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## IN THE NEWS

### E. Coli O157:H7 in Lettuce Update as of May 26, 2018

#### Latest Information:

There is NO new update posted from CDC on the E. Coli contamination of Romaine Lettuce. The information is from the one posted on 5/16/18 which contained an update of cases and states reported through 5/15/18. Therefore, the cases and statistics remain the same as those posted in the last update. They are repeated below:

**To date, there have been 172 cases of E Coli O157:H7 in 32 states.** Of the 157 cases with **known information**, there have been 75 hospitalizations (48%), 20 cases of hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), and one (1) death in California. Reported illnesses fall between March 13, 2018 and May 5, 2018. Since there is a 2-3-week lag time between infection of an individual to when the case is reported, these numbers may not include all cases that occurred after April 21.

**For a map of affected states and case counts by state see:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/2018/o157h7-04-18/map.html>

The CDC updated its advice to consumers and announced that the FDA reported, “The last shipments of romaine lettuce from the Yuma growing region were harvested on April 16, 2018 and the harvest season is over. It is unlikely that any romaine lettuce from the Yuma growing region is still available in stores or restaurants due to its 21-day shelf life.” The lag time between illness and reporting to Public Health is 2 to 3 weeks, so there may still be new case reports added.

There is still no farm or any other entity throughout the supply chain (from grower to harvester, processor, through distributor) that has been identified as the source of contamination. Tracking the source of the contamination can be difficult since, by the time foodborne illnesses have been diagnosed and reported from the HCP/lab to local & state public health authorities, and then to the CDC/FDA, most green leafy vegetables will no longer be available for testing since their shelf life is short after harvesting. Note: Harrison Farm of Yuma, Arizona was found to be the only source of whole head romaine lettuce that was used by a correctional facility in Alaska which resulted in multiple cases of E. Coli however, there was no indication that the contamination occurred at the farm. Many of those infected reported eating pre-cut packages of romaine lettuce or salad mixes containing cut romaine lettuce. The cutting process is not done at farms but at processors. Contamination may have occurred at one or more areas of the supply chain(s). In fact, the FDA has concluded “that the outbreak cannot be explained by a single grower, harvester, processor, or distributor.” (*FDA Investigating Multistate Outbreak of E. coli O157:H7 Infections Likely Linked to Romaine Lettuce from Yuma Growing Region: Fast Facts, May 16, 2018; FDA link below).*

**For a summary of information about E. Coli symptoms, HUS, and incubations periods, check the FirstWatch HIP for the 4/15/18 Outbreak Announcement or find more complete info on the CDC and FDA website links below.**

<https://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/2018/o157h7-04-18/index.html>

<https://www.fda.gov/Food/RecallsOutbreaksEmergencies/Outbreaks/ucm604254.htm>

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