

FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT
COUNTY OF SANTA FE
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

SCOTT VOORHEES, as Guardian ad Litem for
Chris Wallace,

Plaintiff,

v.

Cause No. D-101-CV-2013-02028

FRONTERA PRODUCE LTD., a foreign
corporation; PRIMUS GROUP, INC.,
a foreign corporation, d/b/a "Primus Labs";
WALMART STORES, INC., a foreign
corporation; and JOHN DOES 1-10,

Defendants.

FIRST AMENDED COMPLAINT FOR PERSONAL INJURIES

COMES NOW the Plaintiff above-named, by and through his attorneys of record, Youtz & Valdez, PC, and Marler Clark, LLP, and for his cause of action against the Defendants above-named complains, alleges, and states as follows:

I. PARTIES

1. The Plaintiff Scott Vorhees, Esq., is the duly appointed Guardian ad Litem for Chris Wallace. Mr. Wallace is a 53 year old man who suffered a brain injury, among other injuries, as a result of the incident alleged herein. Mr. Vorhees is a resident of Santa Fe County, New Mexico.

2. At all times relevant to this action, Frontera Produce Ltd. (Frontera), was a manufacturer, distributor and seller of agricultural products in New Mexico, including cantaloupe. Frontera is a Texas company with a principal place of business located in Texas as well.

3. At all times relevant to this action, Primus Group, Inc. d/b/a “Primus Labs” (Primus), was a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of California, with its principal place of business in California as well. At all times relevant to this action, Primus was a company that, among other things, provided auditing services for agricultural and other businesses involved in the manufacture and sale of food products, including in the State of Colorado. On information and belief, Primus retained the services of certain subcontractors, including a Texas company called Bio Food Safety, to provide auditing services, including the audit described in more detail at paragraph 19.

4. The Defendant Walmart Stores, Inc. (“Walmart”) is a foreign corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of Delaware that maintains and operates a retail store known as Walmart, which sells various food and other products, located at 1 I 25 Bypass, Belen, New Mexico. At all times relevant hereto, Walmart was a manufacturer, distributor and seller of food products in New Mexico, including cantaloupe.

5. Upon information and belief, the Defendants John Does 1-10 are entities who participated in the manufacture, distribution, and/or sale of the contaminated food product that was the proximate cause of the Plaintiffs’ injuries and damages, and whose identities are not known to the Plaintiffs at this time. The Plaintiffs will seek leave of the Court to amend this Complaint at such time that the identities of these parties become known.

II. FACTS

The Outbreak

6. On September 2, 2011, the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment (CDPHE) announced that it was investigating an outbreak of Listeriosis. On September 9, 2011, CDPHE announced that the likely source of the *Listeria* outbreak was

cantaloupe. On September 12, 2011 CDPHE announced that the outbreak of *Listeria* was linked to cantaloupe from the Rocky Ford (Colorado) growing region. It was subsequently determined that contaminated cantaloupes were grown by Jensen Farms, a Colorado company, and distributed by Defendant Frontera.

7. A total of 147 persons infected with any of the five outbreak-associated strains of *Listeria monocytogenes* were reported to CDC from 28 states. The number of infected persons identified in each state was as follows: Alabama (1), Arkansas (1), California (4), Colorado (40), Idaho (2), Illinois (4), Indiana (3), Iowa (1), Kansas (11), Louisiana (2), Maryland (1), Missouri (7), Montana (2), Nebraska (6), Nevada (1), New Mexico (15), New York (2), North Dakota (2), Oklahoma (12), Oregon (1), Pennsylvania (1), South Dakota (1), Texas (18), Utah (1), Virginia (1), West Virginia (1), Wisconsin (2), and Wyoming (4).

8. Among persons for whom information was available, reported illness onset ranged from July 31, 2011 through October 27, 2011. Ages ranged from <1 to 96 years, with a median age of 77 years. Most cases were over 60 years old. Fifty-eight percent of cases were female. Among the 144 ill persons with available information on whether they were hospitalized, 142 (99%) were hospitalized.

