Press Releases

02/19/2021

DPH Warns of Contaminated Cheese, Cites Recall of Queso Fresco Varieties

The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) continues to warn consumers, restaurants, and retailers not to eat, serve or sell El Abuelito and related brand Queso Fresco cheese, due to laboratory findings that confirm the product is the source of a multistate outbreak of foodborne bacteria called listeria monocytogenes.

DPH officials said that 'whole genome sequencing' analysis by the Connecticut State Laboratory confirmed listeria found in the cheese samples collected last week genetically matches listeria found in cases in four states.

El Abuelito is a cheese manufacturer in Paterson, N.J., that produces cheese both under its own label and additional private brands. The company is currently working with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and has issued a recall of all Queso Fresco cheese produced by the firm, which includes both the company brand and the private labels, such as Rio Grande and Rio Lindo. All cheeses from El Abuelito, Rio Grande and Rio Lindo should not be sold, served or consumed.

Listeria monocytogenes is an organism which can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, pregnant women 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, stillbirths and fetal infection among pregnant women. Because these products may still be in consumer's refrigerators, DPH encourages consumers to check any Queso Fresco cheese they may have to determine if it included in this recall. Customers and food establishments who still have the product should not consume or serve it and should discard it immediately.

According to FDA, seven people have been hospitalized; 4 in Maryland, 1 in Connecticut, 1 in New York and 1 in Virginia.

Restaurants and retailers that serve or sell Hispanic-style fresh and soft cheeses should follow FDA's safe handling and cleaning advice.

Products included in the recall are: **All Queso Fresco** products with sell by dates through **032821,** have been recalled. The products are sold as El Abuelito Cheese brand, distributed in CT, NJ, PA, NY; Rio Grande Food Products brand, distributed in VA, NC, MD; and Rio Lindo brand, distributed in NC and MD. The products were distributed through Feb 16, 2021, and were

available in supermarkets, wholesale and retail stores.

The following products being recalled were produced at Plant #34-12179 in the following forms

Brand	Product Name	Size	Container Type	UPC Cod
El Abuelito Cheese	Queso Fresco Regular	12 oz.	Plastic Container	673130100
	Queso Fresco Promoción	10 oz.	Plastic Container	673130100
	Queso Fresco de Hoja	12 oz.	Plastic Container	673130100
	Queso Fresco	5 Lb.	Vacuum Packed	673130100
	Queso Fresco Guatemala	12 oz.	Plastic Container	673130100
Rio Grande Food Products, Inc.	Chirilagua Queso de Hacienda	12 oz.	Plastic Container	738529005
	Queso Fresco Campestre con Hoja	14 oz.	Plastic Container	812324031
	Queso Fresco Campestre Artesanal	14 oz.	Plastic Container	738529002
	Queso Fresco con Hoja	14 oz.	Plastic Container	738529004
	Queso Fresco Yorito	12 oz.	Plastic Container	738529005
	Queso Fresco Olancho	14 oz.	Plastic Container	812324031
	Cuajada Fresca Guatemalteca	12 oz.	Plastic Container	738529001
	Cuajada Fresca Hondureña	12 oz.	Plastic Container	738529001
	Cuajada Fresca Salvadoreña	12 oz.	Plastic Container	738529001
Rio Lindo	Queso Fresco Mexicano	12 oz.	Plastic Container	718122088
	Queso Fresco Hondureño	12 oz.	Plastic Container	718122088
	Queso Fresco Salvadoreño	12 oz.	Plastic Container	718122088

Please visit the FDA website at **www.fda.gov/food/outbreaks-foodborne-illness/outbreak-investigation-listeria-monocytogenes-hispanic-style-fresh-and-soft-cheeses-february-2021** for case counts and additional information.

Images of Recalled Product Labels

[Click Thumbnail to Zoom In]


RIO LINDO
Brand
KEEP REFRIGERATED
Nutrition Facts
Serving size 2oz. (57 g)
Calories 160
QUESO FRESCO
SALVADOREÑO
SALVADORAN CHEESE
INGREDIENTS: PASTEURIZED MILK, SKIM MILK POWDER, RENNET, SORBIC ACID, NATAMYCIN.
Net Wt. 12 oz (340g)


RIO GRANDE
FOODS
CUAJADA FRESCA
HONDUREÑA
HONDURAN FRESH CHEESE
ESPECIAL
$4.99
Fresh Product / Producto fresco
Keep Refrigerated / Mantener Refrigerado
Nutrition Facts/Información Nutricional
Calories/ Calorías 160
NET.WT./PESO NETO 12 oz (340g)


RIO GRANDE
OLANCHITO
QUESO FRESCO
(Fresh Cheese)
Nutrition Facts
Información Nutricional
Calories/
Calorías 160
Fresh Product / Producto fresco
Keep Refrigerated / Mantener Refrigerado
14 oz (397 g)

