

Governor  
John R. KasichLieutenant Governor  
Mary TaylorODA Director  
David T. DanielsODH Director  
Richard Hodges

DATE: April 21, 2015

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

RE: Recall Announcement (ODA/ODH) 2015-63

**Blue Bell Creameries Voluntarily Expands Recall to Include All of its Products Due to Possible Health Risk**

Blue Bell Ice Cream of Brenham, Texas, is voluntarily recalling all of its products currently on the market made at all of its facilities including ice cream, frozen yogurt, sherbet and frozen snacks 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 headaches, stiffness, nausea, abdominal pain and diarrhea, *Listeria* infection can cause miscarriages and stillbirths among pregnant women.

"We're committed to doing the 100 percent right thing, and the best way to do that is to take all of our products off the market until we can be confident that they are all safe," said Paul Kruse, Blue Bell CEO and president. "We are heartbroken about this situation and apologize to all of our loyal Blue Bell fans and customers. Our entire history has been about making the very best and highest quality ice cream and we intend to fix this problem. We want enjoying our ice cream to be a source of joy and pleasure, never a cause for concern, so we are committed to getting this right."

The products being recalled are distributed to retail outlets, including food service accounts, convenience stores and supermarkets in Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Wyoming and international locations.

Today's decision was the result of findings from an enhanced sampling program initiated by Blue Bell which revealed that Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough Ice Cream half gallons produced on March 17, 2015, and March 27, 2015, contained the bacteria. This means Blue Bell has now had several positive tests for *Listeria* in different places and plants and as previously reported five patients were treated in Kansas and three in Texas after testing positive for *Listeria monocytogenes*.

"At every step, we have made decisions in the best interest of our customers based on the evidence we had available at the time," Kruse said. "At this point, we cannot say with certainty how *Listeria* was introduced to our facilities and so we have taken this unprecedented step. We continue to work with our team of experts to eliminate this problem."

Blue Bell is implementing a procedure called "test and hold" for all products made at all of its manufacturing facilities. This means that all products will be tested first and held for release to

the market only after the tests show they are safe. The Broken Arrow facility will remain closed as Blue Bell continues to investigate.

In addition to the "test and hold" system, Blue Bell is implementing additional safety procedures and testing including:

- Expanding our already robust system of daily cleaning and sanitizing of equipment
- Expanding our system of swabbing and testing our plant environment by 800 percent to include more surfaces
- Sending samples daily to a leading microbiology laboratory for testing
- Providing additional employee training

Blue Bell expects to resume distribution soon on a limited basis once it is confident in the safety of its product.

Consumers who have purchased these items are urged to return them to the place of purchase for a full refund. **For more information consumers with questions may call 1-866-608-3940 Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 8 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. CST or go to [bluebell.com](http://bluebell.com).**