

FDA clears Romaine out of non-affected growing regions

The recent moratorium on Romaine Lettuce sales was set to be eased November 26th by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration, issuing and communicating new guidelines for the industry following an outbreak of *E. coli* that has been attributed to Romaine Lettuce.

The FDA has deemed product safe that was harvested on or after November 23rd from areas outside Central and Northern California. The permitted areas include farms we pull from on a regular basis and as we work to reengage the supply chain and get inventory levels back to normal, we finally see light at the end of the tunnel. To be compliant with the new guidelines, packages of Romaine Lettuce must include information about the date of harvest and the growing region.

All of this means, we can begin ordering and loading Romaine Lettuce and product containing Romaine Lettuce once the growers/shippers have the proper labeling to comply with the latest FDA guidelines. Given the time and distance to travel, we do not expect to receive any of the newly labeled product in house until early next week. Until then, we will continue our effort to offer Iceberg Lettuce and Salad Mix without Romaine as an alternative.

To date, there have been 43 confirmed illnesses in 12 states with 16 people hospitalized and no deaths. 22 of those experiencing symptoms, reported having eaten Romaine Lettuce in the days leading up to the onset of their illness. Luckily, there have been no reported infections out of the Carolina's. Not to worry – our warehouse is currently Romaine free and no product in our inventory is dangerous!