



GREENFIELD, Mass. (Feb.16, 2009) – A handful of organic peanut butter products were among those produced in two Peanut Corporation of America (PCA) processing and shelling facilities that have been implicated in the recent *Salmonella* scare. As a result, a small number of organic products have been included in the resulting broad recall of institutional peanut butter, peanut butter paste and peanut products.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released a statement Jan. 18 tracing a source of *Salmonella* Typhimurium contamination to a plant owned by PCA in Blakely, GA, as the likely source of the contaminated peanut butter. A broad recall was issued for all products produced there since Jan. 1, 2007. In addition, a full recall has been announced for all peanuts and peanut products produced at PCA's shelling and grinding facility in Plainview Texas, since its opening in March 2005. This has resulted in the largest food-safety recall in U.S. history. To see the latest list, see

[http://www.peanutcorp.com/pdf/PCA Expanded Product Recall 1\\_18\\_09.pdf](http://www.peanutcorp.com/pdf/PCA_Expanded_Product_Recall_1_18_09.pdf).

“OTA regrets this news. The organic industry takes these food safety alerts seriously and is concerned for those affected,” said Christine Bushway, OTA’s Executive Director. She added, “This, however, is not an organic issue, but rather one that is food industry-wide. PCA’s track record of sub-par food safety controls and apparent woeful disregard for the public health is tragic.”

The way organic foods are grown and processed is among the most closely monitored food system in the world. Organic foods must meet or exceed all federal organic regulations as well as all applicable food safety regulations. The organic system includes certification by U.S.D.A. accredited agents, annual onsite audits of farms and processing facilities by independent inspectors, and transparent paper trail for the chain of custody.

U.S. regulations require that organic food and beverage products be grown according to strict standards that prohibit the use of genetically engineered seeds and growth hormones, sewage sludge, and irradiation, and processed in accordance with handling requirements that set practice standards for the prevention of contact with prohibited substances and commingling with nonorganic products. No matter where they were grown, all organic food and beverage products sold in the United States must meet U.S. national organic standards as well as all U.S. food safety regulations.

PCA’s plant violations of FDA’s food safety standards are grounds for non-compliance with the organic standards under sections governing organic handling requirements in the National Organic Program (NOP) regulation. The organic industry supports the swift and decisive moves by state and federal regulators and certifying agencies to enforce that the U.S. organic processing system is incompatible with the operational negligence revealed through the investigation of contaminated peanut products originating at PCA.

OTA urges consumers to follow FDA’s guidance on *Salmonella* outbreaks and specific company recalls. Information can be found at FDA’s web site:

<http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/salmonellatyph.html#consumers>.