



NEWS FROM THE LITTLE CREAMERY

Blue Bell Announces Voluntary Agreements with Texas and Oklahoma State Regulatory Agencies as Part of Company Efforts to Ensure the Production of Safe Ice Cream

Brenham, TX – Blue Bell Creameries, the Texas Department of State Health Services and the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry have entered into voluntary agreements outlining a series of steps and actions Blue Bell will take as part of its efforts to bring Blue Bell Ice Cream products back to market.

The voluntary agreements, signed today, detail certain actions Blue Bell will take to help give the public confidence that when Blue Bell products return to market, they are safe. The actions include rigorous facility cleaning and sanitizing, revised testing protocols, revised production policies and procedures designed to prevent future contamination, and upgraded employee training initiatives. Once the company is ready to resume production, the voluntary agreements also call for a trial production period before ice cream is distributed to consumers.

“We are committed to meeting the high standards and expectations of our customers and our regulatory agencies,” said Blue Bell CEO and President Paul Kruse. “State and federal regulatory agencies play an important role in food safety, and we hope that it will be reassuring to our customers that we are working cooperatively with the states of Texas and Oklahoma in taking the necessary steps to bring Blue Bell Ice Cream back to the market.”

Kruse also noted that Blue Bell will continue to work cooperatively and transparently with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and has entered into discussions with the State of Alabama Department of Public Health regarding a similar voluntary agreement. Discussions on these voluntary agreements began with the State of Texas and then extended to Oklahoma.

The agreements signed today include provisions specific to addressing *Listeria*, including:

- Conducting root cause analyses to identify its potential or actual sources;
- Retaining an independent microbiology expert to establish and review controls to prevent the future introduction of *Listeria*;
- Notifying the Texas and Oklahoma state agencies promptly of any presumptive positive test result for *Listeria monocytogenes* found in ingredients or finished product samples, and providing the state agencies full access to all testing;
- Ensuring that the company’s Pathogen Monitoring Program (PMP) for *Listeria* in the plant environment outlines how the company will respond to presumptive positive tests for *Listeria species*; and,
- Instituting a “test and hold” program to assure that products are safe before they are shipped or sold.

“These detailed agreements will help guide us back to producing the safe, high-quality products that Blue Bell is known for,” Kruse said. “We appreciate the tremendous public support we have received,

and we look forward to working with our regulatory agencies and returning to making ice cream as soon as possible.”

The Texas news release and agreement can be found here:

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/news/releases/20150514.aspx>

The Oklahoma agreement can be obtained from: Blayne.arthur@ag.ok.gov