9. Thirty three deaths were reported. Among persons who died, ages ranged from 48 to 96 years, with a median age of 82.5 years. In addition, one woman pregnant at the time of illness had a miscarriage. Seven of the illnesses were related to a pregnancy; three were diagnosed in newborns and four were diagnosed in pregnant women.

10. On or about September 19, 2011, the Food and Drug Administration announced that it found *Listeria monocytogenes* in samples of Jensen Farms' Rocky Ford-brand cantaloupe taken from a Denver-area store and on samples taken from equipment and cantaloupe at the

Jensen Farms' packing facility. Tests confirmed that the *Listeria monocytogenes* found in the samples matches one of the multiple different strains of *Listeria monocytogenes* associated with the multi-state outbreak of listeriosis.

11. Jensen Farms recalled its Rocky Ford-brand cantaloupes on September 14, 2011 in response to the multi-state outbreak of listeriosis.

The July 25, 2011 Audit of Jensen Farms

12. Prior to the outbreak described in paragraphs 6 through 11, Jensen Farms or Frontera, or both of them, contracted with Defendant Primus to conduct an audit of Jensen Farms' ranchlands and packing house.

13. It was the intent of these contracting parties—i.e. Jensen Farms or Frontera, or both of them, and Primus—to ensure that the facilities, premises, and procedures used by Jensen Farms in the production of cantaloupes met or exceeded applicable standards of care related to the production of cantaloupe, including, but not limited to, good agricultural and manufacturing practices, industry standards, and relevant FDA industry guidance. It was further the intent of these contracting parties to ensure that the food products that Jensen Farms produced, and that Frontera distributed, would be of high quality for consumers, and would not be contaminated by potentially lethal pathogens, like *Listeria*.

14. Prior to the formation of the contract described at paragraph 12, Frontera represented to the public generally, and specifically to the retail sellers of its produce products, including cantaloupes, that its various products were “Primus Certified.”

15. It was Frontera's intent and expectation that the representation set forth in the preceding paragraph would serve as an inducement for the purchase of its various products,

including cantaloupes, and that consumers, ultimate retailers, and itself would all benefit from Primus's audit and certification by having a high quality product.

16. After the formation of the contract described at paragraph 12, Primus selected and hired Bio Food Safety, a Texas-based auditing company, to conduct the audit of Jensen Farms. Bio Food Safety thereby became Primus's subcontractor, and agent, for the limited purpose of auditing Jensen Farms.

17. Defendant Primus held itself out as an expert in the field of food safety, including specifically, though not exclusively, in the analysis and assessment of food safety procedures, facility design and maintenance, and Good Agricultural and Manufacturing Practices, and other applicable standards of care incumbent on producers of agricultural products, including cantaloupes.

18. By auditing companies involved in the production and distribution of food products, Primus intended to aid such companies in ensuring that the food products produced were of high quality, were fit for human consumption, and were not contaminated by a potentially lethal pathogen, like *Listeria*.

19. Bio Food Safety auditor James Dilorio conducted an audit at Jensen Farms' ranchlands and packing facility on or about July 25, 2011, roughly one week before the CDC identified the first victim of the cantaloupe *Listeria* outbreak. Mr. Dilorio, as employee and agent of Bio Food Safety, and as agent of Primus, gave the Jensen Farms packing house a "superior" rating, and a score of 96%.

20. On or about September 10, 2011, officials from both FDA and Colorado, conducted an inspection at Jensen Farms during which FDA collected multiple samples,

including whole cantaloupes and environmental (non-product) samples from within the facility, for purposes of laboratory testing.

21. Of the 39 environmental samples collected from within the facility, 13 were confirmed positive for *Listeria monocytogenes* with pulsed-field gel electrophoresis (PFGE) pattern combinations that were indistinguishable from at least three of the five outbreak strains collected from outbreak cases. Cantaloupe collected from the firm's cold storage during the inspection also tested positive for *Listeria monocytogenes* with PFGE pattern combinations that were indistinguishable from at least two of the five outbreak strains.

22. After isolating at least three of the five outbreak strains of *Listeria monocytogenes* from Jensen Farms' packing house and whole cantaloupes collected from cold storage, the FDA initiated an environmental assessment at Jensen Farms, in which the FDA was assisted by Colorado state and local officials.

