

Penn State Berkey Creamery  
Crisis Communications Plan  
E.Coli/Foodborne Illness Scenario

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### **Acknowledgements (Ally)**

By providing a signature below, these persons hereby declare that they have read this crisis communications plan regarding an E.coli breakout at the Berkey Creamery. By signing this document, all members of the crisis team verify that they have understood every part of this in detail and are prepared to execute their designated role to the best of their ability.

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Neeli Bendapudi, President and CEO, Penn State

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Dr. Sara Thorndike, Vice President and CFO, Penn State

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Thomas Davis, Berkey Creamery General Manager, Berkey Creamery

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Rachel Pell, Vice President of Strategic Communications, Designated Spokesperson, Penn State

### **Statement from Management to Employees (Barbara)**

The current incident involving reports of E. coli in our products requires a coordinated and unified response from Berkey Creamery staff. We ask that you pay close attention and follow the procedures exactly as directed in this crisis communication plan. The plan exists to ensure all information released is accurate and our message is consistent. We aim to respond to this manner in a timely and transparent manner that aligns with both public health guidelines and our company values. Strict adherence to this plan ensures this situation is handled with the utmost professionalism and compassion to retain customer trust and open communication. Customary safety is our number one priority. It is essential that all Berkey Creamery staff support and implement this plan accordingly as your cooperation is indispensable.

Failure to comply with this plan could result in misinformation, injury to the public, and damage to Berkey Creamery reputation. Any deviation from this plan can undermine our response efforts and reputation. While the Berkey Creamery maintains high safety standards and has not had any issue with E. coli in the past, this instance demonstrates that no organization is immune to crisis which is why we have this communication plan. Similar organizations have encountered this situation before including Twin Sisters Creamery in Ferndale, Washington which found E. Coli in many of their products in 2025. Twin Sisters have since recuperated and restored their quality standards which we intend to do as well.

## **The Crisis Communications Team (Courtney)**

- **Crisis communications director- Rachel A. Pell (Primary Spokesperson)**

Vice President, Strategic Communications: Phone: (814)-865-7517 (office) Email:

[rap142@psu.edu](mailto:rap142@psu.edu)

- **Assistant Communications Manager- Sheila Crust**

Creamery Business Manager: [sqc5836@psu.edu](mailto:sqc5836@psu.edu), 814-863-4729

- **Spokesperson- Rachel A. Pell (Primary Spokesperson)**

Vice President, Strategic Communications: Phone: (814)-865-7517 (office) Email:

[rap142@psu.edu](mailto:rap142@psu.edu)

- **Social Media & Digital Monitoring Unit**

@pennstate (all official accounts) / @berkeycreamery (Twitter/X, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok)

- **Print media- Centre Daily**

888-237-3801/ [news@centredaily.com](mailto:news@centredaily.com)

- **TV WTAJ News / WPSU Local Media Partners**

WTAJ News (Local CBS Affiliate) [news@wtajtv.com](mailto:news@wtajtv.com)/ 814-942-1010

WPSU (PBS/NPR Affiliate) [wpsu@psu.edu](mailto:wpsu@psu.edu) / 814-865-3333

- **(Legal) Penn State Office of General Counsel**

[generalcounsel@psu.edu](mailto:generalcounsel@psu.edu)/ 814-865-2657

## **Crisis Summary (Ally)**

Multiple reports of the foodborne illness E.coli have been reported and linked to Penn State Berkey Creamery products. The Berkey Creamery was established in 1865 and stands as an ice cream landmark at Pennsylvania State University in State College, Pennsylvania. Affected products from the current E.coli contamination include ice cream, cheeses, milk, and any other products sold and distributed by the Creamery. The Berkey Creamery distributes its products and dairy goods throughout the entire state of Pennsylvania, including locally at Penn State's University Park Campus. Reported traces have led to feelings of nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, low-grade fevers, and severe stomach cramps.

## **Purpose and Objectives (Barbara)**

The purpose of this crisis communications plan is to address recommended actions by the Berkey Creamery upon disruptive events that threaten product safety, public safety, and company reputation. The purpose of this plan is to address the safety and well-being of everyone involved to ensure a swift and organized response while protecting the company's reputation for faster recovery and thoroughly addressing the concerns of key stakeholders. It aims to provide protocols and communication strategies that ensure communication aligns with the values of the organization. Public communication will be led by Rachel Pell, vice president for Strategic Communications at the Pennsylvania State University. We will make every effort to inform the public in a timely and open manner that focuses on transparency and compassion and work to rectify any wrongdoing or injury with compassion.

