Blue Bell Ice Cream Listeria Recall

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Blue Bell ®

Listeria

Food associated with *Listeria*:

- Meat (cold cut cooked meat
- Dairy products (soft cheeses)
- Milk
- Seafood

Who is at risk?

- pregnant women and their newborns
- adults 65+
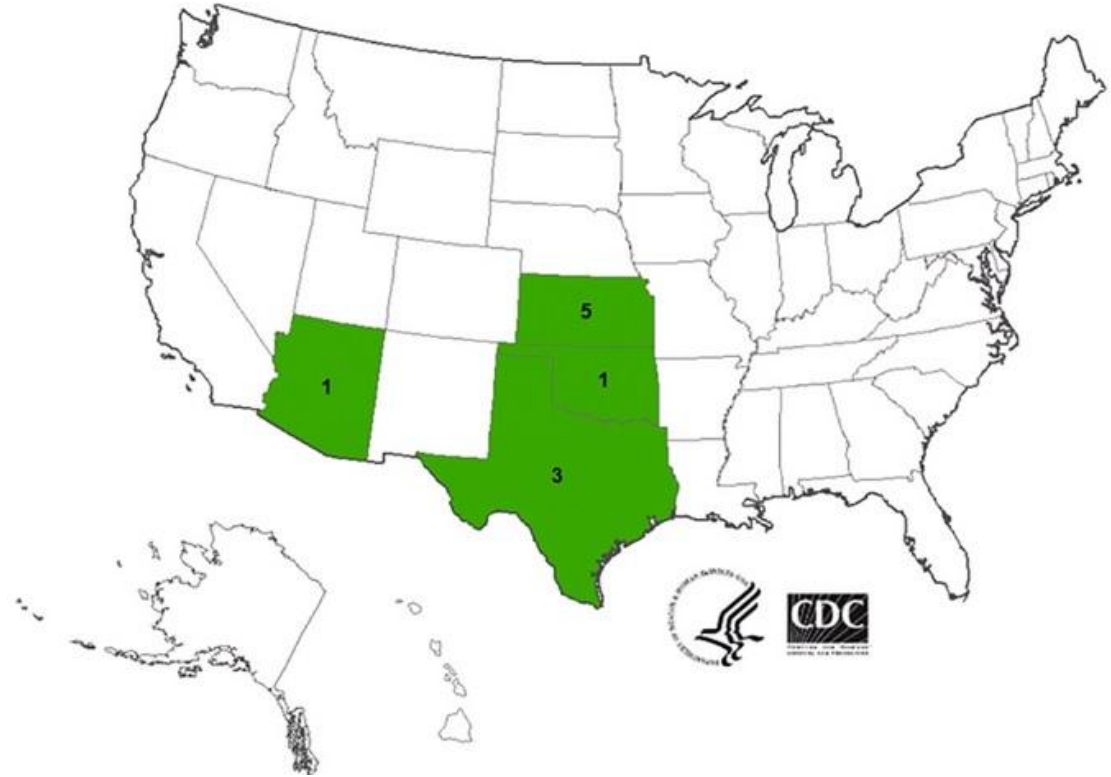- people with weakened immune systems.

How was is discovered? Source of the problem

- Routine sample of Blue Bell`s products in **South Carolina** by South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
- Ice cream samples that were checked:
  - Chocolate Chip Country Cookie Sandwiches
  - Great Divide Bars

- Tests done by the location in **Texas** revealed the same problems in:
  - Chocolate Chip Country Cookie Sandwiches
  - Great Divide Bars
  - "Scoops"

Who was affected?

- Number of cases: 10

- States: 4

  - Arizona

  - Kansas

  - Oklahoma

  - Texas

- Deaths: 3

- Hospitalizations: 10

What actions were taken?

PulseNet system that find outbreaks/illnesses caused by foodborne illness by connecting similar cases across states and even countries.

- PFGE (Pulsed-field gel electrophoresis)
- Recall issued
- Production halted
- Facilities were cleaned, machinery was repaired and replaced
- New safety procedures and protocols put into place
- Agreement was reached with the states of Texas and Oklahoma
- $850,000 fine was paid to state of Texas

What was the outcome?

- In March 2013 Blue Bell decided to shut down the facility in Texas and announced recall on some of their products
- In April the company recalled ALL their products that were on the Market (ice creams, frozen yogurt, frozen snack, sherbet).

- Company now back in production, but in only 16 of the original 23 states

BLUE BELL RECALL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -- APRIL 20, 2015 – BLUE BELL CREAMERIES VOLUNTARILY EXPANDS RECALL TO INCLUDE ALL OF ITS PRODUCTS DUE TO POSSIBLE HEALTH RISK.

How could it have been prevented?

- Should not have ignored original tests that came back positive for *Listeria* on equipment in 2010

- Implemented better cleaning procedures in factory

- Trained staff on what course of action to take when *Listeria* was first noticed

- Implement test and hold practice before outbreak

Stop Foodborne Illness