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E.Coli outbreak:

Spain suspends activities of two suspect cucumber distributors

The Spanish authorities informed the European Commission tonight that they **suspended the activities of two establishments in the provinces of Almeria and Malaga**, which are suspected of distributing the E. Coli contaminated cucumbers to Germany. Samples have been taken from the soil, water and products and investigations are ongoing.

On May 26, the German authorities identified fresh cucumbers from Almeria and Malaga as one of the sources responsible for the STEC (shiga toxin-producing E.coli) outbreak. **Investigations are ongoing to identify other potential sources**, while a third suspect batch of cucumbers originating either in the Netherlands or in Denmark, and traded in Germany, is also under investigation.

The German authorities have also notified, through the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF), that one suspect consignment of Spanish cucumbers has been distributed to Denmark. The Danish authorities have traced these cucumbers and withdrew them from the market. They have also reassured the Commission that no cucumbers from these consignments have been traded further to other Member States.

Primarily **Germany** and, to a smaller degree, **five other Member States** have been affected by the outbreak.

A number of people with STEC developed the Haemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS), a serious form of E. Coli. The STEC outbreak is responsible for two deaths in Germany, while a total number of 276 HUS cases have been recorded there. Sweden has reported 25 STEC cases out of which 10 developed HUS, Denmark seven STEC cases (three HUS), the UK three cases (two HUS), the Netherlands one HUS case and Austria two STEC cases.

The outbreak affects mainly north Germany, and in particular an area around the city of Hamburg. Most of the cases reported outside Germany concern either German nationals travelling or persons who had been visiting Germany.

All information regarding the ongoing investigations is disseminated to all Member States through the RASFF.

RASFF website: http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/rapidalert/index_en.htm

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