



**DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE**

**CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ISSUES
PRECAUTIONARY CLOSURE OF APPROVED SHELLFISH GROWING
WATERS IN A PORTION OF GROTON AND STONINGTON DUE TO
POSSIBLE SEWER CONTAMINATION**

(HARTFORD, CT) - On Wednesday, August 30, the Connecticut Department of Agriculture (CT DoAg) issued a precautionary closure of a portion of Groton and Stonington approved shellfish growing waters due to possible sewage contamination. Industry members voluntarily recalled all oysters harvested from August 28 through August 30, which were shipped to numerous states, including Connecticut. No illnesses have been reported to date and all oysters which had not already been consumed were destroyed or returned to the growing area by September 1st.

The precautionary closure was enacted in an abundance of caution following routine water and shellfish monitoring which produced results outside the normal parameters of the area to protect public health and the integrity of the Connecticut shellfish program and industry. CT DoAg is working with the shellfish industry, impacted towns, local health departments, and sewer departments to determine the potential source of contamination. This investigation is ongoing, and the area will remain closed to harvest until the source is located and repaired. The area will be reopened following the national guidelines as set forth by National Shellfish Sanitation Program Model Ordinance (NSSP-MO) and the collection of acceptable sample results.

This precautionary closure has no relation to the recent *Vibrio vulnificus* wound infection cases reported in August. CT DoAg commends the proactive response and cooperation of local shellfishers in initiating a precautionary recall of oysters from the potentially impacted areas and their willingness to stop harvest. These actions provide an additional layer of safety to the shellfish consumer.

As with any raw food product, immunocompromised individuals, and those over age 65 should speak with their physician before consuming raw shellfish. Contaminated oysters can cause illness, especially if eaten raw, particularly in people with compromised immune systems. Consumers should be aware that contaminated food may look, smell, and taste normal. Anyone who experiences food poisoning symptoms such as diarrhea, stomach pain or cramps, nausea, vomiting, or fever following the consumption of raw shellfish should contact their healthcare provider, who should report their symptoms to their local health department.

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture and shellfish industry will continue to work together to ensure the integrity of all shellfish harvested from Connecticut waters. For additional information on shellfish safety and the Connecticut shellfish program please visit:

<https://portal.ct.gov/DOAG/Aquaculture1/Aquaculture/Aquaculture-Home-Page>.

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture mission is to foster a healthy economic, environmental, and social climate for agriculture by developing, promoting, and regulating agricultural businesses; protecting agricultural and aquacultural resources; enforcing laws pertaining to domestic animals; and promoting an understanding among the state's citizens of the diversity of Connecticut agriculture, its cultural heritage, and its contribution to the state's economy. For more information, visit www.CTGrown.gov.

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For Immediate Release: Wednesday, September 6, 2023

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