Massive Beef Recall for Plastic Contamination, Including Kroger Stores

More than 35,000 pounds of ground beef sold by North Carolina food processor JBS USA has been recalled after a consumer found hard, blue pieces of plastic in a package. The ground beef is in a variety of packages and distributed through Kroger locations in North Carolina, Virginia, Indiana, Illinois and eastern West Virginia as well as Food 4 Less and Jay C stores located in the Midwest. Kroger spokeswoman Kristal Howard addressed the recall, saying that Kroger "verified that none of these products are in our stores today…We encourage customers to check their freezers for the potentially affected products and not to consume them but throw them away or return them to their place of purchase for a full refund."

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Meat Recalls in the U.S.

This is by no means the largest recall of meat with plastic bits this year. In addition to the current recall, 60 tons of beef and 67 tons of Salisbury steak were recalled earlier in the month of April for plastic fragments and pieces of bone, respectively. The past two years, 2016 and 2017, saw the highest numbers of meat recalled for extraneous materials like plastics in the past decade. While those numbers can be partially attributed to massive single occurrence recalls, the fact remains that we are finding more plastic than ever in our food.

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Plastics Everywhere

This recall, coupled with the ongoing Romaine lettuce scare, make it seem like our food system is headed for an unpleasant awakening. The United States Department of Agriculture doesn't even keep track of microplastics, a growing issue for seafood. Water is a fundamental part of our food chain, and discoveries of microplastics in bottled water will translate to an agricultural setting if they haven't already.

Related: ***Many Hand-me-down Plastic Toys Are Toxic for Kids***

Sources

- *Kroger ground beef among 17.7 tons recalled for potential plastics contamination* – USA Today
- *Summary of Recall Cases in Calendar Year 2017* – USDA.gov
- *Drinking Bottled Water Means Drinking Microplastics, According To Damning New Study* – Organic Lifestyle Magazine
- *Extraneous Materials* – Food Safety News