

June 3, 2011

Supply of Cheese Disruption in the Southwest

At a Glance: Pacific Cheese, a major supplier of block and shredded Monterey Jack and Cheddar Cheeses to the foodservice and retail industry has placed a “hold” on 26 Million pounds of shredded and block cheese affected a large number of products shipped to several Distributors and suppliers, including U.S. Foodservice, while it conducts an investigation on possible foreign materials in these products.

The Issue: Hilmar Cheese Co., a supplier to Pacific Cheese and the original producer of the cheese identified the possibility that some plastic mesh may have become shredded and mixed in with the cheese from several vats. The supplier hasn’t identified all the dates and lots affected. The FDA has been notified and is now working with the cheese companies to determine the extent of the problem.

Am I Impacted? No Recall has been issued to date. U.S. Foodservice put all products that might be affected on hold and stopped sales. We are also in close communication with the Supplier and the FDA and will follow up as appropriate.

US Foodservice Position: At U.S. Foodservice we take food safety very seriously. We are committed to keeping our customers informed and will not sell this product until we are convinced it is safe for you and your customers.

What You Can Do:

- If you have operations in the Southwest and do not buy shredded or block cheese from U. S. Foodservice, ask your supplier if they are affected by the Pacific Cheese hold
- Review your own internal recall procedures - does your staff know what to do if they receive notice that a product is being recalled? Typically only specific lot codes are affected.
- Purchase all of your supplies from a company with a robust food safety and recall program that can keep you aware of recall and food safety issues
- Help us serve you better. Provide your distribution center with a valid email address so we may reach you with recall information.

Finally, count on U.S. Foodservice to keep you informed, and to keep recalled product out of your establishment.