

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONSUMER WARNING: CONTAMINATED CHEESE

INDIANAPOLIS (30 January 2008)—Routine surveillance by the Indiana State Board of Animal Health's Dairy Division revealed high levels of *staphylococcus aureus* (or "staph") in several raw milk cheeses manufactured by Grassy Meadows dairy of Howe, Ind. Because of the facility's location, consumers in Ohio and Michigan, as well as Indiana, should also check their refrigerators for these items.

Products of concern include, but are not limited to, Colby (lot no. 210317 and 19177), Jalapeno natural cheese (lot no. 2617, 21017 and 11017), "Homemade" cheese (lot no. 19267 and 19227), Monterey Jack (lot no. 18207 and 2937), and garlic pepper cheese (lot no. 19147). All are sold in wedges or blocks of various weights.

Due to the nature of the manufacturing process for raw milk cheese, BOAH advises consumers not to eat **any** cheese from this facility purchased prior to January 30, 2008. According to Terry Philibeck, Director of BOAH Dairy Division, the agency has not yet been able to identify when the staph contamination began. Cheese purchased prior to January may be contaminated.

Grassy Meadows products were sold directly to consumers from the dairy farm, located in LaGrange County, Ind., as well as more than a dozen retail health food stores in Northeastern/Fort Wayne Indiana region. BOAH is working to secure a complete list of retail outlets that carry this product.

All the samples taken indicated higher-than-allowed levels of staph. No consumer illness or complaints have been reported.

Staph infections can cause nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramping, headache and muscle cramping. The greatest health risk is to the very young, the very old and those with compromised immune systems.

The State Board of Animal Health is cooperating with the Indiana State Department of Health to update county health departments statewide as retail outlets are identified.

Consumers should not consume these products, but return them to their place of purchase.