For Immediate Release
Partnership for Food Safety Education
Shelley Feist, 202-220-0651
sfeist@fightbac.org

Recall Basics for Consumers
Partnership for Food Safety Education produces primer on identifying food that has been recalled

March 4, 2010 – Washington, D.C. - New consumer materials from the Partnership for Food Safety Education at www.recallbasics.org orient consumers to the need to take notice of recalls and to take action to identify whether a recalled product is in their home.

Recent research by the Rutgers University Food Policy Institute found that most Americans say they pay close attention to news reports about food recalls, and 81% say that when they hear about a food recall, they tell others about it. Yet fewer than 60% of Americans have *ever* checked their home for a recalled food item. This suggests that, for many Americans, food recalls are seen as important but not particularly relevant to themselves.

“These new materials are intended to take the mystery out of major food recalls and bring consumers back to basic steps that bridge the gap between understanding and action,” said PFSE Executive Director, Shelley Feist.

Recalls are issued for safety and should not cause panic. Downloads at www.recallbasics.org include a *“What to Look For”* flyer that lists the basic identifying information on various food products that consumers can match to a recall notice in order to find out if they have a recalled product in their home.

“Getting consumers to pay attention to news about recalls isn’t the hard part,” says William K. Hallman, a psychologist and Director of the Food Policy Institute at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, “Getting them to take the step of actually looking for recalled food products in their homes is the real challenge.”

The Partnership encourages consumers to be aware of these simple steps to identifying if they have a recalled food product at home:

-

Learn about food recalls in the news, through your food retailer, or sign up to receive recall notices at www.recalls.gov

-

Identify the type of food product in the recall notice -- i.e. meat, poultry, canned good, fresh produce, etc.

-

If you think you may have the product in your home, start with matching the details! Match identifying marks on the food product you have--such as product name, brand, container codes, and container size or weight-- with the recall notice details. If the product details don't match the recall notice details then there is no need to be concerned or to take action.

-

Remember to check your freezer, pantry and refrigerator. Consumers believe that most recalled food has already been eaten by the time a recall occurs, but this is not always the case.

-

Understand that the recall of one product does not mean all forms of that product are a potential problem. But, be aware that occasionally recalls will be expanded to include additional products as more information is gathered.

-

If you do find that you have a recalled food product in your home, do not eat or open the product. Handle the recalled product carefully, always washing hands after touching the product. Return it to the store where it was purchased, or dispose of it properly following the recall notice guidelines.

Consumers can learn more about current food recalls at www.recalls.gov and www.foodsafety.gov .

A recall news widget can be downloaded at http://www.foodsafety.gov/widgets/index.html .

Additional support for consumers with questions about food safety and recalls can be found at:

USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline
1-888-MPHOTLINE (1-888-674-6854). The hotline operates Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET.
"Ask Karen," the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service virtual representative is available 24 hours a day, at AskKaren.gov .

For food products other than meat and poultry products:
FDA hotline 1-888-SAFEFOOD (1-888-723-3366).
The hotline operates Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Consumers can also email questions to consumer@fda.gov This e-mail address is being protected from spam bots, you need JavaScript enabled to view it .

***

Recall Basics was developed by the non-profit Partnership for Food Safety Education (PFSE) which unites industry associations, professional societies in food science, nutrition and health, consumer groups and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Environmental Protection Agency, and from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to educate the public about safe food handling and preparation. The Partnership is the creator and steward of the Fight BAC! ® campaign, a food safety education program developed using

scientifically based recommendations and resulting from an extensive consumer research process. Fight BAC! ® materials are fully accessible online at www.fightbac.org and utilized by consumers, teachers, dietitians, public health officials and extension agents across the United States.

###