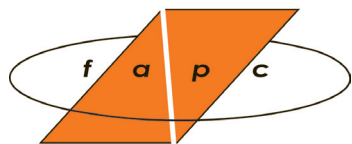


# Food & Agricultural Products Center



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## Steps to Take During a Non-Meat Product Recall

STILLWATER, Okla. – Few people understand that the Food and Drug Administration oversees recalls for non-meat products, while the United States Department of Agriculture oversees all meat recalls.

The FDA has several steps companies should pursue during a recall, and companies have three basic guidelines to follow, said Jason Young, quality management specialist for the Food & Agricultural Products Center.

Companies should submit recall information to the FDA, supply public notification of the recall and finally, evaluate the recall after it is complete.

“Companies need to know their responsibilities for recalls,” Young said. “A company should have a written recall program detailing the roles of each recall team member. The recall team should have an understanding of the FDA recall guidelines.”

When submitting the recall information to the FDA, companies should include a description of the product including the intended use, expected shelf life, type of packaging and labeling information. The submission should also include production identification numbers and the recalling firm’s contact information.

It is also important to include the reason for the recall and an assessment of the health risks associated with the deficiency, Young said.

A strategy to indicate how the recall will be implemented, and the amount recalled, is necessary to give

the FDA an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan.

Young said detailed planning within an establishment and with customers will greatly reduce anxiety and fears during the recall.

"Planning is only successful when executed effectively," he said. "That is why having a recall team in place is critical. Each team member should have a clearly defined role with a leader or coordinator to oversee the recall process and serve as central information gatherer."

The second step of public notification should be accomplished through a press release that is issued promptly after the recall is decided. It is important that all customers in the distribution chain are notified.

Recall notifications should be labeled in large bold print with “URGENT: (inserting food, drug, medical device, etc.) RECALL OR CORRECTION.” These announcements should include recall and instructions to customers and a description of the problem. Examples of all recall letters and attachments should be sent to the client’s local district recall coordinator.

The final step is an evaluation of the effectiveness of the recall. Companies should verify that their customers received the recall notification.

The FDA also requires companies to provide recall status reports after initiating a recall to the local recall

coordinator. Once the root of the problem is determined, the FDA suggests companies communicate the cause to the local coordinator and explain any corrective actions taken during the recall process.

“Written recall procedures can be evaluated by the use of a mock recall,” Young said. “A mock recall is a process that tests your recall program. Recall procedures

should be reviewed and edited based on mock recall results.”

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