

Press Release

No Evidence to Support Raw Cheese Recall

RAW FARM Immediate WITHDRAWAL of Voluntary Cheese Recall

Recall was UNFOUNDED and is now LIFTED

***FDA targeted RAW FARM despite lack of evidence; FDA Director Dr. Stic Harris is personally against the sale and consumption of raw milk and raw cheese.**

February 26, 2024

After an investigation and thorough review of hundreds of product samples and testing, no pathogens were found by FDA, multiple state health agencies or private laboratory testing.

RAW FARM was urgently pressured into issuing a Voluntary Recall with no evidence of adulterated product connecting to any consumer illness. On Thursday February 15th, 2024, RAW FARM was provided 30 minutes notice before a urgent conference call demanded by the FDA and CDC. In a preemptive abundance of caution, RAW FARM issued the Voluntary Recall on February 16, 2024.

On February 17, 2024, FDA's Director posted "While my personal opinion is you should never drink raw milk or eat raw milk products, you certainly don't want to eat raw milk cheese linked to an ongoing outbreak" next to pictures of Raw Farm's Raw Cheddar Cheese products. See Exhibit A. While former, current, and future FDA Directors may have personal dietary restrictions, whether Vegetarian, Vegan, or lactose-intolerant, that should never be the basis to restrict the sale and consumption of safe and legal foods.

During this last 10-day Voluntary Recall period, RAW FARM acted in complete cooperation with the FDA and CDC, including extensive testing which revealed no matches at all between Raw Farm's products and the E. coli outbreak. A summary of key events follows:

- 1) On February 16, FDA notified media, consumers, and retailers (Consignees) 3 hours before the deadline they gave to RAW FARM for issuing the Voluntary Recall, thereby issuing a de-facto mandatory recall outside of the FSMA administrative process requirements of section 402 of the FD&C Act.
- 2) FDA failed to comply with FSMA (Food Safety Modernization Act) guidelines for following a Voluntary Recall (including not following the Firms' guidance) under section 423 (d) of the FD&C.
- 3) Raw Farm's voluntary recall specified the batches of block and cheddar cheese allegedly linked to the E. coli cases. Unlike with prior warnings where the FDA limited its warning to certain batches or time periods, FDA did not limit its warning in any way and instead advised consumers and re-sellers to never eat or sell RAW FARM-brand Raw Cheddar Cheese. FDA

failed to respond to multiple pleadings from RAW FARM to update their guidance to comply with standard procedures for all Voluntary Recalls.

- 4) FDA posted links on their cheese recall guidance that show biased and misleading information on raw milk, a product not implicated in the recall.
- 5) On February 17, Dr. Stic Harris, Director at FDA, posted a biased and brand defaming image along with a statement on his FDA LinkedIn account showing anti-raw milk agendas unassociated with the ongoing investigation.
- 6) Over the past 10 days, test results have all come back NEGATIVE. These results were immediately shared with the FDA and CDC. There have been no positive test results connecting Raw Farm products to E. Coli or any of the reported cases.

Raw Farm is now publicly announcing that the Voluntary recall was UNFOUNDED and has been

LIFTED. All raw cheese product date codes are safe to consume. We now direct all stores, consignees, and consumers to freely consume our products with confidence. This includes any product inventories which have been quarantined as subject to Voluntary Recall. Please release all quarantines and resume all normal product sales and consumption.

Background:

On February 15, 2024 RAW FARM was contacted by the FDA and CDC regarding the “epidemiological possibility” (via PULSENET) that RAW FARM raw cheddar cheese **might** have caused some illnesses within a date range of October 18th 2023 and January 31st 2024. This included the verbal statements that about half of the ill people denied consuming any RAW FARM products. RAW FARM received no evidence of adulterated products on February 15, 2024 but reluctantly issued the Voluntary Recall on February 16, 2024 in full cooperation with the FDA/CDC and CDPH in a **preemptive preliminary abundance of caution**.

