



# Do the Spring Ice Cream Recalls Identify Potential Operational Weakness in Dairy Plants? - June 2015

The Spring of 2015 will be remembered in the dairy industry in some ways like September 11th, 2001, is remembered by many in the USA. Our innocence and confidence were both assaulted by the Blue Bell and shortly thereafter, the Jeni's Splendid Ice Cream recalls. At the late April's National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments (NCIMS), the recall subject was the first topic of discussion, whether it was in a group of industry, state dairy regulators, FDA headquarters or Regional Milk Specialists or a mixed group of some or all these parts of the US dairy industry. It was clear that both state and FDA regulators intended to increase their sampling of ice cream products for the near future.

For those of us in the dairy ingredient industry, Listeria is not usually our main biological concern; Salmonella is and in some ways, is more difficult to remove from the dairy plant environment. Based on news media reports and the FDA Form 483 Inspectional reports for two of the Blue Bell plants and the Jeni's Splendid Ice Cream plant, it appears that both plants may have had credible written operational programs. However, in one case, apparent failures in equipment and facility cleaning and sanitizing tasks as well as employee food safety training may have contributed to the Listeria problem. In another case, FDA identified a number of environmental, operational and testing shortcomings that resulted in an inadequate response to the detection of Listeria and repeated higher levels of coliforms in finished products.

In order to arrive at "Lessons Learned" that all dairy plant can benefit from, [click here to view a cataloging of the various FDA observations and a short comment on how to address or avoid the problem.](#)

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