

One Death, 76 Illnesses Linked to Turkey

MARY CLARE JALONICK, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal officials say one person has died from salmonella poisoning that appears to be linked to eating ground turkey, but the government so far has declined to say who produced the meat or initiate a recall.

Seventy-six people in 26 states have been made sick from the same strain of the disease, which the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says is resistant to many commonly prescribed antibiotics. The CDC did not say where the person who died became sick and released no details about the death.

The illnesses date back to March, and the CDC said Monday that cultures of ground turkey from four retail locations between March 7 and June 27 showed salmonella contamination. The agency said preliminary information showed that three of the samples have been linked to the same production establishment but did not name the retailers or the manufacturers.

The Agriculture Department oversees meat safety and would be the agency to announce a recall. The department sent out an alert about the illnesses late last week telling consumers to properly cook their meat, which can decrease the chances of salmonella poisoning. But the department has not given consumers any further warnings about the source of the tainted meat.

The USDA did not respond to requests for comment Monday on why there has not been a recall. The CDC said it and the USDA were "vigorously working to identify the specific contaminated product or products that are causing illnesses and will update the public on the progress of this investigation as information becomes available."

Food safety advocate Bill Marler, an attorney who has represented victims of the nation's biggest food-borne illness outbreaks, said he believes the three positive samples should prompt a recall.

"Consumers have no idea what to do except not eat ground turkey," he said.

The illnesses are spread all over the country. The states with the highest number sickened were Michigan and Ohio, 10 illnesses each, while nine illnesses were reported in Texas. Illinois had seven, California six and Pennsylvania five.

The remaining states have between one and three reported illnesses linked to the outbreak, according to the CDC: Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Iowa, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, North Carolina, Nebraska, Nevada, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Tennessee and Wisconsin.

The CDC said 26 states were affected but only listed 25 states in which illnesses

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