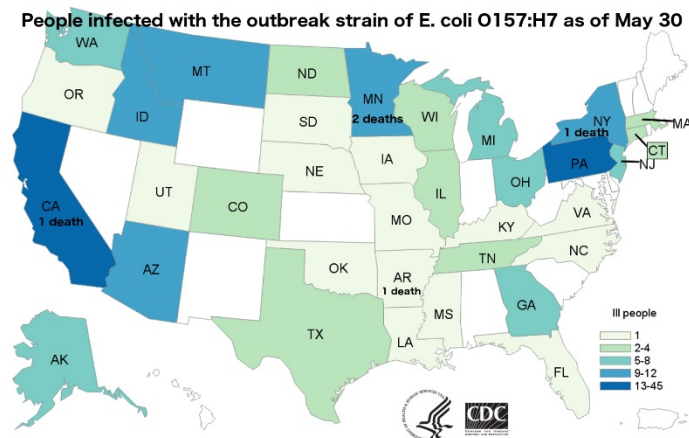


# Current status of the E. coli Outbreak Linked to Romaine Lettuce out of Yuma

August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Remember that E.coli O157:H7 outbreak linked to Romaine lettuce from the Yuma, AZ, growing region? IT was declared over on June 28<sup>th</sup>, but not before it resulted in five deaths, 96 hospitalizations and 210 people confirmed ill in 36 states. At least six people in Canada were also confirmed with the outbreak strain of E. coli. The outbreak officially became the largest foodborne outbreak related to produce in the last 10 years. Well, it appears that the cause was contaminated irrigation water and a key factor to that irrigation water may be a cattle feedlot near the canal.

On August 6<sup>th</sup>, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) reported their hypothesis on the possible cause and vectors of the pathogens, "Samples of irrigation canal water have tested positive for the outbreak strain of E. coli." Additionally, "FDA notes that the canal is close to a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO), a facility with a large number of cattle on the premises... The CAFO can hold in excess of 100,000 head of cattle at any one time."



The FDA continues to work on examining links between the CAFO, adjacent water, geology and other factors to explain the contamination event. However, preliminary traceback information showed a clustering of contaminated romaine lettuce farms nearby.

On July 31 and August 1, 2018, this information was shared in a meeting held between the FDA and the Leafy Greens Food Safety Task Force (a produce industry stakeholder group that was formed in response to this outbreak). The FDA considers that contaminated water coming into contact with produce, either through direct irrigation or other means, is a viable explanation for product contamination. During this meeting a number of preventative measures were discussed with the goal of implementing them before next years growing season. Items such as expanding buffers between feedlots and leafy greens.

For more information on this outbreak visit:

<https://www.fda.gov/Food/RecallsOutbreaksEmergencies/Outbreaks/ucm604254.htm>