In the event of product contamination (bacterial outbreak, i.e. E-coli, salmonella, listeria) this plan provides the recommended actions and communication framework. The objectives in this instance are:

1. To communicate openly with the public and implement a product recall
2. Ensure proper corrective measures are taken including holding those responsible and revising production to reduce the risk of recurrence in the future
3. Inform valued stakeholders including Berkey Creamery customers, local retailers who sell Berkey Creamery products, and the Pennsylvania State University Strategic Communication Department as timely as possible
4. Take the necessary measures to recover brand confidence

## **Potential Crises for Berkey Creamery (Barbara)**

1. Bacteria outbreak recall (E.coli, Listeria, Salmonella, etc.)
  - a. Primary Concerns: Public safety, recall, loss of inventory, reputation
2. Mislabeled allergens (cross contamination of potential allergens)
  - a. Primary Concerns: Public safety, brand loyalty, reputation
3. Immediate threat to personnel and customers on site (active shooter, bomb threat, etc.)
  - a. Primary Concerns: staff safety, customer safety
4. Contamination of dairy cows
  - a. Primary Concerns: Product safety, loss of product, supply shortage
5. Foreign objects found in product
  - a. Primary Concern: Public safety, reputation
6. Technology malfunction compromises products (freezers, refrigerators)
  - a. Primary Concern: Public safety, loss of inventory, product quality

## **10 Questions about the Crisis to Inform Decision-Makers (Courtney)**

1. When were the first reports of illness connected to Berkey Creamery products received?
2. How many suspected or confirmed E. coli cases are currently associated with the Creamery?
3. What food safety, sanitation, and pasteurization procedures were in place during the production of the affected batches?
4. What specific production step or unit in the facility is most likely responsible for the E. coli contamination?
5. What corrective actions are needed to be taken immediately to eliminate the contamination source, and how quickly can those be implemented?
6. How will stopping production impact campus dining, local partners, suppliers, and distribution networks in the short and long term?
7. What communications have been sent or need to be sent to key stakeholders (students, employees, retailers, state authorities)?
8. How are local, state, and federal health agencies involved, and what information or cooperation are they expecting from us?
9. What different resources (hotlines, medical guidance, social media team hours) are needed to handle the public inquiries, press requests, and misinformation?
10. What potential brand, financial, and reputational risks does the Creamery face, and what recovery strategies should be considered?

## **Key Message (Ally)**

The Berkey Creamery and Penn State University are taking immediate action to protect our community and ensure everyone's safety and continued trust amidst this outbreak.

## Designated Spokesperson and Backup (Barbara)

### **Rachel A. Pell (Primary Spokesperson)**

Vice President, Strategic Communications

Phone: (814)-865-7517 (office)

(814)-380-7209 (cell)

Email: [rap142@psu.edu](mailto:rap142@psu.edu)



Rachel Pell was named the Vice President for Strategic Communications for Pennsylvania State University in February of 2023. She focuses on the university's public relations and marketing units for internal and external communication. She serves on Penn State's President's Council to advise senior leaders on communications strategies for internal and external audiences. In the event of a crisis, she will serve as the main point of contact for media relations and designated spokesperson for crisis communication.

**Wyatt DuBois (Backup Spokesperson)**

Senior Director for University Public Relations

Phone: 814-865-3202

Email: [wed112@psu.edu](mailto:wed112@psu.edu)

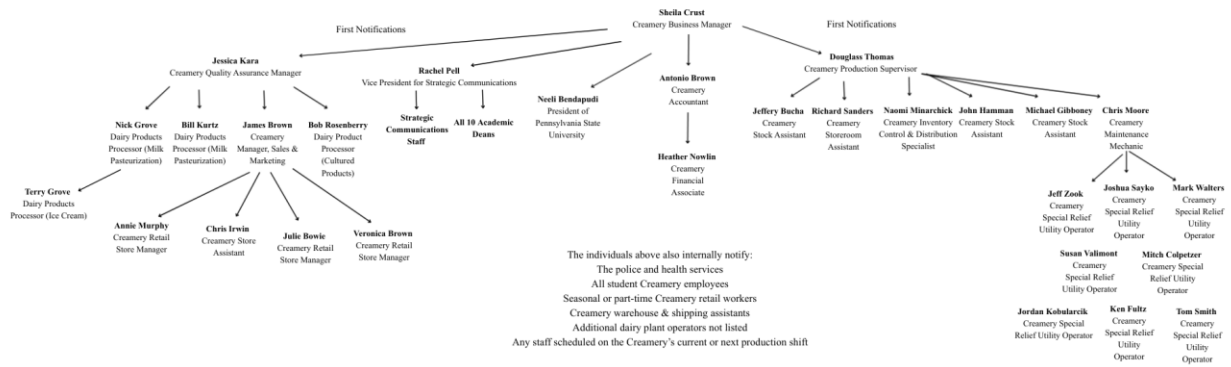


Wyatt Dubois was named Senior Director for University Public Relations in March of 2025. He joined Strategic Communications for Pennsylvania State University in 2019. He focuses on issue management and crisis communications across the university and works directly with university leadership. His objective is to anticipate and respond to challenges facing Penn State. In the event of a crisis, he will serve as a secondary point of contact and backup spokesperson for crisis communication.

