

NO NAME BRAND OR WHO'S ON FIRST?

James Fischer _____

NEWS RELEASE:

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency detected nitrofurans in honey packaged for consumer sale, and ordered a recall of Honey sold by the Loblaws company under the trade name "No Name Brand" Honey.

The affected lot numbers are 220EQ and 248EQ...

Ring, Ring, Ring...

A: Good morning, CANADUH, how may I help you?

Q: Did I dial correctly? Did you say "CanaDUH"? Shouldn't you say "Canada"?

A: "CANADUH" is the "Canadian Agency Notifying All on Demonstrated Unsafe Health." How may I help you?

Q: I'm calling about the contaminated honey that I read about in the newspaper.

A: Yes, I can assist you with that.

Q: Which honey is contaminated with Nitrofurans?

A: No Name Brand.

Q: No honey is contaminated?

A: No, honey IS contaminated!!!

Q: Did I hear you just say that no honey is contaminated?

A: Honey IS contaminated. That's why we ordered a recall.

Q: OK, you ordered a recall of what brand?

A: No Name Brand.

Q: So you didn't recall any brand of honey?

A: No, we DID recall a brand of honey!

Q: So which brand of honey is contaminated?

A: No Name Brand.

Q: So, no name brand of honey is contaminated?

A: Yes, exactly.

Q: So only honey sold by local beekeepers, without a name brand is contaminated?

A: Absolutely none of the honey sold by local beekeepers is contaminated.

Q: But then IS any honey actually contaminated?

A: Yes.

Q: And a specific name brand of honey is contaminated?

A: Yes.

Q: But the brand has no name?

A: No, the brand IS "No Name".

Q: How can a big company sell honey with no name brand?

A: It is a major name brand.

Q: Then are you refusing to divulge the name brand?

A: No, the name brand is "No Name Brand".

Q: So, is the label, like blank or something?

A: No, the label says "No Name Brand" on the label.

Q: Now wait just a second! I go to the store, OK?

A: Sure.

Q: And I want to buy some honey, OK?

A: That's a fine idea. Honey is good.

Q: But I don't want any of those Nitrofurans, OK?

A: Understandable.

Q: So I walk up to the shelf, and I see a jar of honey with no name brand. That's the one to avoid, right?

A: That's the one.

Q: So as long as I buy honey with a name brand, I'm not going to get any Nitrofurans in my honey.

A: No, if you buy honey with the name brand "No Name Brand," there might be Nitrofurans in that honey.

Q: Never mind. Just forget about the names, OK?

A: But you called and asked...

Q: Just drop it, please?

A: Very well, sir.

Q: What is the health risk posed by Nitrofurans in honey if I have already eaten some?

A: Almost none. The amount of nitrofurans in the honey are uniformly low and pose a low risk.

Q: Can I get a disease?

A: It is a potential carcinogen.

Q: You mean it might make me commit sins in my car?

A: No, carcinogens are things that can cause cancer.

Q: But why would these Nitrofurans get in honey?

A: Perhaps because it is an antimicrobial drug.

Q: But I read that honey is one of the oldest antimicrobial substances known to man! Why would anyone need to use an antimicrobial drug when they had honey around?

A: We are still researching that.

Q: So, it is a potential carcinogen, but it poses a low risk.

A: Exactly.

Q: But if it is such a low risk, then why the recall?

A: To protect the public.

Q: AGAINST WHAT?

A: Against the risk.

Q: Against the "low" risk?

A: But it is a risk. The public is advised whenever there is a health concern.

Q: Uh, do you know how MUCH honey is contaminated?

A: Only a few lots.

Q: Well, is it a few jars, or a lot?

A: It's not much, really.

Q: Then why did you say "lots"?

A: Because lots are contaminated.

Q: You mean "a lot IS contaminated".

A: No, TWO lots are contaminated!

Q: My head hurts. Let's move on, shall we?

A: Of course, sir.

Q: Now, the contaminated honey is imported, right?

A: Correct.

Q: So if I buy honey that says "Canada" on the label, then I won't get Nitrofurans in my honey, right?

A: No, I'm afraid that's not correct.

Q: Huh?

A: If you buy honey labeled "Canada No. 1", it most likely is blended with honey from other countries.

Q: How can anyone get away with calling honey from other countries "Canada No. 1"?

A: Well, it is like the "USDA Grade A" label in that country just to the South of us. It is an assurance that the honey meets certain quality standards.

Q: But shouldn't "quality" at least imply uncontaminated honey?

A: We're trying, sir.

Q: Yes, you're very trying.

A: Thank you, sir... I think.

Q: But wait a moment – I read that Canada produces TONS of honey, more than most other countries, right?

A: Yes, Canada is one of the largest producers of honey in the entire world.

Q: So why would anyone IMPORT honey into Canada?

A: Because Canada exports most of its honey, to places like the U.S.

Q: Where is it all labeled "USDA Grade A"?

A: Exactly.

Q: So if I want to be sure I am buying Canadian honey...

A: Yes sir, you should mail-order it from the U.S.