Homemade botulism
VR Green Farms
San Clemente, CA

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Potential *C. botulinum* Cases - Notification from OH and FDA

- 7/29/2014 – Two potential *C. botulinum* cases in OH reported
- 20 year old and 22 year old shared meal of pasta with pesto sauce on 7/15/2014
- 1 case initially diagnosed with Guillain-Barre Syndrome / 1 case diagnosed with botulism
- Both cases on ventilators
- VR Green Farms Pesto Sauce collected from one of the case patient’s refrigerator
Distribution of VR Green Farms Pesto Sauce

- Implicated product distributed from unlicensed Farm Stand in San Clemente, CA
- CA resident purchased six jars of pesto sauce from Farm Stand in late May 2014
- Drove product from CA to OH to visit daughter
- Provided two jars to friends in CO
- Provided three jars to daughter and roommate in OH
Distribution of VR Green Farms
Pesto Sauce
VR Green Farms, San Clemente, CA was not licensed as a cannery with CDPH / no record of inspection from CDPH or FDA
Investigation at VR Green Farms

- Farm Stand location only – direct sales to the public
- Various acidified and LACF foods manufactured by multiple individuals in homes and a restaurant kitchen
- Firm initially claimed products were manufactured under Cottage Food Operators permits
- Quick View

Homemade Pasta Tomato Sauce $14.00

8 oz. Marinated Goat Cheese Balls $10.00

Homemade Pickled and Spicy Blue VRF Extra Virgin Olive Oil w/Garlic Lake Beans $12.00

Pewter Top $24.00

- Quick View

VR GREEN FARMS

VRGF Sweet Red Pepper Hot Jelly

VRGF Pine Nut Basil Pesto

VRGF Old World Tomato Sauce

VRGF Grilling Sauce
Pesto Sauce Manufacturing

- Manufactured in a private home
- Individual was not licensed by CDPH or registered with FDA
- Individual did not have a Cottage Food Operators permit (would not have been approved due to high-risk commodity)
- Ingredients – fresh basil, olive oil, fresh peeled garlic, pine nuts, parmesan cheese, and salt
- Cold-packed pesto - processed in a water bath canning unit for 16 minutes – boiling water
Results of Investigation

- Firm recalled all acidified and low acid canned foods
- CDPH issued a press release regarding the botulism cases and associated recall
- All acidified and LACF foods removed by CDPH from facility

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CDPH Warns Consumers Not to Eat
VR Green Farms Jarred Food Products Because of Botulism Risk

SACRAMENTO -- California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Director Dr. Ron Chapman and state health officer warned consumers today not to eat VR Green Farms jarred food products because they may have been improperly produced, making them susceptible to contamination with Clostridium botulinum.

Ingestion of botulism toxin from improperly processed jarred and canned foods may lead to serious illness and death. CDPH is coordinating with the US Food and Drug Administration and the Ohio Department of Health in the investigation of two cases of suspected food-borne botulism infections that may be associated with consumption of the firm’s Pine Nut Basil Pesto.

VR Green Farms of San Clemente, California, is voluntarily recalling the following varieties of jarred food products: Pine Nut Basil Pesto, Pickled Farm Mix, Old World Tomato Sauce, Sundried Tomatoes in Olive Oil, Tuscan Grilling Sauce, and Pasta Sauce. These food products were sold under the VR Farms label and packaged in Mason-style glass jars with screw-on metal lids. The product labels do not include any coding or “use by” dates. Photographs can be found on Recalled Product Photos Page. The products were sold at the VR Green Farms stand in San Clemente, California and via the Internet to consumers throughout the United States.

Botulism toxin is odorless and colorless. Consumers who have any of these products or any foods made with these products should discard them immediately. Double bag the cans in plastic bags and place in a trash receptacle for non-recyclable trash. Wear gloves when handling these products or wash your hands with soap and running water.

Botulism is a rare but serious paralytic illness caused by a nerve toxin that is produced by the bacterium Clostridium botulinum. The initial symptoms frequently experienced are double or blurred vision, drooping eyelids, and dry or sore throat. Progressive descending paralysis, usually symmetrical, may follow. Infants with botulism appear lethargic, feed poorly, are constipated, have a weak cry and poor muscle tone. CDPH recommends consumers experiencing any ill effects after consuming these products should consult their health care provider. Consumers that observe the product being offered for sale should report the activity to CDPH at (800) 495-3232.

www.cdph.ca.gov
Testing Results

- Pasta dish containing pesto and chicken tested positive for *C. botulinum* toxin type B
- Intact samples collected in OH and CO tested negative for *C. botulinum* toxin
- Intact sample of pesto sauce collected by CDPH – negative for *C. botulinum* toxin type B
- Patient specimens negative for *C. botulinum* toxins
Questions?