

FSIS Issues Public Health Alert for Beef Meatball Products Due to Misbranding and Undeclared Allergen

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is issuing a public health alert because Whole Foods Market, Inc., sold an undetermined amount of beef meatballs with marinara sauce that were misbranded and were produced with an undeclared allergen. The products contain parmesan cheese made from milk, which is a known allergen, and is not declared on the product label. FSIS is issuing this public health alert out of the utmost of caution to ensure that consumers with allergic

reactions to milk are aware that these products should not be consumed. A recall was not requested because it is believed that the affected products are no longer available to be directly purchased by retail consumers.

The beef meatballs with marinara sauce products subject to the public health alert are:

24-oz. clear plastic containers of “Whole Foods Market Beef Meatballs with Marinara” with a PLU code of 39496 and sell-by dates through 2/27/21.

This product was sold in retail locations in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin.

The problem was discovered when the firm notified FDA of a customer report of an adverse reaction due to consumption of the product. Anyone concerned about an illness should contact a health care provider.

FSIS is concerned that some product may be in consumers’ refrigerators or freezers. Consumers with food allergies who have purchased these products are urged not to consume them. These products should be thrown away or returned to the place of purchase.

Consumers and members of the media with questions about the public health alert can contact Nathan Cimbala, Global Public Relations, Whole Foods Market, Inc., at nathan.cimbala@wholefoods.com.

Consumers with food safety questions can call the toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854) or live chat via Ask USDA from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Eastern Time) Monday through Friday. Consumers can also browse food safety messages at Ask USDA or send a question via email to MPHotline@usda.gov. For consumers that need to report a problem with a meat, poultry, or egg product, the online Electronic Consumer Complaint Monitoring System can be accessed 24 hours a day at <https://foodcomplaint.fsis.usda.gov/eCCF/>.