

### **Part 1 – News analysis**

The following three articles relate to the same issue and were published roughly within the same time period. Please read the articles and, in a separate document, write a brief summary focusing on the differences in tone, bias, and information included or omitted in each article. The summary should be no longer than you feel is appropriate. Also, based on what you have read, please provide some analysis and recommendations regarding what Taco Bell can do to improve the tone of the news coverage and to address communications challenges it faces in the current climate.

#### **E. coli outbreak spread to six US states, CDC says**

By Maggie Fox, Health and Science Editor

7 December 2006

[Reuters News](#)

WASHINGTON, Dec 7 (Reuters) - An outbreak of E. coli infection that has sickened 58 people, some seriously, may still be spreading and its source has not yet been found, a U.S. federal health expert said on Thursday.

DNA fingerprints of the bacteria taken from patients have started entering a database run by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and will be analyzed to see if they are all from the same source, said Dr. Robert Pauxe, deputy director of the CDC's Division of Foodborne, Bacterial and Mycotic Disease.

So far, 58 cases have been officially reported to the CDC from six states -- New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Utah and Delaware, the agency said.

Most have been traced to **Taco Bell** restaurants.

"The risk to the public is considered ongoing and we expect additional cases to be identified in the coming days," the CDC said in a statement on its Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov>.

"There is no question that we are seeing more of these rather large outbreaks, and particularly ones that are related to produce," Pauxe said in a telephone interview.

In September, E. coli traced to farmed spinach from California's Salinas Valley killed three people and infected more than 200 in 26 states. In November, restaurant tomatoes contaminated with another bacteria, Salmonella, made 183 people sick in 21 U.S. states and Canada.

But Pauxe said -- and other federal food safety experts agree -- that reports of foodborne diseases in the United States have been declining in the past 10 years.

Food poisoning is very common.

The CDC estimates that there are 76 million cases of foodborne disease in the United States each year and that 5,000 people die from such infections. E. coli, notably the virulent O157 strain, infects 73,000 people a year and kills 60.

The latest outbreak has sent 48 people to the hospital, according to the CDC and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Seven have a serious kind of kidney failure called hemolytic uremic syndrome.

#### FOCUS ON GREEN ONIONS

The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services asked all Taco Bells in the state to throw away food from one supplier, McLane Foodservice, Inc. of Burlington, New Jersey, to discard all current food supplies and to clean and sanitize their facilities.

**Taco Bell Corp.**, a unit of Yum Brands. Inc. , sent samples of green onions to an independent lab and said at least three samples appeared to be contaminated with E. coli.

The company had closed eight restaurants on Long Island and one in New Jersey following the E.coli outbreak, but said on Tuesday that those were set to reopen.

Paxe said it was unusual to have an outbreak like this in December. E. coli outbreaks are more common in the late summer and autumn, he said.

Suppliers said green onions used this time of year are often imported from Mexico. But the FDA said it was looking at several possible culprits.

"FDA is obtaining samples of all non-meat items served in the restaurants that could carry the pathogen. These include cilantro, cheddar cheese, blended cheese, green onions, yellow onions, tomatoes and lettuce. The samples will be tested at FDA laboratories. The states involved are testing as well," the agency said in a statement.

One member of Congress, Connecticut Democratic Rep. Rosa DeLauro, said faulty food safety regulations were at fault. The FDA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture are both responsible for food safety.

Paxe noted that food production cannot be sterile.

"Animals are raised with other animals. And plants are, except for a very few that are raised in a greenhouse, they are raised outdoors also," he said.

"I think our food supply is safer than it was 100 years ago. I think it could be safer yet."

**E. coli believed found in city; Taco Bell closed all 15 of its Phila. sites pending testing. Green onions were a prime suspect.**

7 December 2006

[The Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

All 15 Taco Bell restaurants in Philadelphia shut down yesterday afternoon, as the E. coli outbreak that has sickened at least four dozen people in New Jersey, New York and Montgomery County was believed to have been also found at a city Taco Bell. The company voluntarily shut the city eateries pending inspections and food-sample testing by the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, department spokesman Jeff Moran said.

Green onions shipped to Taco Bell restaurants through a Burlington City warehouse are the leading suspect in the search for the source of E. coli contamination, health officials said.

However, laboratory tests that would conclusively link the illnesses to the same E. coli strain will not be completed until early next week.

As a precaution, Taco Bell yesterday removed green onions from all of its 5,800 restaurants nationwide because preliminary tests showed three samples of green onions were contaminated with a virulent strain of E. coli.

The company's nine restaurants in Montgomery County were closed yesterday for cleaning and replacement of food supplies, county Health Department spokeswoman Harriet Morton said.

She added that three of four residents with confirmed E. coli infections ate at the Gilbertsville Taco Bell in western Montgomery County.

