

France recalls hamburgers after E. coli scare

June 16 2011, By CECILE BRISSON , Associated Press

(AP) -- French health authorities ordered a recall of hamburger patties sold by a German supermarket chain after seven children were infected by the E. coli bacteria, though officials ruled out Thursday any link between the infections and a deadly outbreak of the virus in neighboring Germany.

Daniel Lenoir, who heads the health agency in France's Nord-Pas-de-Calais region, said "we are certain it's not the same [bacterial strain](#) that was identified on the sprouts in Germany," which killed 39 people and infected thousands of others in recent weeks.

In a news conference, Lenoir said the seven children were hospitalized with infections stemming from E. coli, which causes vomiting and severe, often bloody diarrhea. He added that five of the children are known to have eaten frozen ground beef patties made in French factory and sold by German supermarket chain Lidl.

The beef for the patties came from farms in France, Germany and the Netherlands, said the French manufacturer that supplied the meat for the patties, SEB.

The recall affects about 10 tons of meat, Guy Lamorlette of SEB told The Associated Press. He said the patties were analyzed before being delivered to supermarket distributors.

The family of one of the hospitalized children brought a box of the patties to [health authorities](#) for analysis, the co-director of Lidl France,

Jerome Gresland, told the AP. He added that all the meat supplied by SEB had been removed from the supermarket chain's shelves.

European Union spokesman Frederic Vincent said the European Commission, the 27-nation bloc's executive branch, said the outbreak in France is not nearly as serious as the one in Germany.

He said the strain found in France is discovered regularly. There were 3,500 cases of E.coli in the European Union last year, 93 of which were in France, he said.

Also, Vincent said the commission was waiting for more information in order to avoid a repeat of the recent debacle, when Spanish cucumbers were wrongly blamed for the German E.coli outbreak, costing Spanish farmers significant income.

The German outbreak was eventually traced last week to sprouts from a farm in northern Germany. With more than 3,000 infections reported so far, German health officials have said the number of new infections is tailing off.

However, they are still recommending that consumers do not eat any vegetable [sprouts](#) as they try to determine how the bacteria got onto the farm - whether through workers, in seeds or by some other means like contaminated water.

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