



FDA News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE


April 28, 2007

Media Inquiries:

FDA Press Office:

 301-827-6242

USDA Press Office:

 202-720-4623

Consumer Inquiries:

 888-INFO-FDA

Joint Update: FDA/USDA Update on Tainted Animal Feed

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) continue their investigation of imported rice protein concentrate which has been found to contain melamine and melamine-related compounds. Based on information currently available, FDA and USDA believe the likelihood of illness after eating pork from swine fed the contaminated product would be very low. The agencies are taking certain actions out of an abundance of caution. As announced on April 26, swine known to have been fed adulterated (contaminated) product will not be approved to enter the food supply. (Because the animal feed in question was adulterated, USDA cannot rule out the possibility that food produced from animals fed this product could also be adulterated. USDA cannot approve potentially adulterated meat.) This update provides additional information regarding the ongoing investigation.

As reported on April 22 by FDA, the Agency determined that rice protein concentrate imported from China was contaminated with melamine and melamine-related compounds. The product was imported by Wilbur-Ellis, an importer and distributor of agricultural products. Although the company began importing product from China in August 2006, the company did not become aware of the contamination until April 2007. As part of the ongoing investigation, FDA has determined the rice protein was used in the production of pet food and a portion of the pet food was used to produce animal feed. The ongoing investigation is tracing products distributed since August 2006 by Wilbur-Ellis throughout the distribution chain.

At this time, we have no evidence of harm to humans associated with the processed pork product, and therefore no recall of meat products processed from these animals is being issued. Testing and the joint investigation continue. If any evidence surfaces to indicate there is harm to humans, the appropriate action will be taken.

The assessment that, if there were to be harm to human health, it would be very low, is based on a number of factors, including the dilution of the contaminating melamine and melamine-related compounds from the original rice protein concentrate as it moves through the food system. First it is a partial ingredient in the pet food; second, it is only part of the total feed given to the hogs; third, it is not known to accumulate in the hogs and the hogs excrete melamine in their urine; fourth, even if present in pork, pork is only a small part of the average American diet. Neither FDA nor USDA has uncovered any evidence of harm to the swine from the contaminated feed. In addition to the dilutional factor and the lack of evidence of illnesses in the swine fed the waste pet food, we are not aware of any human illness that has occurred from exposure to melamine or its by-products. While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

systems would have limited ability to detect subtle problems due to melamine and melamine-related compounds, no problems have been detected to date. To further evaluate any potential harm to humans, the FDA is developing and implementing further tests and risk assessments based on the toxicity of the compounds and how much of the compounds consumers could be expected to actually consume.

The ongoing investigation and product reconciliation and testing have led to certain farms. We expect the investigation will continue to find more places where product may have been distributed. As of April 26, sites in the following states are believed to have received and used contaminated product: California, Kansas, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina and Utah. As we confirm additional sites that have received and used contaminated product, we will provide additional updates.

USDA and FDA continue to conduct a full, comprehensive examination to protect the nation's food supply and will provide updates as new information is confirmed.