

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Campylobacter Outbreak in Michigan Linked to Consumption of Raw Milk Products

LANSING - The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) is issuing a public health alert regarding illness from Campylobacter infections among people who have reported consuming raw milk products obtained from the Family Farms Cooperative in Vandalia, Michigan.

Family Farms Cooperative operates a cow share program where members own part of a cow and in return receive raw dairy products. The milk for the Family Farm Cooperative cow share program comes from a dairy farm in Indiana. The plastic containers of raw milk have the following information on a green and white cap: "FOREST GROVE DAIRY, MIDDLEBURY, INDIANA; RAW COW'S MILK, WARNING-NOT PASTEURIZED, 128 FL OZ." Cowshare programs are not inspected or regulated under Michigan law. These products are not available at retail stores.

A total of eight confirmed Campylobacter cases have been reported in Macomb, Washtenaw, and Wayne counties. No hospitalizations have been reported to date. Ages of the ill range from 2 to 51 years old and the majority are young children under four years old with onset of illness beginning in early March. The outbreak investigation is ongoing with efforts to determine how widely these unregulated products are being distributed.

"Raw or unpasteurized milk and dairy products may carry many types of disease-causing germs such as Campylobacter, Salmonella and E. Coli," said Dr. Gregory Holzman, chief medical executive for MDCH. "People need to be aware that raw milk and raw dairy products have not been heat treated or pasteurized to kill germs."

Campylobacter is a bacterial illness causing diarrhea (often bloody), fever, and abdominal cramps 2–5 days after exposure. Illness may persist for 1–2 weeks. Some people require treatment. The elderly, infants, and those with weak immune systems are more likely to have a severe or enduring illness. Persons who are ill with these symptoms and have consumed raw milk recently should consult with their medical provider and ask about being tested for Campylobacter infection. Campylobacter illness is a reportable communicable disease in Michigan.

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