairy inspectors.

Consumers who have purchased any of these recalled products can return them to the store for a full refund. Consumers with questions may contact Grassfields Cheese at 616-997-8251 Monday – Friday, 8am - 5pm EST or Grassfieldscheese@gmail.com.

- * **We believe that none of the products being recalled were processed or offered through the national office.**
- * We strongly encourage you to notify your agencies within one business day from receipt of this notice.
- * ALL cased and uncased inventories, both at the member level and agency level, need to be checked. This product may have entered member and agency warehouses through salvage, local donations, TEFAP, local purchases, retail pickups, food drives, or other avenues.
- * For additional local details, please contact the Health Department(s) for the area(s) your food bank serves.

For full details on the recall, please

visit: http://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/ucm514967.htm?source=govdelivery&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

If you have questions, please contact Wayne Melichar, Food Safety Manager, at wmelichar@feedingamerica.org or 312.629.7263.