# Telephone Tree (Mary)

<https://www.canva.com/design/DAG6gB65Hgg/ivWWGeGOSLAHRHF0ahAkg/edit>

Internal Publics Telephone Tree



## **Blogs and Social Media Sites Appropriate to the Organization/Issue (Brooke)**

### **Penn State University:**

- Penn State News Blog: [news.psu.edu](https://news.psu.edu)
- Penn State Official Social Media Accounts (@penn\_state on Twitter, @pennstate on Facebook and Instagram)
- Berkey Creamery Social Media Accounts (@psucreamery on Twitter, @pennstatecreamery on Instagram and Facebook)

### **Student-Oriented Digital Platforms:**

- Onward State: <https://onwardstate.com/>
- The Daily Collegian (TDC): <https://www.psucollegian.com/>

### **Community and Local Audience Platforms:**

- Centre Daily Times Blog Section: <https://www.centredaily.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/>
- Happy Valley News Blog: <https://happyvalley.com/dispatch>
- State College.com: <https://www.statecollege.com/>
- WPSU (NPR) Digital Coverage: <https://wpsu.org/about/coverage-area/>

### **Health and Safety Communication Channels:**

- Pennsylvania Department of Health Blog/Alerts: <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/health/healthcare>
- CDC Food Safety Updates: <https://www.cdc.gov/index.html>
- FDA Food Safety Page: <https://www.fda.gov/>
- Tag accounts such as (@pahealthdept, @fda, @cdcgov on Instagram) for increased credibility

## Media Policies and Procedures (Brooke)

- Centralized Communication Protocol
  - All media inquiries will be routed through the Office of Strategic Communications.
  - Only authorized spokespersons (VP Strategic Communications, PR Director, University President, College of Agricultural Sciences Dean, Creamery General Manager) may speak publicly.
  - No employees, students, or operational staff are permitted to comment to the media under any circumstances.
- Receiving Media Requests
  - Media requests must be directed to: [press@psu.edu](mailto:press@psu.edu)
  - Staff will log every request in the Crisis Media Tracker, noting: (Outlet, Reporter Name, Deadlines, Topic/question summaries, and recommended spokespersons)
- Interview Procedures
  - Interviews will prioritize transparency, public safety messaging, and key message alignment.
  - Interviews will only be granted after the Crisis Communications Team reviews the request for relevance, accuracy, and public health sensitivity.
  - Spokespersons will receive talking points, approved language, and restricted topics prior to any interview.
- Press Conferences
  - Press conferences will be announced via media advisory.
  - A designated moderator will facilitate Q&A and close the session when all essential questions have been addressed.

- Media Tours
  - No media tours will be conducted at the Creamery production facilities during the contamination investigation.
  - Virtual assets such as a map of distribution routes, stock b-roll, and photos of the facility will be provided instead.
- Message Consistency
  - All crisis updates will be simultaneously across all platforms with responses that acknowledge concern, direct to official updates, and avoid speculation.
  - All public-facing communication must use the Key Message and Holding Statement as guiding templates
  - Staff must avoid speculating on sources of contamination, sharing unverified numbers or medical information, assigning blame, and commenting on legal or regulatory processes
- Media Monitoring
  - Misinformation will be corrected using verified statements.
  - Office of Strategic Communications will monitor:
    - TV, Radio, and Print Coverage
    - Social Sentiment
    - High-Volume Online Discussions (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)

### **Holding Statement (Ally)**

Berkey Creamery and Penn State University have received reports of foodborne illness potentially linked to Creamery dairy products. As soon as this came to our attention, we halted production of our products and have begun working with public and local health authorities to investigate the trace. We are issuing a recall of select products that may have been infected with the E.coli bacteria. Currently, our focus is to protect the health and safety of our customers and campus community. If you're feeling sick after consuming a Berkey Creamery product, please seek medical attention. Once again, we express our sincere apology and ensure that we will work to provide updates as more information becomes available.

