



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Scott Harris, M.D., M.P.H.
State Health Officer



March 19, 2019

Dear Consumer,

Re: Brucellosis *RB51* Potential Exposure

You or your customers may have been exposed to a potentially fatal strain of a bacteria in raw milk products from Miller's Biodiversity Farm. The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH), in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Pennsylvania Department of Health, is investigating *Brucella* RB51 exposures linked to raw, or unpasteurized, milk consumption from Miller's Biodiversity Farm in Quarryville, Pennsylvania. This particular strain of *Brucella* is resistant to the antibiotics typically used to treat symptoms and may be difficult to diagnose because of limited testing options. If you have purchased unpasteurized dairy products from this farm, please immediately discard any leftovers.

Brucellosis (*Brucella* infection) is a bacterial infection caused from contact with infected animals or infected animal products contaminated with the bacteria. Although there are increased risks for persons who work in slaughterhouses, meatpacking facilities, or laboratories, the most common way to be infected is by eating or drinking raw or unpasteurized dairy products.

Symptoms of *Brucella* infection may include fever, sweats, loss of appetite, fatigue, headache, muscle/joint pain, and miscarriage in pregnant women. Symptoms can begin anywhere from five days to six months after exposure, and some may present for prolonged periods of time or never go away.

To minimize exposure risks and prevent infection, ADPH advises only consuming dairy products that have been pasteurized. If you are not sure that the dairy product is pasteurized, do not consume it. If you are at risk for exposure, either occupationally or through leisure activities such as hunting, you should protect yourself by wearing rubber gloves, goggles, gowns, or aprons.

If you have consumed raw or unpasteurized dairy products and experience any of the associated symptoms, you should contact your local healthcare provider to be properly diagnosed. Depending on severity of illness, treatment may take a few weeks to several months. Death is rare, but severity of illness may vary.

Please help ADPH investigate exposures by completing a survey: <https://is.gd/brucellosiscontacts>.

Sincerely,

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