

Topps E. coli outbreak traced to Canada

27 October 2007

The U.S. Department of Agriculture said the recent outbreak of E. coli linked to Topps Meat Company has been traced to a Canadian supplier.

DNA fingerprints, called PFGE patterns, from beef trim supplied by a Canadian firm, Ranchers Beef Ltd., matched those from patients who became sick and from positive tests on product that was later recalled by Topps, the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service said Friday in a release.

The PFGE information was provided by the Canadian Food Inspection Service.

Ranchers Beef Ltd., in Balzac, Alberta, ceased operations Aug. 15, although some product remained in storage and was collected and tested by CFIA as part of the joint investigation of the Topps recall, and as part of CFIA's investigation into 45 illnesses in Canada from E. coli O157:H7.

FSIS has notified processors to hold all boneless beef manufacturing trim from Ranchers Beef Ltd., Canadian establishment number 630, or raw products produced in whole or in part from these products until the joint investigation is completed.

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