## Press Release (Ally)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: December 12, 2025

Contact: Rachel Pell, Vice President of Strategic Communications

Phone: **814-865-7517** | Email: **rap142@psu.edu**

### Berkey Creamery Issues Product Recall After Confirmed E.coli Contamination

UNIVERSITY PARK, PA — Penn State’s Berkey Creamery announced Friday an immediate recall of all dairy products following the confirmation of an E.coli contamination in a product batch.

The recall affects products produced between November 16 and December 10, 2025, including ice cream, milk, and cheese. These products are sold in-store and distributed statewide across Pennsylvania.

“We are deeply concerned for anyone impacted, and I want to affirm at this time that our highest priority is protecting against further contamination and the safety of our consumers,” said Rachel Pell, spokesperson for Penn State. “We are working closely with state and federal public health authorities and have paused production until we can ensure the full safety of our products.”

Anyone who purchased Creamery dairy products during this period should not consume them and is advised to dispose of the products immediately. Full refunds will be issued for all contaminated products, and refund requests can be submitted using the phone number and

website below. If you are experiencing symptoms of contamination, such as diarrhea, vomiting, or a fever, contact a healthcare provider immediately.

Please utilize the hotline for emergency use only and to submit a claim at (HOTLINE NUMBER), and for additional updates, please visit [creamery.psu.edu/safety](http://creamery.psu.edu/safety).

Penn State will provide additional updates within the next 24 hours. The university will hold a scheduled press briefing on December 13 at 10 a.m. at the Hetzel Union Building, Room 16, and will also be available via Zoom.

## **General List of Key Internal Publics (Internal to the organization) (Mary)**

- Penn State Students
- Student Affairs
- University Park/State College Police
- Dean, Troy Ott, College of Agricultural Sciences
  - [tsh102@psu.edu](mailto:tsh102@psu.edu)
- Dean, B. Stephen Carpenter II College of Arts and Architecture
  - 1-814-865-2591
- Dean, Lee R. Kump College of Earth and Mineral Sciences
  - <https://www.ems.psu.edu/about/visit-contact-us/contact-us>
- Dean, Tonya L., Peeples College of Engineering
  - 814-865-7537
- Dean, Craig J. Newschaffer, College of Health and Human Development
  - 814-865-1428
- Dean, Andrea Tapia, College of Information Sciences and Technology
  - 814-865-8947
- Dean, Clarence E. Lang, College of the Liberal Arts
  - 814-865-7691
- Dean, Levon Esters, The Graduate School
  - <https://gradschool.psu.edu/about/contact-us>
- Dean, Charles H. Whiteman, Smeal College of Business
  - 814-863-0448

- Dean, Hubert J. “Hub” Brown, Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications
  - 814-863-1484

Creamery Staff:

- Retail Store Manager, Julie Bowie
  - [jab385@psu.edu](mailto:jab385@psu.edu), 814-865-7535
- Accountant, Antonio Brown
  - [adb82@psu.edu](mailto:adb82@psu.edu)
- Manager, Marketing and Sales, James Brown
  - [jtb15@psu.edu](mailto:jtb15@psu.edu), 814-863-2922
- Retail Store Manager, Veronica Brown
  - [vjb5@psu.edu](mailto:vjb5@psu.edu), 814-865-7535
- Creamery Stock Assistant, Jefferey Bucha
  - [jeb6521@psu.edu](mailto:jeb6521@psu.edu), 814-865-7535
- Special Relief Utility Operator, Mitch Colpetzer
  - [mac1323@psu.edu](mailto:mac1323@psu.edu), 814-865-7537
- Business Manager, Sheila Crust
  - [sqc5836@psu.edu](mailto:sqc5836@psu.edu), 814-863-4729
- Special Relief Utility Officer, Ken Fultz
  - [krf17@psu.edu](mailto:krf17@psu.edu), 814-865-7353
- Creamery Stock Assistant, Michael Gabboney
  - [mlg30@psu.edu](mailto:mlg30@psu.edu), 814-865-7353
- Dairy Products Processor, Milk Pasteurization, Nick Grove