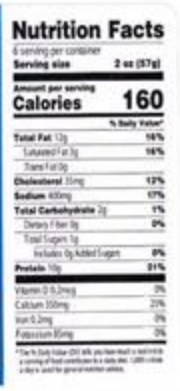

RIO GRANDE
CUAJADA FRESCA
GUATEMALTECA
GUATEMALAN FRESH CHEESE
ESPECIAL
ESPECIAL
$4.99
Fresh Product / Producto fresco
Keep Refrigerated / Mantener Refrigerado
ESPECIAL
ESPECIAL
$4.99
CUAJADA FRESCA
GUATEMALTECA
GUATEMALAN FRESH CHEESE
Nutrition Facts/Información Nutricional
Calories/ Calorías 160
NET.WT./PESO NETO 12 oz (340g)


RIO GRANDE
CUAJADA FRESCA
SALVADOREÑA
SALVADORAN FRESH CHEESE
ESPECIAL
ESPECIAL
$4.99
Fresh Product / Producto fresco
Keep Refrigerated / Mantener Refrigerado
ESPECIAL
ESPECIAL
$4.99
CUAJADA FRESCA
SALVADOREÑA
SALVADORAN FRESH CHEESE
Nutrition Facts/Información Nutricional
Calories/ Calorías 160
NET.WT./PESO NETO 12 oz (340g)


Queso Fresco
Fresh Cheese
YORITO
Especial /
Special
$4.99
Nutrition Facts/Información Nutricional
Calories/ Calorías
160


NUESTRO
RIO GRANDE
FOODS
QUESO FRESCO
(FRESH CHEESE)
Nutrition Facts
Información Nutricional
Calories/
Calorías
160


"EL ABUELITO"
Queso Fresco Guatemalteco/
Guatemalan Soft Cheese
(973)345-3503 / Toll Free (888) 522-8350
www.abuelitocheese.com
INGREDIENTS: Pasteurized Milk, Rennet, Salt Added.
INGREDIENTES: Leche, Cuajo, Sal Natural.
NET WT 12 oz. (340g)
KEEP REFRIGERATED
Paterson, NJ 07503
Plant #34-12379


Nutrition Facts
6 serving per container
Serving size 2 oz (57g)
Amount per serving
Calories 160
% Daily Value*
Total Fat 12g 16%
Saturated Fat 3g 16%
Trans Fat 0g
Cholesterol 35mg 12%
Sodium 400mg 17%
Total Carbohydrate 2g 1%
Dietary Fiber 0g 0%
Total Sugars 1g
Includes 0g Added Sugars 0%
Protein 10g 21%
Vitamin D 0.2mcg 0%
Calcium 350mg 25%
Iron 0.2mg 0%
Potassium 85mg 2%


KEEP REFRIGERATED
RIO LINDO
Brand
QUESO
FRESCO
HONDUREÑO
HONDURIAN CHEESE
Nutrition Facts
Calories 160


"EL ABUELITO"
QUESO FRESCO HOJA DE PLATANO
SOFT CHEESE IN A BANANA LEAF
www.abuelitocheese.com
Paterson, NJ 07503
Plant #34-0279
Nutrition Facts
Calories 160


"EL ABUELITO"
QUESO FRESCO/
SOFT CHEESE
(973)345-3503/ Toll Free (888) 522-8356
www.abuelitocheese.com
Paterson, NJ 07503
Plant #34-0279
KEEP REFRIGERATED
MANTENER REFRIGERADO
Nutrition Facts
160


"EL ABUELITO"
QUESO FRESCO/ SOFT CHEESE
(973)345-3503 / Toll Free (888) 522-8356
www.abuelitocheese.com
Plant # 34-0279
Packed and Distributed by:
Abuelito Cheese, Inc.
Paterson, NJ 07503
KEEP REFRIGERATED
Net Wt. 12 oz. (340.19g)
Nutrition Facts
Calories 90


"EL ABUELITO"
QUESO FRESCO/ SOFT CHEESE
(973)345-3503 / Toll Free (888) 522-8356
www.abuelitocheese.com
$3 99
Packed and Distributed by:
Abuelito Cheese, Inc.
Paterson, NJ 07503
Plant # 34-0279
Net Wt. 12 oz. (340g)
Nutrition Facts
Calories 90


QUESO FRESCO
CAMPESTRE
FARMER STYLE FRESH CHEESE
ARTESANAL HECHO A MANO
RIO GRANDE
Nutrition Facts
Información Nutricional
Calories/
Calorias
160
NET. WT. / PESO NETO
14 oz (397g)


QUESO FRESCO
CAMPESTRE
FARMER STYLE FRESH CHEESE
ARTESANAL HECHO A MANO
RIO GRANDE
Nutrition Facts
Información Nutricional
Calories/
Calorias
160
NET. WT. / PESO NETO
14 oz (397g)


CHIRILAGUA
QUESO FRESCO
DE HACIENDA
FARMER STYLE
FRESH CHEESE
ARTESANAL
HECHO A MANO
ARTESANAL HANDMADE
Especial /
Special
$4.99
Nutrition Facts/Información Nutricional
Calories/ Calorias
160
NET WT / PESO NETO
12 oz (340 g)