

Beef warning issued

Education Commissioner Harold Reynolds, Jr. has notified school districts, child care providers and other agencies that receive federal commodities to stop serving ground beef that the United States Department of Agriculture withheld from distribution in September.

According to Reynolds, some of the ground beef the USDA stopped distributing found its way to Alaska in late October and early November. Approximately 43 agencies — school districts, child care centers and others — received 700 cases of the frozen ground beef. Each case weighed 55 pounds.

Reynolds said all who received the ground beef have been contacted by telephone. In addition, school districts have been contacted over the Department of Education's Electronic Mail System. Written communication will follow.

Dr. E.S. Rebeau, Deputy Commissioner for Health, Department of Health and Social Services, has alerted public health nurses across the state to assist in identifying the cases of ground beef.

The ground beef can be identified by one of two contract numbers, 33269 or 33009, and by an Establishment (Est.) Number 23, 135 or 5572. The numbers are clearly stamped on the cardboard boxes containing the product.

The Department of Education is currently compiling information about agencies that still have the ground beef on hand. The information should be available in about one week.

Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block on September 21 ordered an immediate halt to all distribution of ground beef processed by Cattle King, Denver, Colorado and Nebraska Beef Packers, Inc. Gering, Nebraska, all scheduled for use in the school food lunch program.

At that time the USDA noted in a news release that the halt in shipments "... was prompted by reports indicating the ground beef may have come from substandard cattle and may have been processed under less than sanitary conditions."

Here is a list of the school districts and other agencies that received shipments of the ground beef:

Annette Island, Bering Strait, Bethel BIA School, Bristol Bay, Chatham, Cordova City, Covenant High School (Unalakleet), Craig, Dillingham, Delta Greely;

Fairbanks Youth Facility, Fairbanks North Star Borough, Galena City, Hoonah City, Hydaburg City, Iditarod Area, Kake, Kenai Peninsula Borough, Ketchikan Gateway Borough;

King Cove, Kuspuk, Lake and Peninsula, Lower Kuskokwim, Matanuska-Susitna Borough, McLaughlin Youth Center, Nome, Nome Youth Facility;

North Slope Borough, Northwest Arctic, Southwest Region, St. Mary's, St. Mary's Mission;

Valdez, Yakutat, Yukon Flats, Unalaska City, Hillcrest Day Care Center (Anchorage);

Associated Village Council Presidents Headstart (Bethel), St. Ann's Day Care Center (Juneau), Kotzebue Day, Nome Child Care, Petersburg Day Care, Learning Tree Day Care Center (Petersburg).