- [nlg14@psu.edu](mailto:nlg14@psu.edu), 814-865-7353
- Dairy Products Processor, Ice Cream, Terry Grove
  - [tlg28@psu.edu](mailto:tlg28@psu.edu), 814-865-7353
- Creamery Stock Assistant, John Hamman
  - [jch6072@psu.edu](mailto:jch6072@psu.edu), 814-865-7353
- Creamery Store Assistant, Chris Irwin
  - [cmi5037@psu.edu](mailto:cmi5037@psu.edu), 814-865-7353
- Quality Assurance Manager, Jessica Kara
  - [jxs186@psu.edu](mailto:jxs186@psu.edu), 814-865-4637
- Special Relief Utility Operator, Jordan Kobularcik
  - [jck5365@psu.edu](mailto:jck5365@psu.edu), 814-865-7353
- Dairy Products Processor, Milk Pasteurization, Bill Kutz
  - [wak10@psu.edu](mailto:wak10@psu.edu), 814-865-7353
- Inventory Control and Distribution Specialist, Naomi Minarchick
  - [njm17@psu.edu](mailto:njm17@psu.edu), 814-865-4726
- Maintenance Mechanic, Dairy Plant, Chris Moore
  - [cmm7445@psu.edu](mailto:cmm7445@psu.edu), 814-865-7353
- Retail Store Manager, Annie Murphy
  - [asm5667@psu.edu](mailto:asm5667@psu.edu), 814-865-7357
- Financial Associate, Heather Nowlin
  - [hxl162@psu.edu](mailto:hxl162@psu.edu), 814-865-4711
- Dairy Product Processor, Cultured Products, Bob Rosenberry
  - [rrr10@psu.edu](mailto:rrr10@psu.edu), 814-865-7535

- Creamery Storeroom Assistant, Richard Sanders
  - [rjs170@psu.edu](mailto:rjs170@psu.edu), 814-865-4733
- Special Relief Utility Operator, Joshua Sayko
  - [jus1939@psu.edu](mailto:jus1939@psu.edu), 814-865-7535
- Special Relief Utility Operator, Tom Smith
  - [tas43@psu.edu](mailto:tas43@psu.edu), 814-865-7535
- Production Supervisor, Douglass Thomas
  - [dst11@psu.edu](mailto:dst11@psu.edu), 814-865-7535
- Special Relief Utility Operator, Susan Valimont
  - [srv1@psu.edu](mailto:srv1@psu.edu), 814-865-7535
- Special Relief Utility Operator, Mark Walters
  - [mlw43@psu.edu](mailto:mlw43@psu.edu), 814-865-7435
- Special Relief Utility Operator, Jeff Zook
  - [jlz16@Psu.edu](mailto:jlz16@Psu.edu), 814-865-7535

## **External Publics (Alexa)**

- Parents/Families
- News Media (Local, State, National)
- State College Residents
- Penn State Board of Trustees
- Penn State Alumni
- Local businesses and retailers carrying Creamery products
  - Across whole state of Pennsylvania
- Restaurants and food service partners using Creamery products
- Online customers nationwide

## Emergency Personnel (Alexa)

- Centre County Police
  - <http://www.centerpolice.com/>
  - In Case of Emergency, Dial 911
  - (Office) 724-774-0272
  - (Non-Emergency) 724-775-0880
- Mount Nittany Medical Center
  - <https://www.mountnittany.org/>
  - (814) 231-7000
- University Health Services
  - uhs-ems AT [resources.uhs.psu.edu](https://resources.uhs.psu.edu)
  - (814) 863-0774
- Penn State University Police
  - <http://police.psu.edu/>
  - [mdl16@psu.edu](mailto:mdl16@psu.edu)
  - 20 Eisenhower Parking Deck
  - University Park, PA 16802

## Government Officials (local and state) (Alexa)

### LOCAL/REGIONAL/NATIONAL OFFICIALS

- Dr. Neeli Bendapudi
  - President, Penn State University
  - [president@psu.edu](mailto:president@psu.edu)
  - 814-865-7611
- Justin Schwartz
  - Executive Vice President & Provost
  - [provost@psu.edu](mailto:provost@psu.edu)
  - 814-865-2505
- College of Agricultural Sciences
  - Dean's Office
  - [agdean@psu.edu](mailto:agdean@psu.edu)
  - 814-865-7521
- Food Science Department Chair
  - Dr. Edwin G. Rajotte
  - [foodscience@psu.edu](mailto:foodscience@psu.edu)
  - 814-865-5444
- Penn State Environmental Health & Safety (EHS)
  - [ehsinfo@psu.edu](mailto:ehsinfo@psu.edu)
  - 814-865-6391
- Penn State Office of Strategic Communications
  - [press@psu.edu](mailto:press@psu.edu)
  - 814-865-7517
- On-Campus Dining & Food Services Administration

- [foodservices@psu.edu](mailto:foodservices@psu.edu)
- Kerry Benninghoff - State House Representative
  - 814-355-1300
  - <http://www.kerrybenninghoff.com/>

