NC STATE EXTENSION

Food Policy



Food Recalls

A food recall canoccur when there is reason to believe that a food may cause someone to become sick or injured, such as the discovery of apathogen or toxin, potential allergens in a product and/or mislabeling or misbranding. When a problem is discovered a food manufacturer or distributer usually voluntarily initiates the recall. In some cases a recall can be requested by a government agency such as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) or Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Types of Food Recalls

Class I - Recall involves a health hazard situation in which there is a reasonable probability that eating the food will cause health problems or death.

Class II - Recall involves a potential health hazard situation in which there is a remote probability of adverse health consequences from eating the food.

Class III - Recall involves a situation in which eating the food will not cause adverse health consequences.

Preparing for Recall Situations

Step One: Subscribe to alert listservs

- Sign up for USDA and FDA recall alerts for most timely notifications of recall situations
- USDA Recalls: go.ncsu.edu/usdarecalls
- FDA Recalls: go.ncsu.edu/fdarecalls

Step Two: Keep records

- Document food purchases by keeping a copy of the receipt and/or taking a picture of groceries used for an event
- Keep copies of rosters and registration with contact information for program participants

Navigating Recall Situations

- If there is a recall of a food provided at an Extension event, reach out to the Safe Plates team for guidance on how to proceed with communicating to participants
- If necessary, reach out to participants to explain the situation, risks and next steps
- Contact local environmental health with further questions or reports of illness symptoms

Sample Message

This week the FDA issued a recall notice for cilantro from Arlo, Florida. Cilantro from this region was served at the Healthy Eating event you attended last week. If you experience any gastrointestinal symptoms please visit your doctor and report symptoms to Patriot County Environmental Health at 987-555-1234

safe plates
BY NC STATE EXTENSION

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For more information contact ncsafeplates@ncsu.edu | Updated 10.28.26