Investigation Findings:

- 1) RAW FARM assumed that the FDA/CDC would issue guidance that corresponded and supported RAW FARM’s Voluntary Recall, as per FSMA 423 (d) of the FD&C.
 - a. Instead of the FDA and CDC issuing guidance that followed the Voluntary Recall issued by RAW FARM, the FDA and CDC issued guidance that did not have a specific BATCH LOT ID or specific cheese product to be recalled and therefore did not correlate to RAW FARM Voluntary Recall.
- 2) The FDA recall guidance was a **“forever directive”** to throw away and never eat or consume RAW FARM cheese products.
 - a. This same FDA guidance overreached and advised consumers to **never consume raw milk**. Raw Milk was not and is not subject to recall.
 - b. The FDA does not regulate raw milk (state laws do) yet it directed consumers to never consume legally produced, inspected, and compliant raw milk.
- 3) In addition to this over-reaching and unfounded guidance, the FDA and CDC has failed to provide any evidence of an adulterated cheese product or any presence of a pathogen, required for a recall under the FSMA.
- 4) RAW FARM subsequent and thorough internal investigation of cheese subject to the Voluntary Recall confirms:

- a. No root cause can be found.
- b. No adulterated products leaving the facility, as confirmed by Food Safety Net Services AOAC PCR testing.
 - i. **COA from 168 batches** ranging from make date 2023-9-12 to 2023-12-19 (current cheese being cut) confirmed all negative pathogen results from FSNS PCR testing.
 - ii. **CDFA testing of all products**, including raw cheese, have revealed zero E coli 0157:H7 during the same date range.
- c. No breaches in food safety protocols.
- d. No violations of Critical Control Points.
- e. No violations of Process Preventative Controls or FSMA (unrelated 9-day FDA inspection in January 2024 showed full compliance)
- f. No violations of the Hazard Analysis.
- g. No illnesses have been directly reported to RAW FARM.
- h. No product testing has resulted in positive pathogen findings.
- i. No environmental monitoring testing has resulted in a positive pathogen.
- j. CDPH and UDPH have confirmed 24 total (15 CA, 9 UT) product samples taken from random "multiple state retail" consignees have tested negative by their State independent labs.

This Voluntary Recall is now CONCLUDED and has been LIFTED. For more information, please contact Customer Service at 559-846-9732 or email josh.l@rawfarmusa.com or aaron.m@rawfarmusa.com.


Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Aaron', followed by a stylized flourish.

Aaron McAfee, MBA PCQI
President
RAW FARM, LLC


Exhibit A:

FDA Director, Dr. Stic Harris, Biased and Revealing LinkedIn Post on February 17th, 2024 (1 day into ongoing investigation)




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Stic Harris' Post




Stic Harris
Director at FDA
6d

While my personal opinion is you should never drink raw milk or eat raw milk products, you certainly don't want to eat raw milk cheese linked to an ongoing outbreak...



Outbreak Investigation of E. coli O157:H7: Raw Cheddar Cheese
[fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov)



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Withdrawal and Conclusion of VOLUNTARY PRODUCT RECALL

February 26, 2024

Product: RAW CHEDDAR CHEESE (See below)
Affected Lots: 20231113-1 or Older for Block, 20240116 or Older for Shred

Dear Customer,

This is to notify you that Raw Farm, LLC is lifting and withdrawing the voluntarily recall originally issued on February 16, 2024 of the below referenced product packed and distributed as identified:

PRODUCT NO LONGER ON Voluntary Recall

Item	Barcode	Product Description	Package Size (oz)	Brand	Batch or Older
1075	835204000156	Raw Cheddar Cheese - Pound Block	16	RAW FARM	20231113-1
1050	835204001177	Raw Cheddar Cheese - Half Pound Block	8	RAW FARM	20231113-1
1080	835204001184	Raw Cheddar Cheese - Half Pound Shred	8	RAW FARM	20240116

This notice removes all quarantines or limitations on regular sale or consumption of RAW FARM Raw Cheddar Cheese products. RAW FARM deliveries will commence immediately.

See 2024-2-26 Press Release attached for more details.

If you have any questions, please call the Customer Service Representative at 559-846-9732 for more information.

Aaron McAfee, MBA PCQI
President
RAW FARM, LLC
Aaron.m@rawfarmusa.com
559-977-8564

Attachment: Press Release dated 02-26-2024



Analytical Results

Report Number: 24-076151
Report Date: 02/13/2024

186 S West Ave, Fresno, CA, 93706 Phone:559-443-1046 Fax:559-443-2176

Customer*: Raw Farm, LLC

Contact*: Aaron McAfee
 7221 S. Jameson

Fresno, CA, 93706

Phone*: 559-846-9732

Fax*: 559-842-8061

Samples Received: 02/08/2024

Start of Testing: 02/08/2024

PO Number:

