



CONSUMER GOODS COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA

FOOD SAFETY INITIATIVE

LISTERIA OUTBREAK STATUS REPORT

03 April 2018

BACKGROUND

As of December 2017, the Consumer Goods Council of South Africa (CGCSA) has been assisting with the gathering of information since the Minister of Health, Dr. Aaron Motsoaledi, notified the nation of the outbreak of Listeriosis, a food borne disease in South Africa. So far, regrettably, a total of 189 deaths have been reported.

On the 4th March 2018, Dr. Aaron Motsoaledi, announced the source of the outbreak and the National Consumer Commission (NCC) gave an order to recall processed meat products manufactured by Enterprise (a division of Tiger Brands) and Rainbow (a division of RCL Foods) following confirmation of laboratory tests by the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD).

MEDIA REPORT ON LISTERIOSIS OUTBREAK AS OF 4TH MARCH 2018

After the Minister's announcement, the CGCSA prepared a response which was disseminated to the media, and also posted on the CGCSA website. In addition, it was distributed to relevant CGCSA stakeholders.

Predictably and inevitably, media interest in the issue was high, and still is. The CGCSA, as an interested party, received numerous requests from the media for interviews and further comment. It was decided that subject expert, Ms. Matlou Setati, would be the spokesperson for the CGCSA. In all, 11 media engagements have been held as at 10am, 4th March 2018, which have included 8 radio and 3 television broadcasts.

The summary of the media engagements is as follows:

1. The CGCSA media statement was disseminated to the following: The Star, Business Day, Business Live, Business Report, Fin 24, Classic FM, Radio Jacaranda, Eye Witness news, eNCA, SABC Radio and Business News Desk, Food Stuff ZA, eHealth News, Cape Argus, IOL, Sowetan, ANN7 and New Age.
2. The Star newspaper mentioned CGCSA statement in their lead article on the product recall and trade intelligence assisted with information dissemination on the subject <http://tradetatler.cmail19.com/t/r-l-jynkdhl-gdulrkhk-r/>
 - SABC "Morning Live" (7am) <https://youtu.be/78AMVajwRlg>
 - eNCA (9.30am) <https://www.facebook.com/eNCAnews/videos/1200096330127030/?ref=tahoe>

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNICABLE DISEASES (NICD): UPDATE

Source: NICD situational report, 29 March 2018

The source of the outbreak and the recall of the implicated products were announced on the 4th March 2018. The NICD expects that there may be new outbreak-related cases due to the 70 day incubation period of Listeria, cross contamination at retail or home and the long refrigeration shelf life of the implicated products. Since the recall on 4th March 2018, a total of 23 laboratory-confirmed cases were reported and 17 persons have been interviewed; ten consumed implicated food products and two had direct contact with recalled food products. All exposures occurred prior to the recall. Outcome data is now available for 70% (687/982) of cases, of which 28% (189/687) died.

INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT

The CGCSA commends industry for their assistance since December 2017, where test results were shared with the NICD and Food Control of the Department of Health. The NICD has further requested **point of sale data** from retailers to assist in the finalization of the research. The data will be solely used for research purposes and to monitor the decline of the outbreak and the recall efficiency. The CGCSA urges members (retailers & affected production companies) to provide data to assist the NICD.

CGCSA WAY FORWARD

1. Food Safety Training

The CGCSA, in partnership with KVRQgubheka, will be running a 2-day workshop on how to safely handle food & beverage products in the food manufacturing, production distribution and retail environments. The programme will provide delegates & companies with the ability to, amongst other topics:

- Handle, store & manage food & beverage products safely & appropriately
- Understand & prevent contamination of food & beverages products etc.

The purpose of this training is to reemphasise the importance basic food hygiene in food handling for employees.

Training will be held on:

Date: 5 – 6 June 2018
Venue: CGCSA Office
Cost: R5000.00 per person

For any queries email info@cgcsa.co.za.

2. Industry Food Safety Dialogue

The CGCSA plans to host an industry workshop, to mainly discuss food safety key compliance commitments and product recall protocol, with the main result to produce an industry protocol as an answer to key questions and challenges. Sponsorship requests have been circulated and it is important that members participate as industry guidelines will be developed during this dialogue. Members wishing to sponsor this dialogue can Zinhle Tyikwe via e-mail ZinhleT@cgcsa.co.za

3. CGCSA Government Engagements

On the 30th March 2018, The CGCSA-FSI had a meeting with the NICD and the work demarcations between the NICD (clinical surveillance & outbreak response) and the NHLS (food sampling and testing: enforcement surveillance) were outlined to clarify engagements going forward.

Following the NICD meeting and discussions at the Joint Parliamentary meeting for Health on the 28th March 2018, the FSI will be engaging with the Food Control of the Department of Health and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) to facilitate industry & government discussions around:

- Conclusion of the outbreak investigation
- Communication pertaining to affected industry to restore consumer confidence in the sector and products
- General processed meat sector facilities evaluation/inspection process to continue with business (as per parliamentary DAFF Minister comment)
- Hygiene and microbiological regulations and limits
- Food products surveillance testing and inspection
- Sampling methods
- Environmental pathogen limits and what a positive result means for a facility
- South African food history data- monitoring for rise in pathogen infections (fingerprinting and genome sequencing)
- Government Private Consumer education on Listeria and the various strains involved. (What a positive Listeria test means and basic consumers education on the subject)

For any comments, suggestions and enquiries do not hesitate to contact the CGCSA-FSI.

Kind Regards,

Matlou Setati

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