

Louis B. Colameco, III , President  
Wellshire Farms, Inc  
509 Woodstown Road  
Swedesboro, NJ 08085

Mr. Calameco,

As a gluten-free consumer, I would like to thank you for taking an interest in the celiac, gluten-intolerant, and wheat-allergic community by providing gluten-free foods. As a family with celiac children and adults, we are constantly looking for delicious and safe products to enjoy.

I am disappointed however, that your products are not safe despite a claim to be gluten-free, for those of us who have to avoid wheat and gluten. A recent article in the Chicago Tribune has illuminated this problem. When they had your "gluten-free" products tested, they ranged from 116 ppm of gluten all the way to 2,200 ppm of gluten. None of these numbers is safe for us. If, as you state in a letter on your website, that your understanding of the Tribune's article is that it was about children with anaphylaxis reactions, your cavalier position about the safety of your products labeled gluten-free is even more concerning. Those children may die on the spot from eating your products. My children are going to suffer intestinal damage that could cause other long-term health problems.

It is not just the University of Nebraska's testing that showed high levels of gluten. Wellshire Farms' own tests showed levels of 120 to 200 ppm, and that is only the information that you gave to the press.

It would appear from your response letter dated Nov 21, 2008 on your website that Wellshire Farms is not following its own philosophy "to live well, you must eat well." For me this message also translates to "do no harm."

Based on your letter, I know that you are aware the FDA has not finalized its ruling for the labeling of foods gluten-free, and that the USDA does not have a definition of gluten-free. However, you also know that the FDA is planning to use 20 ppm or less of gluten as the definition for gluten-free. It is my understanding that the USDA is considering adopting the FDA's definition as well. Even the World Health Organization's Codex has adopted 20 ppm or less of gluten.

Wellshire Farms is not living up to this standard, and is not creating gluten-free food.

Your letter states being gluten-free "...will be difficult to achieve as wheat and other grains can become cross contaminated from growth in the fields, or milling in the combines. It becomes very, very difficult if not impossible to control..." At the same time you misinterpret the FDA's definition, as it does define prohibited grains as being wheat, rye and barley. 20 ppm is considered a safe level based on scientific studies and accounts for the content in a finished product, so gluten-containing ingredients cannot be hidden as a processing aid. You are also incorrect in believing that this could be impossible to control. Other brands with products similar to yours are able to achieve this level of quality control. Both USDA and FDA regulated companies are doing it successfully.

The gluten-free/wheat-free community is in desperate need of safe food. Wellshire Farms, however, has betrayed our trust. Earning it back could be difficult.

I strongly suggest that you work with the Gluten-Free Certification Organization (GFCO) to earn our trust. GFCO is a third party auditing organization that has set the highest standards in the industry for certifying products gluten-free. They certify both USDA and FDA products in the US and Canada. Consumers look for the "Certified Gluten-Free" mark on packages. It is a mark they trust. By certifying, Wellshire Farms will truly show the gluten-free community that you have reached the highest standards for gluten-free and your products are safe.

Sincerely,