



SERVICE AND MANAGEMENT OF RETURNABLE CONTAINERS

MEDIA NOTE:

Savoy spinach is a type of spinach, it is not a brand name

Labeling lets consumers know where curly leaf spinach is grown

For Immediate Release

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(Green Bay, WI) – As spinach begins to return to the shelves of grocery stores throughout the country, consumers will have an easier time identifying curly leaf spinach, which is an alternative to the flat leaf spinach, the probable source for an e-coli outbreak. “Curly leaf spinach, which is also known as Savoy spinach, offers great taste and an option for those who love spinach,” said Chan Pusey, owner of Avon Heights Inc., in Avondale, Pennsylvania. “Curly leaf spinach is grown in a number of locations across the country depending on the time of year and is available throughout the year.”

Michael Fechter, vice president of sales for Tosca Ltd., which supplies containers to the curly leaf spinach industry, says it’s important for the industry to be sure that wholesalers, retailers and consumers know its product is grown in the near west, southeast and northeast United States. “We want people to know it’s OK to eat spinach again.”

Curly leaf spinach is used by restaurants throughout the U.S., but many consumers are not aware of it. “The challenge is to make sure people understand that there is a choice,” Fechter said. “The growers of Savoy, or curly leaf spinach, have been working with processors and re-packers to develop labeling that clearly identifies the origin of the product.” All of the re-packers will include a point of origin on the spinach packaging near the date code. Examples of the product or origin labels include “Product of Colorado” or “Product of East Coast.”

In addition to being grown outside of California, Savoy/curly leaf spinach is also handled differently than the flat leaf spinach that was found to contain e-coli, spurring the ban on all spinach sales. Once harvested, Savoy spinach is placed in sophisticated, ice-packed, sanitized containers designed specifically to handle curly leaf spinach as it is sent to re-packers in the produce industry.

“Safety and nutrition are important to all of us in the food industry,” said Jennifer Verdelli, director of sales for Verdelli Farms of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. “We understand that people may be hesitant to resume buying spinach, so we are doing everything we can to educate the public about the issue and about the fact it is OK to eat our spinach.”

Brennan Starkey, of Starkey Farms in Galena, Maryland says growers and re-packers of Savoy spinach were seriously impacted by the spinach ban, so he’s excited that curly leaf spinach is returning to grocery store shelves. “Consumers should understand that they do have options when it comes to the type of spinach they purchase,” Starkey said. “With the new origin labeling on the spinach packaging, consumers will also be able to clearly determine where the curly leaf spinach was grown.”

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