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## **CDC suspects blackberries as source of hepatitis A outbreak**

November 27, 2019

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and state and local partners, are investigating a multistate outbreak of hepatitis A illnesses potentially linked to fresh conventional (non-organic) blackberries from Fresh Thyme Farmers Market.

CDC has updated its case counts to 14 illnesses, with the most recent illness onset date on Nov. 15.

Based on the epidemiological information collected in the investigation thus far, ill patients reported consuming fresh conventional blackberries from Fresh Thyme Farmers Market stores in five states: Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska and Wisconsin.

However, traceback information to date shows that these berries came from a distribution center that ships fresh berries to Fresh Thyme Farmers Market stores in 11 states: Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. As this investigation continues, the FDA will work with our federal and state partners to obtain additional information during the traceback investigation and will update this advisory as more information becomes available.

The FDA is urging consumers to not eat any fresh conventional blackberries if purchased Sept. 9-30 from Fresh Thyme Farmers Market stores in the 11 states mentioned above.

"At this time, there is no reason to believe that any of the product was contaminated via handling in our stores," Fresh Thyme said in a statement. "In addition, the agencies are only concerned with product purchased between Sept. 9 and Sept. 30; product purchased or consumed outside of these dates are not subject to the investigation. We are working with these agencies to identify our

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suppliers and isolate the source of this contamination. Fresh Thyme takes the health and safety of our customers and our team members very seriously. Fresh Thyme Farmers Market has a stringent process for ensuring compliance to all local, state and federal health and hygiene regulations.

"Fresh Thyme is committed to the health and safety of our customers, and we will continue to work closely with these agencies to determine the source of the contamination," the company said in the statement.

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