

Timeline of Events: Multistate Outbreak of Listeriosis Linked to Whole Cantaloupes from Jensen Farms in Colorado—United States, 2011

Outbreak Identification and Source Implication

September 2
The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) notifies the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of seven ill persons with listeriosis (*Listeria* infection) reported since 8/29/11.

September 6
PulseNet defines outbreak strains in CO patients and identifies an ill person in NE and another in TX, each infected with an outbreak strain of *Listeria*. Initial interviews of 7 ill persons in CO with standard CDC questionnaire find all ate cantaloupe. Three ill persons report eating cantaloupe from one region in Southeastern CO ("Rocky Ford").

September 7
CDC begins coordinating the multistate investigation.

September 8
CDC asks states to use the supplemental questionnaire created by CDPHE to learn more about cantaloupe eaten by ill persons. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) begins investigation with initial information collected by CDPHE to identify sources of cantaloupe eaten by ill persons.

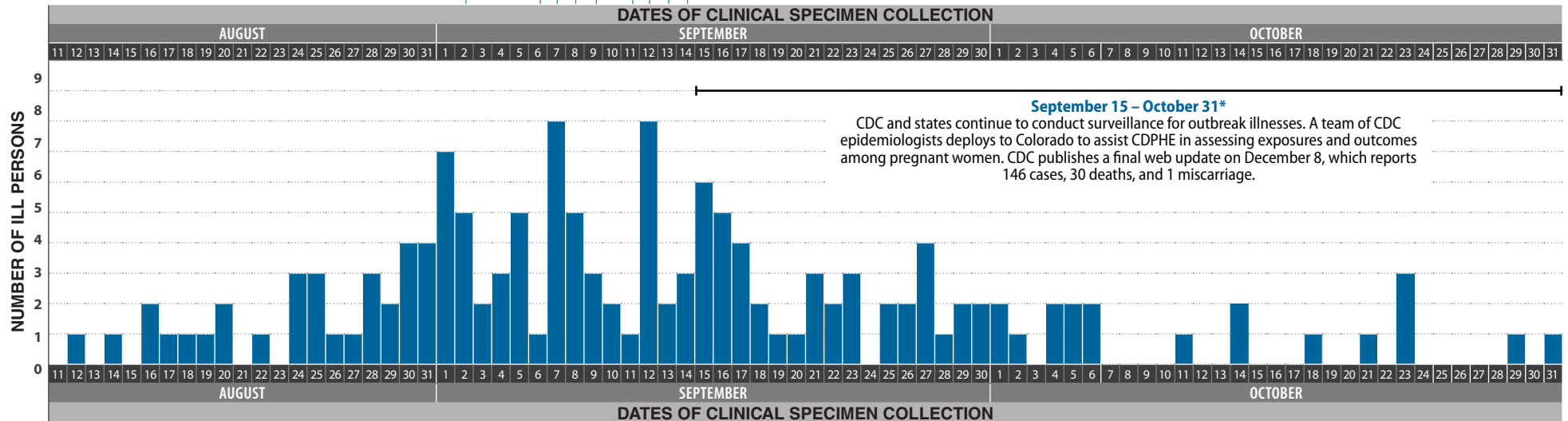
September 9
CDPHE announces that cantaloupes are the likely cause of illness and warns high-risk CO residents not to eat them.

September 11
Preliminary traceback investigation suggests that cantaloupe produced at Jensen Farms was sold at several retail locations where ill persons reported buying cantaloupe marketed as coming from one region in Southeastern CO.

September 12
CDC posts initial web announcement about the investigation, saying that the multistate outbreak of listeriosis is linked to cantaloupes marketed as coming from one region in Southeastern CO, and warning persons at high risk nationwide not to eat them.

September 13
FDA issues a statement that public health officials have discovered that most ill persons consumed cantaloupe purchased whole, most likely marketed as coming from one region in Southeastern CO.

September 14
CDC posts another web update about the investigation, including a warning that the multistate outbreak of listeriosis has been linked to cantaloupes from Jensen Farms.



September 15 – October 31*
CDC and states continue to conduct surveillance for outbreak illnesses. A team of CDC epidemiologists deploys to Colorado to assist CDPHE in assessing exposures and outcomes among pregnant women. CDC publishes a final web update on December 8, which reports 146 cases, 30 deaths, and 1 miscarriage.

Regulatory Actions, Recalls, and Results of Product Testing

September 5
Cantaloupes are collected by CDPHE for *Listeria* testing from the home of an ill person.

September 8
Cantaloupes are collected by CDPHE for *Listeria* testing from retail locations where ill persons reported buying cantaloupes.

September 9
Cantaloupes are collected by FDA for *Listeria* testing from retail locations where ill persons reported buying cantaloupes.

September 10
FDA and CDPHE visit Jensen Farms for an inspection and to collect environmental and product samples. The broker for Jensen Farms stops distribution of cantaloupes and tells grocery stores to remove Jensen Farms cantaloupes from shelves.

September 11
Cantaloupe samples collected by CDPHE on 9/5/11 from the home of an ill person and on 9/8/11 from 2 retail locations yield *Listeria*.

September 14
FDA announces that Jensen Farms has issued a voluntary recall of their whole cantaloupes.

September 16
A sample of cantaloupe collected by CDPHE from 2 retail location stores supplied by Jensen Farms yields an outbreak strain of *Listeria*.

September 19
Cantaloupes and environmental samples collected at Jensen Farms by FDA yield an outbreak strain of *Listeria*.

September 22
FDA, along with Colorado state and local officials, begins an environmental assessment at Jensen Farms.

September 23
Carol's Cuts of Kansas City, Kansas initiates a recall of fresh cut cantaloupe and cut mixed fruit containing cantaloupe because the cantaloupe was produced by Jensen Farms.

October 6
Fruit Fresh Up of Buffalo, New York initiates a recall of individual packages of fresh cut cantaloupe and cut mixed fruit containing cantaloupe because the cantaloupe was produced by Jensen Farms.

October 18
FDA issues a warning letter to Jensen Farms based on the presence of the outbreak strains of *Listeria* in environmental and cantaloupe samples taken on 9/10.

October 19
FDA announces findings of its environmental assessment at Jensen Farms.

* Excludes a newborn diagnosed with listeriosis with a specimen date in November whose mother was reported as a case earlier in the outbreak.