

Governor
John R. Kasich**Lieutenant Governor**
Mary Taylor**ODA Director**
David T. Daniels**ODH Director**
Richard Hodges

DATE: February 17, 2016

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

RE: Recall Announcement (ODA/ODH) 2016-21

Forever Cheese Recalls Imported Mitica Brand Pecorino Aged Cheese in Walnut Leaves For Possible Health Risk

February 16, 2016 - Forever Cheese Inc. of Long Island City, NY, is recalling 40 cases of Mitica brand Pecorino Aged Cheese in Walnut Leaves (Pecorino Foglie di Noci) from one specific production code because it has 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.

The imported Mitica brand Pecorino Aged in Walnut Leaves was shipped to distributors between January 27th and February 3, 2016. The imported cheese was further sold to retailers and restaurants located in Los Angeles, California, Cleveland, Ohio, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, New York, Colorado, Vermont, Virginia, Florida and Connecticut.

The cheese in question, Mitica brand Pecorino Aged in Walnut Leaves, is from one production code NOC15313 (found on shipping case only) and invoiced as Lot X2537 which the retailer or distributor would be familiar with. Each shipping case contains 2 wheels of varying weights; each wheel weighs a minimum of 2 lbs. The Mitica brand Pecorino Aged in Walnut Leaves cheese has a natural grayish rind, and will be labeled at the point of sale at the retail level or on a restaurant menu.

There have been no reported illnesses related to this potential contamination to date.

The recall was the result of a routine sampling program by Forever Cheese which revealed that the imported cheese tested positive for the bacteria. The company has ceased distribution of the affected lot as the FDA and the company continue their investigation as to what caused the problem.

Each and every distributor and retailer has been contacted in an effort to recall any and all remaining product in the marketplace. Consumers should not consume the imported Mitica brand Pecorino Aged in Walnut Leaves cheese listed above. Consumers that believe they have purchased the affected Mitica brand Pecorino Aged in Walnut Leaves cheese should contact the retailer or the company for a full refund. Consumers with questions may contact Sarah Weisensel at Forever Cheese at 1-888-930-8693, Monday through Friday, 9 am – 5 pm EST.

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