



Ohio Department of Agriculture
and
Ohio Department of Health



Governor
John R. Kasich

Lieutenant Governor
Mary Taylor

ODA Director
David T. Daniels

ODH Director
Richard Hodges

DATE: December 30, 2014

TO: Health Commissioners, Directors of Environment Health and Interested Parties

RE: Recall Announcement (ODA/ODH) 2014-128

Merb's Candies Announces Voluntary Recall of Caramel Apples due to possible contamination with *Listeria monocytogenes*

Merb's Candies, is issuing a voluntary recall of the Merb's Candies brand Bionic Apples and Double Dipped Apples because they have the potential to be contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes*, an organism which can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. Although healthy individuals may suffer only short-term symptoms such as high fever, severe headache, stiffness, nausea, abdominal pain and diarrhea, *Listeria* infection can cause miscarriages and stillbirths among pregnant women.

Bionic Apples and Double Dipped Apples were available for retail sales at St. Louis area locations, through local supermarkets (located in the produce section) and through mail orders nationwide. The product is individually packaged in a clear, burgundy and gold cellophane bag and would have been available from September 8th through November 25th 2014 – no identifying lot codes were used.

Merb's Candies has been working with the Food and Drug Administration in their investigation of the current outbreak of Listeriosis, which has been associated with caramel apples. Bidart Brothers, who is one of Merb's Candies apple suppliers, has initiated a recall as there may be a connection between this outbreak of *Listeria Monocytogenes* and apples they supplied Merb's Candies.

As has been reported in the news, the Center for Disease Control has noted 30 illnesses in 10 states linked to the outbreak and they have advised consumers not to eat commercially produced, pre-packaged caramel apples until more is known.

Production of Merb's Candies caramel apples has ceased- as of November 23rd 2014 - and the caramel apples produced are no longer available for purchase. However, out of an abundance of caution and consumer safety concerns, we recommend that any consumers that are still in possession of caramel apples follow the advice of the CDC and dispose of the product in a secure container to avoid potential contamination to animals.

Consumers who have any product may return it to the store where purchased or dispose of it per the advice of the CDC. Consumers with questions may contact the firm at customercare.merbscandies@gmail.com or during normal business hours Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. CST at (314) 832-7206.