**Media Directory of Key Media (Brooke)**

Location	Outlet	Type	Point of Contact
Local (State College/Centre County)	Centre Daily Times	Newspaper	888-237-3801 <a href="mailto:news@centredaily.com">news@centredaily.com</a>
Local (State College/Centre County)	WPSU (NPR Affiliate)	Radio/TV	814-863-5635 <a href="mailto:newsroom@psu.edu">newsroom@psu.edu</a>
Local (State College/Centre County)	<a href="http://StateCollege.com">StateCollege.com</a>	Digital News	<a href="mailto:tips@statecollege.com">tips@statecollege.com</a> 2929 Stewart Drive, Suite 301, State College, PA 16801
Local (State College/Centre County)	Onward State The Daily Collegian	Student Media Student Newspaper	<a href="mailto:editors@onwardstate.com">editors@onwardstate.com</a> <a href="mailto:news@collegian.psu.edu">news@collegian.psu.edu</a>
Local (State)	WTAJ-TV (CBS Altoona)	TV	814-944-1234 <a href="mailto:news@wtajtv.com">news@wtajtv.com</a>

College/Centre County)	WJAC-TV (NBC Johnstown)		Main Phone: 814.255.7600 News Tipline: 814.255.7650 News Director: 814.255.7654 <a href="mailto:news@wjac.com">news@wjac.com</a>
Statewide	FOX29 Philadelphia	TV	215-982-5500 <a href="mailto:newsdesk@fox29.com">newsdesk@fox29.com</a>
Statewide	NBC10 Philadelphia	TV	215-201-5210 <a href="mailto:news@nbcphiladelphia.com">news@nbcphiladelphia.com</a>
Statewide	6ABC Action News (Philadelphia)	TV	1-866-978-4232 <a href="mailto:tips@6abc.com">tips@6abc.com</a>
Statewide	ABC27	TV	717-236-1444 <a href="mailto:news@abc27.com">news@abc27.com</a>
Statewide	WPXI (Pittsburgh)	TV	412-237-1100 <a href="mailto:desk@wpxi.com">desk@wpxi.com</a>
National	CNN	TV	<a href="mailto:tips@cnn.com">tips@cnn.com</a> or <a href="mailto:cnn.tips@protonmail.com">cnn.tips@protonmail.com</a>

National	NBC News	TV	24/7 PR Hotline: 212-413-6142 <a href="mailto:NBCNewsMediaRelations@nbcuni.com">NBCNewsMediaRelations@nbcuni.com</a>
National	ABC World News Tonight with David Muir	TV	<a href="mailto:newsdesk@abcnews.com">newsdesk@abcnews.com</a> <a href="mailto:news.tips@abc.com">news.tips@abc.com</a> 212-256-2828
National	CBS News	TV	212-975-3247 <a href="mailto:evening@cbsnews.com">evening@cbsnews.com</a>
National	USA Today	Newspaper	<a href="mailto:letters@usatoday.com">letters@usatoday.com</a>
National	New York Times	Newspaper	<a href="mailto:booking@nytimes.com">booking@nytimes.com</a>
National	Washington Post	Newspaper	1-800-477-4679 <a href="mailto:newsdesk@washpost.com">newsdesk@washpost.com</a>
National	NPR	Radio	(202)-513-2000 <a href="mailto:nprnews@npr.org">nprnews@npr.org</a>
Local	University Health Services	Medical Clinic	(814) 865-4UHS (4847) Email: <a href="mailto:uhs-info@psu.edu">uhs-info@psu.edu</a>
Local	Mount Nittany Medical Center	Hospital	(814) 231-7103 <a href="mailto:MyMNH@Mountnittany.org">MyMNH@Mountnittany.org</a>
Statewide	UPMC Mercy	Hospital	(412) 232- Mercy (6372)

			<a href="mailto:ROIRequest@upmc.edu">ROIRequest@upmc.edu</a>
Statewide	Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania	Hospital	215-573-3333 <a href="mailto:SpecialServices@publicsafety.upenn.edu">SpecialServices@publicsafety.upenn.edu</a>
Local	Centre County Police		814-355-6803 Sheriff: Bryan Sampsel 814-355-6803 <a href="mailto:blsampsel@centrecountypa.gov">blsampsel@centrecountypa.gov</a> Chief Deputy Sheriff: Todd Weaver 814-355-6803 <a href="mailto:tjweaver@centrecountypa.gov">tjweaver@centrecountypa.gov</a>

## Potential Tough Questions and Answers (Courtney)

1. Will people get refunded for their purchases?

Anyone who purchased products from the affected date range is eligible for a full refund. There is a dedicated refund hotline and online form.

2. How did E.coli get into the Creamery?

Currently, we do not yet know the exact source. We immediately shut down production and are working health officials to identify the point of contamination.

3. Why was this not found sooner?

We conduct regular safety testing, but in this case, the contamination was not detectable until illness reports surfaced. As soon as a credible link was identified, we took immediate action. We are now reviewing every step of our process to understand why it wasn't found earlier.

