



Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement Provides Facts on Romaine Harvest

Arizona Harvest Over, Coastal California is Now Primary Growing Region

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 30, 2018

Contact: April Ward

Phone: 916-947-0751

Sacramento, CA -- As the U.S. Food and Drug Administration continues to investigate a multi-state outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7 linked to romaine lettuce grown in Yuma, AZ, confusion continues regarding the sources of romaine lettuce currently being harvested and shipped to restaurants and grocery stores. California and Arizona Leafy Greens Marketing Agreements, which represent companies producing 90% of the leafy greens grown in the U.S., want consumers, restaurants and grocery stores to understand the facts about current romaine supplies to help them make safe choices about the foods they buy and eat.

"We want to assure public health agencies that romaine lettuce is no longer being harvested in the Yuma, AZ growing region," said Teressa Lopez, Administrator of the Arizona Leafy Greens Food Safety Committee. "United States Department of Agriculture *Market News* Shipping records maintained by the Arizona Department of Agriculture indicate the last date romaine lettuce was shipped from Arizona was April 16."

According to the FDA and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, investigators have determined the source of all illnesses in this outbreak is romaine lettuce grown in the Yuma, AZ region. A farm in Yuma, AZ has been identified as the source of romaine lettuce consumed by those sickened in the Alaskan cluster of the romaine outbreak. Government agencies continue to look for additional sources including other farms in the Yuma, AZ region.

"None of the illnesses reported in this outbreak have been linked to romaine lettuce grown in California," said Scott Horsfall, CEO of the California Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement. "The vast amount of romaine currently being harvested today and for the past few weeks is from California. A small amount of romaine is also being harvested in Florida and central Mexico, but harvest of romaine in Arizona has ceased."

Horsfall noted the Arizona and California companies who handle leafy greens have worked diligently to remove from marketing channels any romaine grown near Yuma, AZ and to provide assurances to retail and foodservice customers that the romaine they are buying today is from California and not Arizona. To help provide information to customers, the California LGMA is distributing a *Frequently Asked Questions* document to retail and restaurants for use in answering consumer questions about romaine. These will be updated when and if new information becomes available.

"We are providing our customers with consistent, factual and clear information about current romaine lettuce supplies so that consumers can make safe choices," said Horsfall. "We absolutely do not want anyone else to be sickened in this outbreak. The leafy greens industry is doing everything possible to prevent further illnesses."

"Food safety is a top priority for the member companies who make up the LGMA," stressed Horsfall. "California produces on average 31 million servings of romaine lettuce every day under a rigorous food safety program which includes mandatory food safety practices on leafy greens farms and government audits to verify farms are following these practices."

Learn more about the LGMA food safety program by visiting their website at www.safeleafygreens.org.