

Spinach and other fruits and vegetables have been associated with an estimated 400 foodborne illness outbreaks in the past 15 years.

Salmonella, E. coli and Hepatitis A are all of concern



## **FDA warning on serious foodborne E.coli O157:H7 outbreak**

### **One death and multiple hospitalizations in several States**

**September 15, 2006**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is issuing an alert to consumers about an outbreak of E. coli O157:H7 in multiple states that may be associated with the consumption of produce. To date, preliminary epidemiological evidence suggests that bagged fresh spinach may be a possible cause of this outbreak. "Given the severity of this illness and the seriousness of the outbreak, FDA believes that a warning to consumers is needed. We are working closely with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state and local agencies to determine the cause and scope of the problem," said Dr. Robert Brackett, Director of FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN). E. coli

O157:H7 causes diarrhea, often with bloody stools. Although most healthy adults can recover completely within a week, some people can develop a form of kidney failure called Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS). HUS is most likely to occur in young children and the elderly. The condition can lead to serious kidney damage and even death. To date, 50 cases of illness have been reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, including 8 cases of HUS and one death. At this time, the investigation is ongoing and states that have reported illnesses to date include: Connecticut, Idaho, Indiana, Michigan, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah and Wisconsin.

Based on the current information, FDA advises that consumers not eat bagged fresh spinach at this time.