Billing Code	Sample Date*	Sample Number	Sample Description*	Analysis - FSNS Method Number	Result	Units
CAM43	02/08/2024	001	SHREDDED : 20240207	Campylobacter FSNS # 1015.9 (iQ-Check) 25g	Negative	25 gram
			Composite: None			
ECH772	02/08/2024	001		E. coli O157:H7 FSNS # 36.5 (GDS-AOAC) 25g	Negative	25 gram
LM114	02/08/2024	001		Listeria monocytogenes FSNS# 14.21 (GENE-UP) 25g	Negative	25 gram
SAL77	02/08/2024	001		Salmonella FSNS #38.2 (GDS-AOAC 2009.03) 25g	Negative	25 gram
CAM43	02/08/2024	002	CREAM : 20240207	Campylobacter FSNS # 1015.9 (iQ-Check) 25g	Negative	25 gram
			Composite: None			
ECH7247	02/08/2024	002		E. coli O157:H7 (PCR BAX RT - CSM-FSNS-214) 25g	Negative	25 gram
LM114	02/08/2024	002		Listeria monocytogenes FSNS# 14.21 (GENE-UP) 25g	Negative	25 gram
SAL77	02/08/2024	002		Salmonella FSNS #38.2 (GDS-AOAC 2009.03) 25g	Negative	25 gram

Sample Temperature Upon Receipt: 6.0 deg C

Remarks:

All results contained in the above report relate only to the items tested. All samples received in satisfactory condition unless noted otherwise. *The indicated information has been provided by the client to FSNS.

For Questions or Comments Contact:
 Derek Ramirez
 559-443-1046 or Derek.Ramirez@fsns.com

First Approval By:

Grizelda Trevino

Second Approval By:

Jaerinne Lyles

Signature:

Grizelda Trevino

Signature:

Jaerinne Lyles



Analytical Results

Report Number: 24-059260
Report Date: 02/05/2024

186 S West Ave, Fresno, CA, 93706 Phone:559-443-1046 Fax:559-443-2176

Customer*: Raw Farm, LLC

Contact*: Aaron McAfee
 7221 S. Jameson

Fresno, CA, 93706

Phone*: 559-846-9732

Fax*: 559-842-8061

Samples Received: 01/31/2024

Start of Testing: 01/31/2024

PO Number:

Billing Code	Sample Date*	Sample Number	Sample Description*	Analysis - FSNS Method Number	Result	Units
CAM43	01/31/2024	001	Butter C : 04-29-24	Campylobacter FSNS # 1015.9 (iQ-Check) 25g	Negative	25 gram
			Composite: None			
ECH7247	01/31/2024	001		E. coli O157:H7 (PCR BAX RT - CSM-FSNS-214) 25g	Negative	25 gram
LM114	01/31/2024	001		Listeria monocytogenes FSNS# 14.21 (GENE-UP) 25g	Negative	25 gram
SAL77	01/31/2024	001		Salmonella FSNS #38.2 (GDS-AOAC 2009.03) 25g	Negative	25 gram
CAM43	01/31/2024	002	Cheese : 20231124-1	Campylobacter FSNS # 1015.9 (iQ-Check) 25g	Negative	25 gram
			Composite: None			
ECH772	01/31/2024	002		E. coli O157:H7 FSNS # 36.5 (GDS-AOAC) 25g	Negative	25 gram
LM114	01/31/2024	002		Listeria monocytogenes FSNS# 14.21 (GENE-UP) 25g	Negative	25 gram
SAL77	01/31/2024	002		Salmonella FSNS #38.2 (GDS-AOAC 2009.03) 25g	Negative	25 gram
CAM43	01/31/2024	003	Cheese : 20231124-2	Campylobacter FSNS # 1015.9 (iQ-Check) 25g	Negative	25 gram
			Composite: None			
ECH772	01/31/2024	003		E. coli O157:H7 FSNS # 36.5 (GDS-AOAC) 25g	Negative	25 gram
LM114	01/31/2024	003		Listeria monocytogenes FSNS# 14.21 (GENE-UP) 25g	Negative	25 gram
SAL77	01/31/2024	003		Salmonella FSNS #38.2 (GDS-AOAC 2009.03) 25g	Negative	25 gram
CAM43	01/31/2024	004	Cheese : 20231124-3	Campylobacter FSNS # 1015.9 (iQ-Check) 25g	Negative	25 gram
			Composite: None			
ECH772	01/31/2024	004		E. coli O157:H7 FSNS # 36.5 (GDS-AOAC) 25g	Negative	25 gram
LM114	01/31/2024	004		Listeria monocytogenes FSNS# 14.21 (GENE-UP) 25g	Negative	25 gram
SAL77	01/31/2024	004		Salmonella FSNS #38.2 (GDS-AOAC 2009.03) 25g	Negative	25 gram