

FDA tests confirm hepatitis A in scallops from Philippines

August 19 2016, by Jennifer Sinco Kelleher

U.S. Food and Drug Administration tests found hepatitis A in scallops from the Philippines, which have been identified as the likely source of an outbreak of the virus in Hawaii.

The Hawaii Department of Health announced Thursday the FDA laboratory test results of frozen Sea Port Bay Scallops. They're produced by De Oro Resources Inc. Messages left with the company's main office in the Philippines weren't immediately returned.

The scallops are imported by Sea Port Products Corp. in Washington state.

"I am deeply troubled at the thought that anyone may have become ill from eating product that we shipped," Sea Port owner Bill Dresser said in a statement. "I am also fully committed to trying to find out how this may have happened and to work to prevent it from happening again not only to Sea Port, but to the entire seafood community."

There's a Hawaii-wide embargo on the product, meaning businesses aren't allowed to sell them and consumers are advised not to eat them, the health department said.

Health officials on Monday identified frozen scallops served raw at a sushi chain as the probable source of the outbreak. They ordered 11 Genki Sushi restaurants on Oahu and Kauai to close. The popular restaurants, which serve sushi on conveyor belts, must dispose of their

food supply and disposable items like cups and napkins and disinfect the facilities before they reopen.

"This laboratory confirmation is important validation of our investigation findings," state epidemiologist Dr. Sarah Park said in a statement Thursday. "We are continuing efforts to end this outbreak by working to assure no other product is left in the state and to monitor for those who unfortunately may have been infected and do not yet have symptoms."

The health department confirmed 206 cases of hepatitis A as of earlier this week. The disease can cause fever, loss of appetite, nausea and other ailments.

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