



The Bahamas Agricultural Health & Food Safety Authority (BAHFSA) is responsible for issuing food recalls in the country.

## A LOOK INTO HOW FOOD RECALLS WORK IN THE BAHAMAS

A **Food Recall** is the removal of a food item from the market (distribution or sale), and consumption because it poses a potential risk to public health and safety or is in violation of Bahamas Food Safety & Quality legislation.

### STEPS IN THE RECALL OF IMPORTED FOOD

- The Director of Food Safety identifies if the food has been or is likely to have been imported into The Bahamas.
- Information will be gathered on the initial recall to ascertain:
  - i. where it was initiated, (company/food business).
  - ii. the level of the recall (Level 1, 2 or 3).
  - iii. why the product was recalled.
  - iv. where has the product been distributed (US/locally).
  - v. who became ill, hospitalized or died (US).
- An initial recall via Public Announcement is issued
- Confirm with the MOH Surveillance Unit if there were any health reports linked to the recall.
- The Director will communicate with local merchants to prohibit the sale or distribution of the product and encourage utilization of their internal recall procedures.
- Based on the cause, advise consumers on recognizing symptoms and seeking medical attention if food was consumed.
- In collaboration with DEHS and the Food Safety & Technology Laboratory, if available food samples will be collected and tested.
- A recall will be issued locally by the Director via Public Announcement, with subsequent updates.
- Issue final public notice declaring the recall officially over.

### STEPS IN THE RECALL OF DOMESTIC FOOD

- The Directory of Food Safety will identify:
  - i. the product that has been recalled
  - ii. its source (company, business or farm) and island.
  - iii. cause (why) was the recall made
- Public Announcement is issued by the Director
- Prohibit product production, trade, sale or distribution and encourage utilization of their internal recall procedures;
- Liaise with MOH Surveillance Unit to determine if any illnesses were reported, and if so, determine if patient samples were collected (necessary for corroborating food sample lab results);
- Liaise with DEHS to investigate, collect food samples and other evidence, including pictures, videos, etc.;
- Send food sample for testing;
- Determine if human lab tests and recalled food testing identify the causative agent;
- Issue a 2nd public announcement to update the public ;
- Follow-up as necessary until the recall can be declared over;
- Issue final public notice declaring the recall officially over.