

John Bennett Creative Services *for Child Nutrition Professionals*

Attached are two versions of a press release for the beef recall situation. One version is for districts that did not get any of the recalled beef, and the other is for districts that have had to pull some supplies.

Even more so than the parent letter or talking points, this release will require you to edit carefully to insert your own specific information!

Nearly all press releases these days are emailed rather than mailed or faxed. If you like, we will email you the press release text in the body of an email, and you can edit it and forward it. This would save you the step of getting the press release text into an email in good form. That can be a hassle. We will even make your changes for you and then send you the text in the body of an email for you to simply forward.

If you do send out the release, be prepared for a follow-up call from a reporter. See our "media talking points" piece for important advice regarding this possibility.

Call or email if you have questions or need help.

AND PLEASE – call or contact us if you need more extensive or specific help or preparation.

News Release

For immediate release: February 28, 2008

Contact: Lee Hocker, 717-657-5108 or LHocker@hannasd.org

None of recalled beef was sent to Susquehanna Township School District

Harrisburg, Feb. 28, 2008 – None of the beef that has been recalled by USDA in recent weeks was sent to school kitchens in Susquehanna Township School District, according to Lee Ann Hocker, Food Services Director for the district.

“The recall does not affect us directly,” Hocker said, “but we understand that parents and students may well be concerned about the safety of school meals even if a school system, like ours, never received any of the meat.”

Hocker said that her department’s primary commitment is always to the health and well-being of the children in STSD schools. “We prepare and serve XX meals a day, XX a year, which makes us one of the biggest food service operations in the area,” she said, “but we try to never lose sight of the fact that every single one of those meals is eaten by one of our children. Food safety and cleanliness are our most important responsibilities.”

Beef was recalled nationwide in mid-February after Westland/Hallmark, a major west-coast processor of beef for the USDA commodity program, was found to have committed serious violations of processing procedures. In addition to some school meals programs, commercial food vendors like General Mills and Nestle have also been affected by the recall. The action is what USDA calls a “class two” recall, meaning that none of the beef in question has been found to be tainted or harmful in any way. USDA says the risk of human illness from eating the beef is remote.

Hocker said that food from the USDA commodity program makes up only about XX% of the food prepared and served in the district. “We count on USDA to monitor the processors of that food and to act when problems are found,” Hocker said. “I think this recall shows that USDA is ready to act decisively, and we commend them for taking this sweeping action.”

Hocker said that her department follows the strictest food safety standards. “In the very rare event that we need to address a problem, we do so quickly and openly,” she said. “We’re here to provide the nutrition kids need to learn well, and whenever a question about food safety comes up, we will always act immediately in the best interest of our kids.”

News Release

For immediate release: February 28, 2008

Contact: Lee Hocker, 717-657-5108 or LHocker@hannasd.org

How beef recall affects Susquehanna Township School District

Harrisburg, Feb. 28, 2008 – Susquehanna Township School District has removed XX cases of beef from its supplies to comply with the recent recall instituted by USDA, according to Lee Ann Hocker, Food Services Director for the district.

Hocker said that she has gone a step further by putting all beef the district received from USDA on hold, no matter where the beef originated. “Until we’re certain that it’s not part of the recall, we will not prepare any meals using any of the beef we have on hand that we received through USDA,” Hocker said.

Hocker said that her department’s primary commitment is always to the health and well-being of the children in STSD schools. “We prepare and serve XX meals a day, XX a year, which makes us one of the biggest food service operations in the area,” she said, “but we try to never lose sight of the fact that every single one of those meals is eaten by one of our children. Food safety and cleanliness are our most important responsibilities.”

Beef was recalled nationwide in mid-February after Westland/Hallmark, a major west-coast processor of beef for the USDA commodity program, was found to have committed serious violations of processing procedures. In addition to some school meals programs, commercial food vendors like General Mills and Nestle have also been affected by the recall. The action is what USDA calls a “class two” recall, meaning that none of the beef in question has been found to be tainted or harmful in any way. USDA says the risk of human illness from eating the beef is remote.

Hocker said that food from the USDA commodity program makes up only about XX% of the food prepared and served in the district. “We count on USDA to monitor the processors of that food and to act when problems are found,” Hocker said. “I think this recall shows that USDA is ready to act decisively, and we commend them for taking this sweeping action.”

Hocker said that her department follows the strictest food safety standards. “In the very rare event that we need to address a problem, we do so quickly and openly, as we have in this case” she said. “We’re here to provide the nutrition kids need to learn well, and whenever a question about food safety comes up, we will always act immediately in the best interest of our kids.”