

Food Safety in America: 300,000 eggs have been recalled

Salmonella contamination

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Another massive egg recall, another tie to scofflaw Jack DeCoster.

Nearly 300,000 eggs have been recalled, affecting eight states, after Cal-Maine Foods, Inc. got word on Friday from the FDA that eggs from one of its suppliers, Ohio Fresh Eggs, tested positive for Salmonella Enteritidis (SE). Cal-Maine processed and packaged 24,000 dozen eggs in its Green Forest, Arkansas facility under the Sunny Meadow, Springfield Grocer, Sun Valley and James Farm labels.

Cartons bearing plant number P1457 with Julian dates of 282, 284 and 285 are being recalled. The Julian date follows the plant number, for example: P1457-282.

The eggs involved, which were not produced from Cal-Maine flocks, were distributed to food wholesalers and retailers in Arkansas, California, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas. There have been no confirmed SE illnesses related to the purchased eggs, [reports Cal-Maine](#).

The [FDA released](#) the information this morning, three days after notifying Cal-Maine.

According to the Ohio Department of Agriculture, Jack DeCoster invested in Ohio Fresh Eggs, reported [The Iowa Independent](#):

“Ohio Fresh Eggs has had ties with both Orland Bethel and Austin “Jack” DeCoster, the two men behind Iowa egg production companies at the center of a recent massive egg recall....

“In December 2006, the Ohio Department of Agriculture ordered Ohio Fresh Eggs to shut down on grounds that its operators, Bethel and Don Hershey, neglected to report that an anonymous investor with an option to purchase the company was DeCoster, who had already been labeled as a chronic and habitual violator of environmental laws in Iowa.

“DeCoster’s name did not appear on the documents, according to Ohio authorities, because his [previous run-ins with state and federal regulators](#) would have made it more difficult for the company to operate in Ohio under a state [Livestock Environmental Permitting Program](#).”

The revocation was later overturned.

Jack DeCoster, owner of Wright County Egg, involved in this year’s half-billion egg recall after 1,600 people were sickened by salmonella poisoning, has a decades-long history of environmental and labor law violations.

Providing a timeline of infractions covering decades, [The Atlantic](#) said, “[Wright County Egg owner, Jack] DeCoster has left a trail of illness, injury, mistreatment, and death in his wake for decades. That he has been left to police himself for so long is a stunning testament to the failure of federal regulators.”

The [AP reported](#) that “his facilities tested positive for salmonella contamination hundreds of times in the two years before this summer’s outbreak.”

Congressman Henry Waxman told the [New York Times](#) that for decades, “DeCoster farms have had warning after warning. Yet they continue to raise chickens in slovenly conditions and to make millions of dollars by selling contaminated eggs.”

Cal-Maine advises:

“Salmonella is an organism which can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. Healthy persons infected with Salmonella often experience fever, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. In rare circumstances, infection with Salmonella can result in the organism getting into the bloodstream and producing more severe illnesses such as arterial infections, endocarditis or arthritis.

“Consumers who believe they may have purchased potentially affected shell eggs should not eat them but should return them to the store where they were purchased for a full refund. Questions and concerns may also be directed to Cal-Maine’s corporate office at 1-866-276-6299 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. CDT.

“Cal-Maine Foods, Inc. is primarily engaged in the production, grading, packing and sale of fresh shell eggs. The Company, which is headquartered in Jackson, Mississippi, currently is the largest producer and distributor of fresh shell eggs

in the United States and sells the majority of its shell eggs in approximately 29 states across the southwestern, southeastern, mid-western and mid-Atlantic regions of the United States.”

Concentrated animal feeding operations promote infection and contamination of the food supply, a direct threat to food security. Two massive recalls in a single year bolster the move toward small, free range operations. Many urbanites would benefit by raising their own flock, as Leah Zerbe points out in [5 Reasons Why Chickens Belong in Your City, Town, or Neighborhood](#).

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