23. The environmental assessment at Jensen Farms occurred on September 22-23, 2011. Findings from this assessment, set forth in the FDA's report dated October 19, 2011, included, but were not limited to, the following:

- a. **Facility Design:** Certain aspects of the packing facility, including the location of a refrigeration unit drain line, allowed for water to pool on the packing facility floor in areas adjacent to packing facility equipment. Wet environments are known to be potential reservoirs for *Listeria monocytogenes* and the pooling of water in close proximity to packing equipment, including conveyors, may have extended and spread the pathogen to food contact surfaces. Samples collected from areas where pooled water had gathered tested positive for an outbreak strain of *Listeria monocytogenes*. Therefore, this aspect of facility design is a factor that may have contributed to the introduction, growth, or spread of *Listeria monocytogenes*. This pathogen is likely to establish niches and harborage in refrigeration units and other areas where water pools or accumulates.

Further, the packing facility floor where water pooled was directly under the packing facility equipment from which FDA collected environmental samples that tested positive for *Listeria monocytogenes* with PFGE pattern combinations that were indistinguishable from outbreak strains. The packing facility floor was constructed in a manner that was not easily cleanable. Specifically, the trench drain was not accessible for adequate

cleaning. This may have served as a harborage site for *Listeria monocytogenes* and, therefore, is a factor that may have contributed to the introduction, growth, or spread of the pathogen.

b. **Equipment Design:** FDA evaluated the design of the equipment used in the packing facility to identify factors that may have contributed to the growth or spread of *Listeria monocytogenes*. In July 2011, the firm purchased and installed equipment for its packing facility that had been previously used at a firm producing a different raw agricultural commodity.

The design of the packing facility equipment, including equipment used to wash and dry the cantaloupe, did not lend itself to be easily or routinely cleaned and sanitized. Several areas on both the washing and drying equipment appeared to be un-cleanable, and dirt and product buildup was visible on some areas of the equipment, even after it had been disassembled, cleaned, and sanitized. Corrosion was also visible on some parts of the equipment. Further, because the equipment is not easily cleanable and was previously used for handling another raw agricultural commodity with different washing and drying requirements, *Listeria monocytogenes* could have been introduced as a result of past use of the equipment.

The design of the packing facility equipment, especially that it was not easily amenable to cleaning and sanitizing and that it contained visible product buildup, is a factor that likely contributed to the introduction, growth, or spread of *Listeria monocytogenes*. Cantaloupe that is washed, dried, and packed on unsanitary food contact surfaces could be contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes* or could collect nutrients for *Listeria monocytogenes* growth on the cantaloupe rind.

c. **Postharvest Practices:** In addition, free moisture or increased water activity of the cantaloupe rind from postharvest washing procedures may have facilitated *Listeria monocytogenes* survival and growth. After harvest, the cantaloupes were placed in cold storage. The cantaloupes were not pre-cooled to remove field heat before cold storage. Warm fruit with field heat potentially created conditions that would allow the formation of condensation, which is an environment ideal for *Listeria monocytogenes* growth.

The combined factors of the availability of nutrients on the cantaloupe rind, increased rind water activity, and lack of pre-cooling before cold storage may have provided ideal conditions for *Listeria monocytogenes* to grow and out compete background microflora during cold storage. Samples of cantaloupe collected from refrigerated cold storage tested positive for *Listeria monocytogenes* with PFGE pattern combinations that were indistinguishable from two of the four outbreak strains.

24. In October and December 2011, FDA officials participated in briefings with the House Committee on Energy and Commerce that were held to further investigate the likely causes of the *Listeria* outbreak that is the subject of this action. At these briefings, FDA officials

cited multiple failures at Jensen Farms, which, according to a report issued by the Committee, “reflected a general lack of awareness of food safety principles.” Those failures included:

24.1 Condensation from cooling systems draining directly onto the floor;

24.2 Poor drainage resulting in water pooling around the food processing equipment;

24.3 Inappropriate food processing equipment which was difficult to clean (i.e., *Listeria* found on the felt roller brushes);

24.4 No antimicrobial solution, such as chlorine, in the water used to wash the cantaloupes; and

24.5 No equipment to remove field heat from the cantaloupes before they were placed into cold storage.

25. The audit conducted by Mr. Dilorio on or about July 25, 2011, on behalf of Defendant Primus, found many aspects of Jensen Farms’ facility, equipment and procedures that the FDA heavily criticized to be in “total compliance.”

