

2/27/2001

TO:            Brian Gaffney            Joby Warrick  
                 Producer                   Reporter  
                 Dateline NBC            Washington Post

FROM:        Mark Klein  
                 Director of Communications  
                 Excel Corporation

Thank you for contacting us for comment about last summer's outbreak of E. coli O157:H7 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The Milwaukee outbreak was unfortunate. We will follow our policy of not commenting on matters that are in litigation.

I would like to share with you some basic information regarding Excel's food safety programs.

Our customers acknowledge Excel as a leader in food safety. As part of our food safety efforts, Excel is continuously seeking ways to eliminate or reduce food hazards. For the benefits of those efforts to reach the consumer, it is essential for food preparers to follow safe handling practices.

Some of our accomplishments include:

- Implementation of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) in all plants by 1991, seven years before the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) began requiring plants to have HACCP in place. USDA research has shown that HACCP has improved food safety over the years.
- Establishing of microbiological laboratories in all of our plants by 1990. The scientific data from our testing helps us monitor the effectiveness of our food safety programs.
- Co-development of steam pasteurization, which is technology that greatly enhances the safety of beef products. We have the technology in place at all of our beef plants. We also gave our competitors access to this important new technology by waiving our co-patent rights.
- The use of steam vacuums and anti-microbial washes to further enhance food safety.

Excel is committed to providing safe food for people. We use only those production, storage, and transportation facilities that ensure the safety of our products. We choose our suppliers for their ability to meet our requirements for safe raw materials and ingredients. We assist our external customers in developing solutions in the area of food safety. Management provides the resources necessary for each and every employee to carry out their individual responsibilities to provide safe food.

It is our hope that the Milwaukee incident can be resolved fairly and expeditiously.