



## Wyoming Department of Education

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### **MEMORANDUM #2008 - 027**

TO: School District Superintendents and Food Service Directors

FROM: Roxann Greenlee, Commodity Distribution Coordinator

DATE: February 22, 2008

SUBJECT: USDA Recall of Ground Beef

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### **INFORMATION TO SHARE**

On February 17, 2008 the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued a recall of all beef shipped from the Hallmark/Westland Meat Packing Company from February 1, 2006 to the present. All of the product received through the USDA Food Distribution Program was previously affected by a hold issued by USDA on January 31, 2008. All of the food service personnel in the State were notified by email and regular mail on January 31, 2008 of the USDA hold of the ground beef products. The schools then took actions to identify the products affected by the hold and have not served these products to students since February 1, 2008. However, the recall now affects beef product that were received through the USDA Food Distribution Program or obtained on the commercial market. Only the product obtained from the Food Distribution Program has been removed from school food service as of February 1, 2008 when the USDA issued the hold on commodity product only. Commercially obtained product will have been removed as of February 17, 2008 when the USDA issued the nationwide recall.

The USDA has designated this recall as a Class II because there is a remote probability that the recalled beef products could cause adverse health effects if consumed. (A Class I recall is a health hazard situation where there is a reasonable probability that the use of the product would cause serious adverse health consequences or death. A Class II recall is a health hazard situation where there is a remote probability of adverse health consequences from the use of the product.) You may be receiving calls regarding this recall because it

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has made the national news with the emphasis on the fact that some of this beef product was procured specifically for the National School Lunch Program. Here are some facts if you have parents contacting you for more information:

- All the beef product in question that entered the State of Wyoming through the Food Distribution Program has been held and not served to students since February 1, 2008.
- The recall affects all beef products from Hallmark/Westland Meat Packing Company from February 1, 2006 to present.
- The recall encompasses 143 million pounds of beef product, at least 37 million pounds of which was procured through the Food Distribution Program for the National School Lunch Program. (The schools may have additional product affected by the recall that was purchased commercially.)
- While it is estimated that the majority of the product affected by the recall has already been consumed, no illnesses have been reported in association with these beef products.

Additional information will be given to food service personnel regarding the disposition of product affected by the recall. Either replacement product will be provided or the schools will be reimbursed for the costs incurred for procuring the products.

Attached is the official statement from the USDA regarding this recall. If you have questions or concerns please contact Roxann Greenlee, Commodity Distribution Coordinator at 307-777-6398 or Katie Mordhorst, Child Nutrition Programs Manager at 307-777-6262.

Attachment



# STATEMENT

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Washington, DC 20250-1300 • Voice: (202) 720-4623 • Email: [oc.news@usda.gov](mailto:oc.news@usda.gov) • Web: <http://www.usda.gov>

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Release No. 0046.08

Contact:  
USDA Press Office (202) 720-4623

**Statement by Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer Regarding  
Hallmark/Westland Meat Packing Company Two Year Product Recall  
*February 17, 2008***

"Today, USDA is announcing additional actions as a result of the ongoing investigation at Hallmark/Westland Meat Packing Company. USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has evidence that Hallmark/Westland did not consistently contact the FSIS public health veterinarian in situations in which cattle became non-ambulatory after passing ante-mortem inspection, which is not compliant with FSIS regulations. Because the cattle did not receive complete and proper inspection FSIS has determined them to be unfit for human food and the company is conducting a recall.

The United States enjoys one of the safest food supplies in the world. To help ensure the safety of the food supply, we implement a series of safeguards to protect against foodborne disease. These safeguards include in-plant procedures to reduce dangerous foodborne pathogens such as E. coli O157:H7 and Salmonella. It also includes the removal of specified risk materials-those tissues demonstrated to contain the bovine spongiform encephalopathy agent in infected cattle-from the human food chain, along with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's 1997 ruminant to ruminant feed ban. The prohibition of non-ambulatory cattle from the food supply is an additional safeguard against bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

Upon notification of possible violations of USDA regulations, we immediately began an investigation and placed products from this plant destined for the National School Lunch Program, the Emergency Food Assistance Program and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations on hold. Since then, we also suspended all Federal food and nutrition program contracts with Hallmark/Westland Meat Packing Company. To date, Hallmark/Westland Meat Packing Company remains suspended by the Food Safety and Inspection Service. The products destined for the Federal food assistance programs, including the National School Lunch Program, will now be removed from

schools and other holding facilities and destroyed.

I am dismayed at the in-humane handling of cattle that has resulted in the violation of food safety regulations at the Hallmark/Westland Meat Packing Company. It is extremely unlikely that these animals were at risk for BSE because of the multiple safeguards; however, this action is necessary because plant procedures violated USDA regulations.

In addition, our Office of the Inspector General and the Food Safety and Inspection Service continue the investigation. We will respond immediately if further findings warrant. Details about this recall and USDA actions are available at [www.usda.gov/actions](http://www.usda.gov/actions) . "