4. Are students on campus at risk?

Anyone who consumed Creamery dairy products from Nov. 16 to Dec. 10 could be affected. We encourage students with symptoms to seek medical care immediately.

5. How many people have gotten sick?

We are currently working with health authorities to confirm the number of cases. We will share verified numbers as soon as they are confirmed to avoid misinformation.

6. Is Penn State liable for medical bills?

Liability will be determined through the investigation and regulatory guidance. Individuals with concerns should contact our claims hotline.

7. Why should the public trust you again after this?

We are committed to full transparency, corrective action, and meeting the highest standards of food safety. Trust is earned through accountability, and that is exactly how we are approaching this crisis.

8. Are any of the cases severe or life-threatening?

We are aware that some individuals have reported significant symptoms. Public health authorities are leading all medical reporting, and we encourage anyone experiencing symptoms to seek medical care immediately.

9. Has anyone died?

There are currently no fatalities connected to Creamery products. If that changes, we will communicate immediately.

10. Were there any mistakes in the Creamery's safety procedures?

That is exactly what our investigation aims to determine. If something has failed, we will identify and correct it.

11. Is the campus dining safe?

All Creamery products have been removed from dining until full safety is verified.

Dining is sourcing alternatives temporarily.

12. How should the Creamery be trusted again?

We are halting production and implementing enhanced safety measures. We strive to be transparent and take responsibility to earn and keep the public's trust

13. Are you going to test employees for illnesses?

We are conducting internal health and safety evaluations and following the Department of Health's guidance.

14. Could this have been an intentional attack?

There is currently no evidence of intentional contamination. We are cooperating with all appropriate agencies.

15. Are people on campus in danger?

All potentially affected products have been removed, and health services are prepared to support anyone who may be sick.

16. Are any employees being disciplined or fired?

There is no evidence of employee misconduct at the time.

17. Did Penn State try to hide this?

No. We acted the moment a credible link was confirmed and notified the public and issued a recall immediately.

18. Will the university face any lawsuits?

We understand that people have concerns, and our priority right now is supporting those affected. Legal questions will be addressed once the investigation concludes.

19. What about products that have been shipped out?

Some products were shipped across the United States. Those customers have been notified and included in the recall.

20. Did the contamination occur before or after pasteurization?

That is a key part of our investigation, and all areas are being tested thoroughly. The public will be notified with updates.

21. How long will refunds take to process?

Our team is working fast to process refunds as quickly as possible.

22. Could this have been prevented with better management or oversight?

We are working to determine by investigation. If additional oversight is needed, that will be implemented.

23. What happens to the employees during the shutdown?

Employees will continue to be supported during this time. Our priority is maintaining stability for our workforce while ensuring that we safely resume operations.

24. How long will the Creamery be shut down?

We will reopen only when health experts confirm it is completely safe. We cannot provide a timeline right now.

25. What medical resources are available for the community?

Medical resources available include Penn State University Health Services, Penn State EMS, Mount Nittany Medical Center, Centre LifeLink EMS, local urgent care centers, and guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Health, CDC, and FDA.

## Fact Sheet on Organization (Brooke)

### General Overview:

- Name: The Penn State Berkey Creamery
- Location: University Park, PA
- Founded: 1865
- Affiliation: Part of the College of Agricultural Sciences at The Pennsylvania State University
- Mission: To support dairy education, research, and outreach while producing high-quality products for the campus and the greater public.

### Operations:

- Produces ice cream, cheese, milk, yogurt, and specialty dairy products.
- Serves as one of the largest university creameries in the United States.
- Provides hands-on experience for undergraduate and graduate students in Food Science, Animal Science, Agricultural Economics, Supply Chain, and Food Safety.

### Distribution:

- Products sold in on-campus retail stores, online nationwide shipping, select PA grocery stores, local restaurants, and catering partners.
- Shipping is limited to the continental United States only.
- Known for signature flavors like Death by Chocolate, Alumni Swirl, and Peachy Paterno.

### Regulations and Safety Framework:

- Follow safety guidelines from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, FDA Pasteurized Milk Ordinance, and Penn State Environmental Health & Safety.
- Conduct routines such as equipment sanitation, quality assurance inspections, and bacterial testing.

