



December 13, 2018

**Statement on FDA Investigation Update:**

The LGMA welcomes the **information provided by FDA today through their investigation** as it will be extremely valuable in helping the leafy greens industry identify the source of this outbreak so that future illnesses can be prevented.

- As part of today's statement, the FDA is providing some results from environmental findings being conducted in counties identified as potential sources of romaine lettuce involved in this outbreak.
- According to FDA, water testing has identified a pathogen matching the outbreak strain in an ag reservoir on the property of a single ranch.
- FDA has stated they are not yet convinced that this explains all of the illnesses in this outbreak and they continue to examine traceback information.
- The LGMA will be working closely with the FDA to learn more about the practices on this farm which could have resulted in contaminated romaine lettuce entering the marketplace.

The FDA is clearing **three of the six counties** that were previously included on its advisory to resume shipping. Romaine lettuce can now be shipped from the counties of San Luis Obispo, Santa Cruz and Ventura, provided the romaine is properly labeled with the harvest location and date of harvest (after November 23, 2018).

- The FDA continues to advise consumers not to eat romaine grown in the counties of Monterey, San Benito and Santa Barbara.

The farm identified by FDA as being associated with this outbreak is not a member of the California Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement.

- According to FDA, the ranch is owned by Adam Bros. Farms in Santa Barbara County.
- The **California Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement membership** represents 98 percent of the leafy greens produced in California. Members participate in the LGMA voluntarily. But once they sign-on, they are required to be in 100 percent compliance with mandatory food safety practices on leafy greens farms. The practices are verified through government audits.
- Retailer and restaurant produce buyers can help enforce LGMA food safety practices by requiring their leafy greens suppliers to participate in this program as the first step in protecting consumers.

Today's FDA statement emphasizes the need for the leafy greens industry to continue to evaluate food safety practices—particularly those concerning the use of water applied to crops in the field.

- The LGMA's existing food safety practices focus on water as a critical component and monthly water testing is required for all LGMA members.
- Our partners at the **Center for Produce Safety** conduct ongoing research in this area.