



CCOF

Organic Certification Trade Association Education & Outreach Political Advocacy

For Immediate Release

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No Evidence to Link Organic Spinach to E. coli O157:H7 Outbreak

Santa Cruz, CA, October 13, 2006 – The U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the State of California announced results from the field investigation of the outbreak of E. coli O157:H7, tracing a matching genetic fingerprint in spinach that sickened 199 people to samples of cattle feces found on one of four implicated conventional produce ranches.

According to the FDA, all connections between specific bags of spinach and individual victims of the outbreak were traced to conventionally-grown bagged spinach. On September 15, Natural Selection Foods, San Juan Bautista, California, initiated a voluntary recall of all the spinach brands it packs. “This definitely reinforces our belief that the source was environmental,” said Samantha Cabaluna, a spokeswoman for the company, after the announcement that the outbreak had been linked to a cattle ranch.

Organic regulations require producers to adhere to mandatory stringent certification standards and annual inspections, while conventional operations do not have such requirements. Organic food producers must also meet all federal, state, and local food safety regulations and requirements.

Visit the FDA website (<http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/spinach.html>) for further information.

About CCOF

CCOF, a nonprofit organization formed by a group of grassroots activist farmers in 1973, is one of the oldest and largest organic certifiers in North America. CCOF’s purpose is to promote and support organic agriculture in California and elsewhere through:

- *A premier organic certification program for growers, processors, handlers, and retailers.*
- *Programs to increase awareness of and demand for certified organic products and to expand public support for organic agriculture.*
- *Advocacy for governmental policies that protect and encourage organic agriculture.*

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