



Senator the Hon Fiona Nash
Assistant Minister for Health
Senator for New South Wales
Deputy Leader of the Nationals in the Senate

MEDIA RELEASE

18 February 2015

Action on Hepatitis A

Assistant Minister for Health Fiona Nash has moved to outline actions being taken following the importation and distribution of berries which appear to have carried Hepatitis A.

Consumption of Nanna's brand frozen mixed berries has been linked to the 13 cases of Hepatitis A in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and WA as of this afternoon.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) is coordinating the recall of these products, which is being managed by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services. The parent company, Patties, has issued a nationwide voluntary recall on Friday 13 February and subsequent precautionary recall on Sunday of Creative Gourmet Mixed Berries 300g and 500g packs. On Monday they included Nanna's brand frozen raspberries 1 kg, which are not associated with illness, but are packed in the same factory.

The Minister said other actions included:

- The Department of Health had set up the National Incident Room up in Canberra to deal with the issue and will remain active until this issue is resolved.
- The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee, consisting of all State and Territory Chief Health Officers and chaired by the Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer, met yesterday to coordinate jurisdictional public responses.
- The OzFoodNet and the Communicable Diseases Network of Australia are conducting an investigation into the issue.
- The National Food Safety Network, chaired by FSANZ met yesterday and is seeking further information from Chinese food authorities.
- The National Blood Authority and the Australian Red Cross Blood Service (ARCBS) are monitoring the situation closely and continue to take steps to protect the blood supply from the virus.
- The Department of Agriculture today formally requested a review of the risk advice from FSANZ about frozen berries, and will consider the outcomes from the incident investigations conducted by the state and territory food authorities.

“Once FSANZ reports back to us with the information it is seeking from Chinese food

authorities, we will be able to assess whether further steps need to be taken.

“If, upon consideration of all available information, the circumstances require a review of current arrangements or improvements to the system, we will act on this.

“I remind consumers that Australian berry growers are not part of the current issue involving imported produce. Australians can continue to eat our excellent Australian berries with no concerns.”

Further information can be found on the Department of Health website at health.gov.au . Anyone who has eaten the berries and feels ill should contact their GP.

Media contact:

Minister Nash – Les White 0409 805 122 les.white@health.gov.au

Department of Health – Kay McNiece 0412 132 585 kay.mcneice@health.gov.au

FSANZ – 0401 714 265 media@foodstandards.gov.au