26. Further, during the July 25, 2011 packing house audit conducted by Bio Food Safety, as agent for Primus, Mr. Dilorio failed to observe, or properly downscore or consider, multiple conditions or practices that were in violation of Primus’s audit standards applicable to cantaloupe packing houses, industry standards, and applicable FDA industry guidance. The true and actual state of these conditions and practices was inconsistent and irreconcilable with the “superior” rating, and 96% score, that Mr. Dilorio ultimately gave to Jensen Farms packing house.

27. These conditions or practices included, but were not limited to:

27.1 Jensen Farms’ inability to control pests;

27.2 Jensen Farms’ use of equipment that was inappropriate for the processing of cantaloupes;

27.3 Jensen Farms' failure to use an antimicrobial in its wash system, or in the solution used to sanitize processing equipment;

27.4 Jensen Farms' failure to ensure the appropriate antimicrobial concentration in its wash water, which, as alleged at paragraph 24.4, did not contain any antimicrobial at all;

27.5 Jensen Farms' failure to have hot water available for purposes of handwashing;

27.6 The design of Jensen Farms' packing house caused water to pool, creating a harborage site for bacteria;

27.7 Jensen Farms' failure to precool cantaloupes prior to processing.

28. Many of the conditions and practices cited in the preceding paragraph, and others, should have caused Jensen Farms to receive a score that would have caused its packing house to fail the July 25, 2011 audit.

29. In addition, Mr. Dilorio misrepresented the conditions and practices at Jensen Farms' packing house by giving it a "superior" rating and a score of 96%, despite the existence of conditions and practices that should have caused him to fail the facility. Mr. Dilorio made other material misrepresentations—including, but not limited to, statements about the suitability of equipment in place at the packing house for the processing of cantaloupes—all of which were relied on by Jensen Farms as justification for continuing to use, rather than changing or improving, the various conditions, practices, and equipment for its processing of cantaloupes.

30. Had the Jensen Farms' packing house failed the July 25, 2011 audit, the cantaloupe that caused the Plaintiffs' Listeriosis illness would not have been distributed by Jensen Farms and Frontera. Further, had the Jensen Farms packing house failed the July 25, 2011 audit, production would not have continued without Jensen Farms first correcting the various conditions and practices that (a) should have caused the packing house to fail the July 25 audit and (b) were proximate causes of the outbreak that is the subject of this action.

Listeriosis

31. Listeriosis is a serious illness that is caused by eating food contaminated with the bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes*. Although there are other types of *Listeria*, most cases of listeriosis are caused by *Listeria monocytogenes*. *Listeria* is found in soil and water. Vegetables can become contaminated from the soil or from manure used as fertilizer. Animals can carry the bacterium without appearing ill and can contaminate foods of animal origin, such as meats and dairy products. *Listeria* has been found in a variety of raw foods, such as uncooked meats and unpasteurized (raw) milk or foods made from unpasteurized milk. *Listeria* is killed by pasteurization and cooking; however, in certain ready-to-eat foods, like hot dogs and cold cuts from the deli counter, contamination may occur after cooking but before packaging.

32. Although healthy persons may consume contaminated foods without becoming ill, those at increased risk for infection may become ill with listeriosis after eating food contaminated with even a few bacteria.

33. A person with listeriosis may develop fever, muscle aches, and sometimes gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea or diarrhea. If infection spreads to the nervous system, symptoms such as headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance, or convulsions can occur. In immune-deficient individuals, *Listeria* can invade the central nervous system, causing meningitis and/or encephalitis (brain infection). Infected pregnant women ordinarily experience only a mild, flu-like illness; however, infection during pregnancy can lead to miscarriage, infection of the newborn or even stillbirth. The most recent data suggest that about 2,500 illnesses and 500 deaths are attributed to listeriosis in the United States annually.

