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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Michigan Department of Agriculture Fails to Test Food Samples After Feed Contaminant Killing 50,000 Turkeys is Distributed to 100 Farms in 8 States

Details Emerge Concerning State Response to Toxic Levels of Lasalocid Found in Farm Feed for Meat Animals in 2014

12TH February 2016

New attention is being paid to the track record of silence in matters of public health and public disclosure by governmental officials in Michigan after the disastrous lead contamination issue in Flint, MI. Large amounts of lasalocid, a drug not approved for swine, was ingested by pigs intended to head to market- after those pigs were processed, the meat was not tested to determine if the contaminant remained. Seven farms received the drug contaminated oil directly, while four feed manufacturers received the oil and added it into feed headed to unidentified farms. Only one farm has been accounted for in the reporting from MDARD, leaving it unclear what steps were taken by over 100 farms that received the contaminated feed or oil. A diagram of the spread of the contaminant can be seen here: <http://ow.ly/Y0y0p>

Major Points:

- 50,000 turkeys dead from contaminated feed
- 20,000 swine fed the contaminant and later (after 28 day withdrawal) sent to market
- 50,000 contaminated birds and 450 tons of contaminated feed disposed of
- contaminant spread to more than 100 farms in at least 8 states
- contaminant identified as lasalocid
- original source of lasalocid contaminant was lascadoil, a manufacturing bi-product intended for commercial use as a biofuel

Timeline:

- August 2014 - discovery of 50,000 dead turkeys
- September 11, 2014 - discovery that 20,000 hogs were also fed contaminated feed
- October, 2014 - contaminated hogs sent to market
- November 12 2014 – Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development held compliance conference with MI grease supplier. Consent Agreement signed
- January 21, 2015 - disclosure of incident during meeting of the Michigan Agriculture Commission

In response to a FOIA request The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development recently revealed that no food samples were tested to determine whether the contaminant also



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entered the human food chain in 2014 or 2015. This is despite participating in an extensive multi-agency investigation into the August 11th 2014 sudden death of 50,000 turkeys on a turkey & swine farm. Initial investigations by MDARD, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) determined that the deaths of the turkeys was due to an overdose of lasalocid, an animal drug approved preventing coccidiosis (a parasitic disease) for poultry, cattle & sheep. The drug was found in the feed at a rate 5 times higher than approved use, mandating that the farm dispose of the 50,000 dead turkeys as well as 450 tons of contaminated feed. The farm was cleared to again ship poultry for processing August 28th 2014.

The contaminated feed consumed at the farm was tested extensively, and on September 11th 2014 lasalocid was determined to be found in the swine feed from the same farm. Lasalocid is not approved for use with swine, and had not been added as a drug to the feed by the farm. The farm, which normally shipped 5k pigs weekly for processing, ceased shipping September 16th 2014 under an agreement to withdraw from the market for 28 days to reduce residue levels of lasalocid in the meat animals.

The lasalocid contamination was traced back to a Michigan grease processor, and the likely root cause was determined to be loads of soyoil containing lascadoil that were intended for commercial use (biofuels) and may have crossed over to the feed ingredient stream. Lascadoil is a bi-product of the pharmaceutical industry and strict requirements of that waste dictate it to be used only for bio-fuels. An apparent change-up in paperwork allowed it to be used in feed. It is unknown what consequences the grease processor faced, and a stop sale order & recall was placed on September 26th 2014.

The only public disclosure of this significant feed contamination incident occurred during the January 21, 2015 meeting of the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development, after any contaminated food products would have been purchased and consumed. Only one farm, Shur-Green Farms in Ohio, was reported as having issued a recall on October 23rd 2014, nearly a month after the grease processor was ordered to stop sale/recall. The names of the other farms that received the contaminated feed were not disclosed, nor was there an accounting of what actions were taken at those farms in regards to food safety.

It's currently unknown what impact this has had on public health. What is known is that no food samples from the farms known to receive contaminated feed and no food samples from hogs known to have consumed contaminated feed were tested for the contaminant.

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