

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The following is a Statement from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) concerning certain raw milk soft cheeses. The statement is posted for information purposes only. This is not an official recall notice.

DSCP Issue Date: March 21, 2005

Website: <http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/news/2005/NEW01165.html>

Clarification: On March 14th, FDA issued a raw milk soft cheese advisory that mentioned a number of cheeses, including "Ranchero." We've become aware that "Ranchero" is a trademark of the Cacique company, in Industry, California. Cacique's "Ranchero" is made with pasteurized milk. Our raw milk cheese advisory was not intended to include this specific product.

FDA Statement

FDA STATEMENT March 14, 2005

Media Inquiries: 301-827-6242
Consumer Inquiries: 888-INFO-FDA

FDA Issues Health Advisory About Certain Soft Cheese Made From Raw Milk

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is advising that some soft cheeses made with raw milk present a health risk, especially to high-risk groups, such as pregnant women, newborns, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems. Such raw milk soft cheeses can cause several serious infectious diseases including listeriosis, brucellosis, salmonellosis and tuberculosis. Recently, cases of tuberculosis in New York City have been linked to consumption of queso fresco style cheeses; either imported from Mexico or consumed in Mexico, contaminated with *Mycobacterium bovis*, the causative agent.

The raw milk soft cheeses of most concern can originate from Mexico and Central American countries. Queso fresco style cheese, which is soft and white, has been found to be the most popular kind of cheese among the Hispanic community and can include Queso Panela, Asadero, Blanco and Ranchero, among other styles and may be imported or produced in the U.S.

FDA recommends that consumers do not eat any unripened raw milk soft cheeses from Mexico, Nicaragua, or Honduras. Data show that they are often contaminated with pathogens. FDA further recommends that consumers not purchase or consume raw milk soft cheeses from sources such as flea markets, sellers operating door-to-door or out of their trucks or shipped or carried in luggage to them from Mexico, Nicaragua, or Honduras. This includes cheeses made at home by individuals.

FDA further advises that there is some risk of infection from a number of pathogenic bacteria for anyone who eats raw milk soft cheese from any source.

The Point Of Contact for this FDA Statement is CW3 Melinda Strother, Consumer Safety Officer, at DSCP-FTW. VOICE, DSN: 444-7746/8461, Commercial (215) 737-7746/8461, or by FAX, DSN: 444-7526, or Commercial, (215) 737-7526.

Very Respectfully,
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