



LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY



Press Release

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Consumption of Crops Exposed to Flood Waters

Baton Rouge, LA (August 17, 2016) – Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry Commissioner Mike Strain, D.V.M., says pay close attention to the Federal Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) warnings pertaining to crops exposed to flood waters.

According to the FDA, the edible portion of a crop exposed to flood waters is considered adulterated under section 402(a)(4) (21 U.S.C. 342(a)(4)) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and should not be consumed. The FDA recommends that these crops be disposed of in a manner that ensures they are kept separate from crops that have not been flood damaged to avoid adulterating "clean" crops.

The food crops include but are not limited to:

- Surface crops such as leafy greens, tomatoes, string beans, berries, and corn
- Underground crops, such as peanuts, potatoes, carrots, and garlic
- Crops with a hard outer skin or shell, such as watermelon and winter squash
- Grains, nuts, corns, and similar products stored in bulk

For crops that were in or near flooded areas but where flood waters did not contact the edible portions of the crops, the growers should evaluate the safety of the crops for human consumption on a case-by-case basis for possible adulteration.

“Food safety is a top priority for the LDAF. If any producer has questions or concerns, please contact our office for guidance,” said Strain.

Flood waters may have been exposed to sewage, chemicals, heavy metals, pathogenic microorganisms or other contaminants. Therefore, knowledge of the sources of flood

waters and any possible upstream contributors of human pathogens and/or chemical contaminants will help evaluate the likelihood of crop contamination by flood waters.

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