Chris Wallace's Listeriosis Illness

34. On or about August 2, 2011, Chris Wallace purchased a cantaloupe at Defendant

Walmart's store located at 1 I 25 Bypass, Belen, New Mexico. Mr. Wallace consumed the cantaloupe in the days following this purchase. The cantaloupe, which was contaminated by *Listeria monocytogenes*, had been grown by Jensen Farms.

35. On or about the end of Labor Day weekend 2011, Mr. Wallace fell ill with symptoms caused by the *Listeria* infection he acquired from the cantaloupe described in the foregoing paragraph. On or about September 7, 2011, his partner Alan Tomalavage saw behaviors in Mr. Wallace that caused him to believe that Mr. Wallace had suffered a stroke.

36. Mr. Tomalavage rushed Mr. Wallace to the emergency department at Lovelace Medical Center the same day. Mr. Wallace was admitted to the hospital in a confusional state, and was believed to be suffering from meningitis.

37. In the days that followed, Mr. Wallace remained markedly confused and had to have a feeding tube inserted. He underwent an array of diagnostic tests to determine what had caused his severe illness.

38. Ultimately, Mr. Wallace remained at Lovelace Medical Center until September 16, 2011, at which point he was admitted to Lovelace Rehabilitation. This admission lasted only a few days, however, before Mr. Wallace's condition deteriorated, and he was re-admitted to Lovelace Medical Center on or about September 21, 2011

39. At Lovelace Medical Center, Mr. Wallace again submitted to multiple diagnostic tests, including head CT scans and MRIs, to determine the extent of the neurological injury that he had suffered. His physicians believed that he was suffering from an infection. Mr. Wallace was admitted to the Neuro subacute care unit, where he continued treatment with antibiotics, seizure prophylaxis, and other modes of treatment.

40. On or about September 24, 2011, Mr. Wallace underwent a neuropsychiatric

evaluation, given the concerning brain lesions found on MRI and his clinical illness. During the evaluation, Mr. Wallace was severely amnesic and unable to give any history.

41. On or about September 28, 2011, one of Mr. Wallace's physicians described his encephalitis as rhombencephalitis,¹ which is a brainstem and/or cerebellar condition demonstrated clinically or by neuroimaging, with pleocytosis (>4 cells/mm) in cerebrospinal fluid. The physician noted that the condition has a known association with *Listeria* infection. The physician advised continuation of an empiric course of ampicillin for six weeks, particularly given the recent community outbreak of *Listeria* infections.

42. Mr. Wallace was discharged on or about October 3, 2011, and was continued on treatment for a suspected *Listeria* infection.

43. Mr. Wallace has had substantial follow-up medical care, primarily for his neurological injuries, which continue to the present. The effects of Mr. Wallace's traumatic brain injury are permanent.

III. CAUSE OF ACTION AGAINST FRONTERA AND WALMART: STRICT LIABILITY

44. Plaintiff realleges and incorporates each and every allegation contained in paragraphs 1 through 43, above, as though set forth fully herein.

45. The Defendants Frontera and Walmart manufactured and sold the adulterated food that injured and caused Mr. Wallace's injuries.

46. The Defendants Frontera and Walmart manufactured food products, and in particular, cantaloupe for sale to the public.

47. Cantaloupe that is contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes* is unsafe and thus

¹ A. Falini, C. Kesavadas, *et. al.* [Differential diagnosis of posterior fossa multiple sclerosis lesions - neuroradiological aspects.](#) *CURRENT NEUROLOGY AND NEUROSCIENCE REPORTS*, Volume 11, Number 6 (2011), 543-552.

defective when used in a reasonably foreseeable manner—*i.e.*, consuming it.

48. *Listeria monocytogenes*-contaminated cantaloupe is unfit for human consumption, and poses an unreasonable risk of injury to consumers because reasonably prudent persons, having full knowledge of the risk, would find the risk unacceptable.

49. The cantaloupe that Mr. Wallace purchased and consumed from the Defendants Frontera and Walmart was contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes* and was, as a result, defective and unreasonably dangerous.

