







May 31, 2001

Consumer & Retailer Warning!!! The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a warning to retailers to beware of Viva brand melons imported from Mexico by Shipley Sales Service of Nogales, Arizona. Reports of illnesses in Arizona, California, Connecticut, Georgia, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, Nevada, New York, Oregon, Tennessee and Washington has linked the Mexican melons to an outbreak of foodborne *Salmonella poona*. In addition, FDA and the state of California have issued the following guidelines for handling summer fruit safely:

-  Check that produce is not bruised and to be sure that fresh cut produce is refrigerated.
-  Clean all fresh fruit in cool tap water immediately before eating. Use a produce brush on firm fruits and cut away any bruised or damaged spots.
-  Wash hands and surfaces often with soapy warm water and immediately before and after handling fresh fruit, raw meats and seafood. Cutting boards, utensils and countertops can be sanitized after use with a one quart water and one teaspoon chlorine solution.
-  Refrigerate produce promptly after purchase (excluding fresh whole produce such as bananas or potatoes which do not need refrigeration).
-  Avoid cross contamination. Use clean, separate utensils and cutting boards for fresh produce, raw meats, and seafood and do not consume ice that has been used to store perishable, raw or fresh foods.
-  Remember that fresh cut fruit and perishables need to travel and be stored in coolers with ice or gel packs.