Epidemiologic Notes and Reports Update: Milk-borne Salmonellosis -- Illinois

The number of culture-confirmed cases of salmonellosis reported to the Illinois Department of Public Health during the outbreak of milk-borne salmonellosis reported last week (1) reached 5,770 on April 16. Fifty-eight percent of the first 765 cases occurred among persons under 10 years of age. Salmonella typhimurium has been isolated from unopened containers of two lots of milk: Bluebrook 2% milk, dated March 29 and produced March 20, and Hill Farm 2% milk, dated April 8 and produced March 30. Both lots were from the same dairy plant in Illinois, which stopped producing milk April 9. The milk was sold in Jewel, Eisner, and Magna supermarkets in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, and Michigan. All milk produced by the plant has been removed from sale. Although the plant produces milk with several different concentrations of butterfat, thus far only 2% milk has been strongly implicated. Investigations of the plant by state, federal, and industry officials are continuing to determine the precise cause of the contamination of the milk.

By April 16, the Illinois Department of Public Health had received reports of milk-associated, culture-confirmed cases of salmonellosis from the three other states where the milk was distributed--Indiana (289 cases), Michigan (43), and Iowa (28). In addition, three state health departments (Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Florida) have reported a total of 19 cases among persons returning to their states. Reported by local Illinois health departments, Illinois Dept of Public Health; Enteric Diseases Br, Div of Bacterial Diseases, Center for Infectious Diseases, CDC; US Food and Drug Administration.

Editorial Note

Editorial Note: This is the largest number of culture-confirmed cases ever associated with a single outbreak of salmonellosis in the United States. Although Salmonella is sometimes found in dairy cattle and in raw milk (2), pasteurization kills Salmonella. The implicated milk underwent the pasteurization process, suggesting that it was either inadequately pasteurized or contaminated after pasteurization.

References

