



## Recall of implicated rockmelon from Australia

5 March 2018: The Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) had earlier notified the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) of a recall in Australia of whole rockmelons (cantaloupe), which have been linked to an outbreak of human listeriosis in Australia. AVA has since worked with importers to remove the remaining unsold rockmelons from the implicated consignments. The recall has been completed. There has been no further import of rockmelons from the affected grower since, and import has been suspended.

2 Two consignments of rockmelons from the implicated source were imported and were available for sale from 12 February to 2 March. The rockmelons originated from a specific grower in New South Wales, Australia in February. The rockmelons from these consignments were being sold at Sheng Siong supermarket outlets and wet markets. Upon AVA's notification, Sheng Siong voluntarily removed the implicated rockmelons.

3 All rockmelons that are currently available for sale are not implicated in the recall. To ensure food safety, AVA has taken samples of locally sold rockmelons from other sources for food safety tests, including testing for listeria.

4 AVA is following up with FSANZ for updates on the case.

5 Consumers who suspect that they have purchased the implicated rockmelons within the affected time period are advised not to consume it. Those who do not feel well after consumption should seek medical attention.

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Listeria

6 Listeriosis is a bacterial infection caused by *Listeria monocytogenes*. The bacteria is found in the environment, such as soil, water, effluents and the faeces of humans and animals. Food items, which could be contaminated by the bacteria include raw or ready-to-eat foods, such as raw (unpasteurised) milk or raw meat and their products, seafood, and fresh produce including fruits and vegetables.

7 The incubation period of Listeria ranges from 3 to 70 days (typically 1 – 4 weeks). A person with mild listeriosis usually has fever and muscle aches, preceded by diarrhoea or other gastrointestinal symptoms. Pregnant women, the elderly or individuals with a weakened immune system, i.e. people in immuno-compromised status due to AIDS, leukaemia, cancer, solid-organ transplant and steroid therapy, are at highest risk of serious disease **which could include brain and heart infections or complications** in the foetus/newborn.

8 Listeriosis is treatable with antibiotics if diagnosed early. The key to control lies in safe handling, cooking and consumption of food. As rock melons are typically eaten raw, thorough washing of the raw fruits is advisable before consumption. Consumers should seek medical attention as early as possible if symptoms appear within 70 days after consuming Australian rock melon.

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