The fourth Montgomery County resident was not interviewed until yesterday, when it became clear that he ate at a Taco Bell in Philadelphia near the suburban border. In New Jersey, tests confirmed that E. coli infected the 11-year-old girl who became ill after eating at the Cherry Hill Mall Taco Bell on Nov. 22, Camden County health officials said. She was hospitalized for almost a week but went home Dec. 2. Camden County is not closing its nine Taco Bells but is requiring cleaning, food replacement, and testing of food workers' stool samples for E. coli.

In North Jersey, 29 cases of E. coli infection have been confirmed and 13 probable cases are being tested, state Health Department spokesman Tom Slater said. He said Taco Bell "has been very cooperative" and was considering additional precautionary measures recommended by the state. These would include cleaning and resupplying all Taco Bells in New Jersey that receive food from McLane Foodservice Inc. of Burlington, and also testing workers.

McLane is based in Texas. Its Burlington plant receives already-packaged produce, then delivers the packages to Taco Bell restaurants in the region.

Federal health investigators planned to test five produce items - green onions, regular onions, cilantro, tomatoes and lettuce - from the Burlington plant, said Bart McKay, a lawyer for the company.

Most strains of *E. coli* are harmless, but a strain that lives in the intestines of healthy cattle, deer and sheep produces a powerful toxin that can cause severe illness in humans. Bacteria in the animals' feces may come in contact with food in various ways. Meat can be contaminated during slaughter, milk can be tainted if the bacteria are on cows' udders or milking equipment, and produce can be exposed through water contaminated with animal waste.

If hand-washing is inadequate, *E. coli* can also be spread from an infected person's stool to another person who touches it - say, while changing a sick child's diaper. Infection often leads to abdominal cramps, bloody diarrhea, and, occasionally, hemolytic uremic syndrome, which can cause life-threatening kidney failure.

News of the outbreak cooled appetites for south-of-the-border fast food.

During the busy noontime rush at the Cherry Hill Mall food court, holiday shoppers stood in long lines for pizza, sushi, Philly-style cheesesteaks - but not soft tacos. Only three customers walked up over a 30-minute period.

One, Angel Hernandez of Pennsauken, had not heard the news about the possibly dangerous green onions. He was surprised but not deterred.

"I eat here all the time," Hernandez said, paying for his soft-taco combo. "I've never had a problem."

Joe McCarron of Coatesville heard about the outbreak but didn't know all nine Taco Bells in Montgomery County were closed.

"I thought it was one specific place, not the whole enchilada, so to speak," he quipped. After learning the extent of the problem, he drove off to get lunch at Chick-Fil-A.

#### *E. Coli* Outbreaks in Recent Years

September 2006: Three people died and more than 200 fell ill from an *E. coli* outbreak that was traced to packaged, fresh spinach grown in California.

2004-2005: *E. coli* outbreaks that were traced to petting zoos at a North Carolina agricultural fair and a Florida festival sickened 163 people, including 22 cases of hemolytic uremic syndrome. No one died in the outbreaks.

July 2002: Twenty-eight people in six states fell ill from *E. coli* infection traced to contaminated ground beef distributed by the ConAgra Beef Co. Seven people developed hemolytic uremic syndrome.

October 2000: At least 15 people, and probably 36 others, were infected with E. coli at Merrymead Farm's petting zoo in Montgomery County. Eight patients developed hemolytic uremic syndrome. One child, Erin Jacobs of Jeffersonville, had to have a kidney transplant.

1993: Hundreds of people got sick and four children died after eating undercooked hamburgers contaminated with E. coli at Jack in the Box restaurants in the Seattle area and other parts of the Pacific Northwest. The beef was traced to one of the chain's suppliers.

A Toxic Strain

Infection from O157:H7, a particularly toxic strain of Escherichia coli bacterium that lives harmlessly in healthy cattle, strikes about 73,000 Americans a year and kills about 60.

Transmission: Undercooked, contaminated ground beef is the most frequent source. Raw vegetables and unpasteurized milk and juice can also carry it. Bacteria can be passed through human contact or contaminated water.

Symptoms: Severe, bloody diarrhea and abdominal cramps typically begin 3 or 4 days after exposure.

Treatment: Most people recover in 5 to 10 days without medication. Kidney dialysis may be required in life-threatening cases.

Prevention: Cook ground beef thoroughly. Wash raw vegetables. Drink milk, juice or cider only if it is pasteurized. Make sure people with diarrhea wash their hands thoroughly.

### **US consumers avoid Taco Bell, not fast-food**

By Arathi Sivaraman and Nichola Groom

11 December 2006

[Reuters News](#)

NEW YORK/LOS ANGELES, Dec 11 (Reuters) - Lines at Taco Bell restaurants were short at a few locations visited on Monday as the chain dealt with an E.coli outbreak, but many customers chose other Yum Brands outlets rather than abandon the fast food company altogether.

