Linn County Public Health Working with National Frozen Foods Corporation on Reopening

Linn County Public Health reports they have worked cooperatively with National Frozen Foods Corporation in reopening the Albany production facility. The plant is expected to reopen sometime within the next twenty-four hours. National Frozen operates a vegetable processing plant at the Albany site, employing over 300 people. On April 23rd, 2020, the production facility was voluntarily closed due to eight employees and two family members testing positive for COVID-19.

National Frozen has been working with Linn County Public Health and Oregon Health Authority in response efforts. This included the temporarily closure of the facility, COVID-19 testing for employees and developing a guidance questionnaire to be completed by National Frozen employees upon returning to work. The questionnaire involves several questions about the health conditions regarding symptoms related to COVID-19.

Additionally, National Frozen ordered additional personal protective equipment for employee safety, completed a walkthrough of the plant with Linn County Environmental Health, and has partnered with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to ensure safe food processing for Oregonians.

As more employees developed symptoms the number of positive cases did increase from the original 10. To ensure all employee safety, Linn County Public Health partnered with National Frozen and developed a plan for mass testing of employees. National Frozen reached out to employees to notify and guide them through the scheduled testing process. On Friday, May 1, 2020, 191 National Frozen employees were tested even though they were asymptomatic. 10 of the 191 employees tested positive for COVID-19 on this day.

In an effort to be completely transparent about the situation, National Frozen is sharing that there were 34 total positive tests related to their Albany facility. This number includes 30 employees and 4 of their family or other household members.

Linn County Public Health will follow recommendations from Oregon Health Authority and will not release any other identifiers of those tested positive. This includes race, gender or age of the person. Linn County Public Health will conduct contact tracing on all cases in Linn County.
Linn County Public Health wants to remind the public to remain vigilant with social distancing, hand washing and following the Oregon Health Authority’s recommendations so we can all remain healthy.

Oregon Health Authority would like to remind people “that current evidence shows the risk of transfer of the viruses is very low. However, to minimize further risk, wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after handling the food packaging.” Further, the public is informed that the following agencies are NOT aware of any reports that suggest COVID-19 transmission by food or food packaging: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA); and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).