Close Out Summary
Close Out Date: 11/16/2020
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Cluster

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During September – November 2020, CDC, FDA, and state partners investigated an outbreak (2009MLJJP-1) of *Salmonella* Newport infections associated with cantaloupe and watermelon consumption. PulseNet identified a total of 80 cases from 15 states: CA (1), FL (1), IA (1), IL (12), IN (12), KY (4), MI (28), MN (1), MO (2), NY (2), OH (11), PA (1), SC (2), TN (1), WI (1). Isolates were highly related by cgMLST within 0-12 alleles. Isolation dates range from July 7 to October 22. The age range is from 4-96, with a median age of 58. By final case count, 51/77 cases are female (66%). There were 17 hospitalizations, and no deaths. A case was defined as *Salmonella* Newport infection highly related to the WGS outbreak strain upload to PulseNet with an isolation between July 7, 2020 and November 16, 2020.

Overall, 25 of 31 (81%) patients interviewed with a focused questionnaire reported consuming or maybe consuming any melon prior to illness onset. Among 25 patients reporting any melon consumption, cantaloupe was reported by 19/25 (76%), followed by watermelon 17/25 (68%), and 10/25 (40%) reported consuming both. Most reported whole melon products purchased at grocery stores. Information collected from stores where ill people shopped indicated that there was a common supplier of cantaloupe and/or watermelon. Epidemiologic and traceback evidence indicate that cantaloupe and watermelon supplied by this common source were the likely source of this multistate outbreak.

FDA conducted a traceback for eleven cases that reported purchasing cantaloupe at nine retail points-of-service (POS)resulting in three traceback legs that included Meijer Stores in MI, Kroger Stores in IN and OH, and a Jewel Osco store in IL. All three traceback legs were supplied with cantaloupe from a single farm in IN. FDA also conducted a traceback of six cases who reported purchasing seedless watermelon at six distinct retail POS, including Meijer Stores in MI, Kroger Stores in IN and a Jewel Osco Store in IL; no common watermelon supplier was identified in the watermelon traceback.

FDA and Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) conducted a joint inspection at the farm in IN, the findings included (1) equipment and tools used for transportation and processing of melons were not maintained to facility adequate cleaning and (2) the farm did not maintain documentation of cleaning and sanitization for buses used for transporting melons and lines used during melon packing.

FDA collected eight samples during the inspection at the farm in IN. Four environmental samples tested positive for *Salmonella*, however none matched the outbreak strain. Three of the positive samples included soil and water from a water well at two fields where watermelon and cantaloupe were grown in 2020 and the other was a swab sample collected from a melon transportation bus. These positive samples yielded *S.* Newport, *S.*

Typhimurium, and *S.* Javiana. FDA also collected samples of whole watermelon and environmental swabs from the melon packing house; these samples all tested negative for *Salmonella*.

Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) collected 40 melon samples of from retail stores, four of the samples tested positive for *Salmonella,* however they were not related to the outbreak strain and they were not sourced from the farm in IN. The serotyping of the MDARD cantaloupe isolates yielded *S.* Javiana, *S.* Norwich, and *S.* Aberdeen. ISDH collected whole watermelon and pumpkins from retail stores and a distribution center; all of the samples tested negative for *Salmonella*.

Due to a decline in newly identified cases, CDC closed the investigation on 11/16/2020. This outbreak will be reported to NORS with confirmed source of cantaloupe and watermelon using NORS ID: 2020-0092.