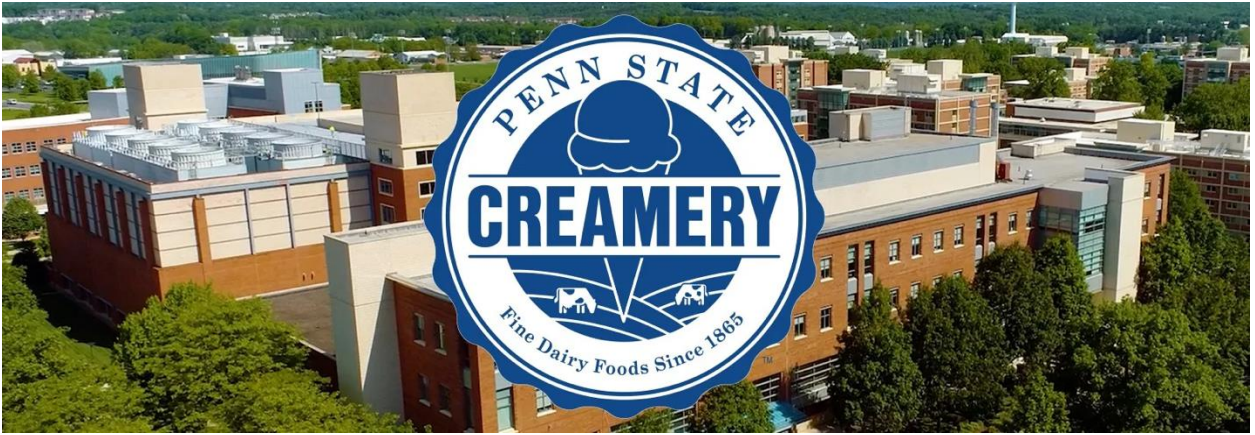
Staff and Structure:

- Overseen by Creamery Director/General Manager, Penn State Office of Strategic Communications, and the College of Agricultural Sciences Administration.
- Approximately 50+ employees, including food scientists, retail staff, production staff, and student workers

Public Presence:



- Highly visible brand in Pennsylvania and among Penn State Alumni
- Serves over 750,00 customers annually in-store and via events.
- Regularly partners with student organizations (ie: Bellisario College of Communication's Involvement Day and Penn State Athletics).

Photo (Mary)



# Dark Site (Mary)

<https://comm373finalproject.my.canva.site/>

	 Emergency Information Site
<a href="#">About the Creamery</a>	<h2>PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION NOTICE</h2> <p>Creamery Statement on Product Safety Investigation:</p> <p>Dear Students, Faculty, Staff, and Supporters of Penn State:</p> <p>As many of you are aware, the Penn State Creamery is currently responding to reports of an E. coli outbreak that may be linked to certain dairy products produced at our facility. Your long-standing support, trust, and loyalty to the Creamery have been invaluable, and we deeply appreciate the role you play in helping our institution maintain the highest standards in food safety and quality.</p> <p>Upon receiving notice of the potential outbreak, the Creamery immediately halted production of the possibly affected items and initiated a full internal review. We have also been cooperating closely with state health officials and independent food-safety experts to identify the source of contamination and ensure that all necessary corrective measures are implemented.</p> <p>Our foremost concern is the health and safety of our community. To anyone who has been affected during this situation, I want to express our sincere apologies. We understand the seriousness of foodborne illness and are committed to complete transparency as we work to resolve this matter. Updated information, including product recall details and answers to frequently asked questions, is available through our website. For guidance on symptoms, testing, or next steps, please see our Health &amp; Safety Information page.</p> <p>We are confident that the steps being taken now will strengthen safety protocols and help prevent similar issues in the future. Thank you for your patience, cooperation, and understanding as we navigate this situation.</p> <p>Tom Davis Executive General Manager The Penn State Creamery</p> <p>Official statement</p>
<a href="#">Our Safety Commitment</a>	
<a href="#">Our Mission and Ethics</a>	
<a href="#">Current Situation &amp; Updates</a>	
<a href="#">Confirmed Facts &amp; Clarifications</a>	
<a href="#">Timeline of Events</a>	
<a href="#">Health &amp; Safety Information</a>	
<a href="#">Product Recall Center</a>	
<a href="#">Testing &amp; Investigation Details</a>	
<a href="#">Media Information &amp; Press Resources</a>	
<a href="#">Frequently Asked Questions</a>	
<a href="#">Contact and Support</a>	<p>Click each tab for more information</p>

### **Prodromes for Crisis (Barbara)**

- Disgruntled employees
- Disgruntled customers
- Evidence of product tampering
- Reports of customer illness
- Delayed supply orders
- Concerns relayed by the Penn State Dairy Production Center
- Increase in faulty products during inspection
- Faulty equipment or technological concerns
- Improper adherence to safety and allergen protocol by staff both in the store and during production
- Recalls from suppliers
- Warnings posted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Center for Disease Prevention
- Failed inspection by the Bureau of Food Safety and Laboratory Services