

***E. coli* traced to raw milk from Minnesota dairy**

(Food Safety News)

By Michelle Greenhalgh

On Wednesday, Minnesota state health officials announced that they have linked three cases of *E. coli* O157:H7 illness associated with raw milk from a dairy farm located in Gibbon, MN. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) urged consumers who may have purchased milk from the Hartmann Dairy Farm, otherwise known as M.O.M's, to discard the product and not drink it.

According to the MDH press release, the milk products may be labeled organic and consumers may be unaware that the milk has not been pasteurized. Officials also urged consumers not to eat cheese, ice cream, or other dairy products from the farm as they may have been made from unpasteurized raw milk.

Officials urged people who have developed symptoms after consuming unpasteurized milk to seek immediate medical attention. Symptoms of *E. coli* O157:H7, include stomach cramps, diarrhea, and bloody diarrhea. Typically, people become sick two to five days after ingesting contaminated foods.

E. coli O157:H7 infection can lead to serious complications, including hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), which can cause kidney failure. HUS can occur a week or more after the onset of diarrhea. Those most at risk of developing complications from *E. coli* infections include young children, the elderly, and people who possess weakened immune systems.

Officials in Minnesota are continuing to investigate a cluster of four *E. coli* O157:H7 illnesses that have the same "pulsed field gel electrophoresis" (PFGE) patterns, otherwise known as DNA fingerprints. Three of the four cases reported provided a direct link to Hartmann Farm while the fourth case is still under investigation. Three people were hospitalized as a result of the illness while one case has developed HUS.

Minnesota law prohibits most raw milk sales, except for some purchases made directly at the farm where the milk is produced. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture investigates complaints and cases of foodborne illness associated with the sale of raw milk. Enforcement actions can be taken in cases when sales of raw milk are identified and people become ill from consuming the raw milk. 05-27-10