FDA: Company shipped tainted peanut butter

November 15 2012, by Mary Clare Jalonick

(AP)—The Food and Drug Administration says a New Mexico peanut company linked to a recent salmonella outbreak distributed peanut and almond butters even after testing showed the products were contaminated.

Sunland Inc. is the nation's largest organic peanut butter processor, though it also produces many non-organic products. The company recalled hundreds of nuts and nut butters in September and October after one of its products, Trader Joe's Valencia Creamy Peanut Butter, was linked to 41 salmonella illnesses around the county.

The FDA said in a report released this week that government inspectors found 28 different samples of salmonella in Sunland's plant. The agency also found improper handling of the products, unclean equipment and uncovered trailers of peanuts outside the facility that were exposed to rain and birds.

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