An E.coli outbreak linked to the Mexican-style chain has sickened dozens of people in states. U.S. health officials said on Monday they were not ready to declare the outbreak over, although the chain said on Saturday that its restaurants are bacteria free. A spokesman for Taco Bell, a unit of Yum Brands Inc. , would not comment on the impact the E.coli outbreak is having on sales, but visits to several Taco Bell restaurants

on Monday revealed that many consumers are shying away from the chain's signature tacos and burritos.

"Three weeks ago I came here and ate Taco Bell stuff and had a stomach upset," said high school student Ninoska Arias at a Manhattan restaurant that houses both a Taco Bell and a KFC.

Arias added that a friend who was with her at the time suffered an upset stomach too. "No more Taco Bell for us."

But regulars spooked enough by the E.coli scare to steer clear of Taco Bell seemed happy to eat at KFC and Pizza Hut outlets that share a kitchen with Taco Bell so long as they did not have to eat that food. Arias, for instance, chose KFC.

Still, the Manhattan restaurant was less busy than usual, said another customer who chose KFC food over Taco Bell.

"Normally, when I come here there is a line of about 10 people waiting to order," said elevator installer Hector Rodriguez. "This week, I have just walked up and ordered. There is no line."

Officials from Wendy's International Inc. and Chipotle Mexican Grill Inc. said they had seen no impact on their business from the E.coli outbreak.

A fall-off in sales at Taco Bell has been expected since the chain first revealed that some customers in the U.S. Northeast fell ill after eating there.

Wachovia analyst Jeff Omohundro on Friday said he expects Yum's same-store sales for the fourth and first quarters to fall more than he had previously forecast. He also lowered his rating on the company's stock.

He added, however, that the impact was expected to be short-term, a sentiment echoed by research firm NPD Group.

"It's going to be a short-term thing," Harry Balzer of NPD said in an interview. "It sounds like there is a lot more of these issues being raised these days, but Americans' concern about food safety has not shifted all that much."

In downtown Los Angeles, a customer at a Taco Bell-Pizza Hut combination restaurant said she only felt comfortable ordering pizza and a soft drink.

"I thought it was Pizza Hut when I walked in the front door," said the woman, who declined to give her name. "I would not order a taco or anything from Taco Bell."

A standalone Taco Bell restaurant in Jersey City, New Jersey was closed on Monday and an employee said the outlet was still waiting for fresh food supplies after being sanitized.

That closure has been a boon to customer traffic at the Burger King next door, the manager of that restaurant told Reuters. She declined to give her name.

## **Part 2 – Press Release**

For this section of the test, please enable the “Track Changes” feature in Microsoft word. It can be found under the “Tools” menu.

Following is a rough draft of a press release. Please read the release and fix any typos or errors you can find. Please also make changes that you think make the release clearer or improve flow.

### **For Immediate Release:**

November 2006

## **Coalition for Patent Fairness Welcomes Supreme Court Review of KSR**

**WASHINGTON** – The supreme court today heard arguments in KSR International vs.. Teleflex in another proactive step aimed at correcting imbalances in in the patent litigation system. Inventors, consumers and businesses large and small will benefit from bright legal lines drawn by the court.

“The Court’s willingness to hear arguments on KSR, when taken into consideration with the court’s action in the eBay case earlier this year, clearly demonstrates there desire to shape up the patent litigation system,” said Mark Isakowitz, Spokesman for the Coalition for Patent Fairness. “Reforming the patent system is a two sided coin that includes addressing both excessive patent litigation and degrading patent quality. The Justice’s clarification of what qualifies as an obvious patents will result in higher quality patents and less frivolous litigation.”

U.S. Solicitor General, independent law professors, and industry leader’s from part of a broad spectrum of supporters sided with KSR International also including the United States Patent and Trademark Office’s own lead attorney.

“The KSR case is just one example of ways in which the judicial process has strayed from congressional intent. While we welcome the supreme court’s efforts on patent reform, the wider community of patent users looks forward to congressional action to reduce excessive patient litigation.”

### **About the Coalition for Patent Fairness**

The Coalition for Patent Fairness is a growing group of companies and trade associations committed to common-sense reforms to the patent-system an patent litigation.

Representing a broad range of companies and trade associations in the technology, financial services, energy, manufacturing and media industries, the Coalitions members include Apple, Autodesk, Business Software Alliance, Cisco Systems, Comcast, Computer & Communications Industry Association, Dell, Electrolux, Financial Services Roundtable, Hewlett-Packard, Information Technology Industry Council, Intel, Intuit, Micron Technology, Microsoft, Oracle, TechNet, Time Warner, and Visa.

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