**March 16, 2012**

Lake Stevens School District is committed to providing the safest products in our school meals. There has been a great deal of media coverage recently on current beef processing techniques for school and commercial beef products. It’s important for you to know too, that students have daily menu options that do not include the selection of a beef entrée.

 **What is Pink Slime?**

* “**Pink Slime**” is a media term for “**Lean Finely Textured Beef (LFTB)**.” This is a production method that utilizes leftover waste trimmings, simmering them at a low heat to separate fat from muscle and spinning the trimmings using a centrifuge to complete the separation. Next the mixture is sent through equipment and treated with a chemical gas to destroy any bacteria.
* LFTB does not have to be included on ingredient lists or nutrition facts making it difficult for any consumer to distinguish if it is in a variety of beef products on the market.
* USDA currently allows “LFTB” to be a safe product allowed in beef processing for the National School Lunch Program.

There are at least ten USDA beef processors that currently supply beef to Washington state schools. OSPI is waiting for statements regarding the use of LFTB as an ingredient in the USDA beef that is processed in our state:

 Message dated 3/16/12 from OSPI Food Distribution on Ground Beef

* *BPI (Beef Products Incorporated) has not shipped USDA purchased beef to WA state processors or to our state for fine grind beef.*
* *However, other USDA approved beef vendors may have shipped USDA purchased coarse ground beef to USDA approved processors or fine grind beef to the state.*
* *OSPI is requesting information from all USDA approved beef vendors who have shipped to our state or to WA state processors.*
* *Statements from these vendors will be compiled and posted on our Food Distribution Message Board when all results are known.*
* *As stated by USDA this process has been in place as a safe practice since 1991. At this time, OSPI cannot unequivocally state that Lean Finely Textured Beef are not part of USDA purchased raw beef products.*

It is important to note that on March 15, 2012 the USDA released a statement that starting next year the schools will have the option to avoid “Lean Finely Textured Beef.”

Lake Stevens diverts its raw beef from USDA to Kings Command in Kent, Washington. Kings Command has confirmed that they do not use or have ever used “LFTB” in their processing plant. The beef products in our school menus are the following:

* Beef Patty, USDA, Processor: Kings Command
* Taco Meat, USDA, Processor : Kings Command
* Beef Crumble, USDA, Processor: Kings Command
* Teriyaki Beef Dipper, USDA, Processor: Kings Command

Additional statements and information are provided:

* Kings Command, Kent Washington, our local USDA beef processor, dated 3-12-2012
* USDA Press release on LFTB , dated 3-15-2012
* American Meat Institute, Q & A About LFTB, received 3-15-12