50. The cantaloupe that Mr. Wallace purchased and consumed was contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes* when it left the control of Frontera and Walmart.

51. Mr. Wallace's consumption of the contaminated cantaloupe caused him to become infected with *Listeria monocytogenes* and suffer injury and damages as a direct and proximate result.

52. Defendants Frontera and Walmart are strictly liable to the Plaintiff for the harm proximately caused by the manufacture and sale of an unsafe and defective cantaloupe.

**IV. CAUSE OF ACTION AGAINST FRONTERA
AND WALMART: NEGLIGENCE and NEGLIGENCE PER SE**

53. Plaintiff realleges and incorporates each and every allegation contained in paragraphs 1 through 52, above, as though set forth fully herein.

54. Frontera and Walmart designed, manufactured, distributed, and sold cantaloupes that were contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes*, a deadly pathogen.

55. Frontera and Walmart owed a duty to all persons who consumed their products, including Mr. Wallace, to manufacture and sell cantaloupes that were safe to eat, that were not adulterated with deadly pathogens, like *Listeria monocytogenes*, and that were not in violation of applicable food and safety regulations.

56. Frontera and Walmart owed a duty to all persons who consumed its products, including Mr. Wallace, to ensure that any representations regarding the certifications its products had undergone prior to distribution and sale were made with reasonable care. With respect to the representation that its products were “Primus Certified,” described at paragraph 14, Frontera and Walmart owed a duty to all persons who consumed its products, including Mr. Wallace, to conduct reasonable investigation into the competence and reliability of the subcontractors retained by Primus.

57. Frontera and Walmart owed a duty to Mr. Wallace to comply with all statutes, laws, regulations, or safety codes pertaining to the manufacture, distribution, storage, and sale of their food product, but failed to do so, and were therefore negligent. Mr. Wallace was among the class of persons designed to be protected by these statutes, laws, regulations, safety codes or provision pertaining to the manufacture, distribution, storage, and sale of similar food products.

58. Frontera and Walmart owed a duty to all persons who consumed their cantaloupes to maintain their premises in a sanitary and safe condition so that the cantaloupes they manufactured and sold would not be contaminated with a deadly pathogen, like *Listeria monocytogenes*.

59. Frontera and Walmart breached the duties owed to the ultimate consumers of their cantaloupe products by committing the following acts and omissions of negligence:

59.1 Failed to adequately maintain or monitor the sanitary conditions of their products, premises, equipment and employees;

59.2 Failed to properly operate their facilities and equipment in a safe, clean, and sanitary manner;

59.3 Failed to apply their food safety policies and procedures to ensure the safety and sanitary conditions of their food products, premises, and employees;

59.4 Failed to apply food safety policies and procedures that met industry standards for the safe and sanitary production of food products, and the safety and sanitary condition of their premises and employees;

59.5 Failed to prevent the transmission of *Listeria monocytogenes* to consumers of their cantaloupe;

59.6 Failed to properly train their employees and agents how to prevent the transmission of *Listeria monocytogenes* on their premises, from their facility or equipment, or in their food products;

59.7 Failed to properly supervise their employees and agents to prevent the transmission of *Listeria monocytogenes* on their premises, from their facility or equipment, or in their food products;

59.8 Failed to test their cantaloupes for microbial pathogens, like *Listeria monocytogenes*.

60. Frontera and Walmart had a duty to comply with all statutory and regulatory provisions that pertained or applied to the manufacture, distribution, storage, labeling, and sale of their food products.

61. Frontera and Walmart owed a duty to Mr. Wallace to use reasonable care in the manufacture, distribution, and sale of their food products, to prevent contamination with *Listeria monocytogenes*. The Defendants breached this duty.

62. The Plaintiffs' injuries and damages proximately and directly resulted from the negligence of the Defendants Frontera and Walmart, and from those Defendants' violations of statutes, laws, regulations, and safety codes pertaining to the manufacture, distribution, storage, and sale of food.

V. CAUSE OF ACTION AGAINST FRONTERA AND WALMART: BREACH OF WARRANTY

63. Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate each and every allegation contained in paragraphs 1 through 62, above, as though set forth fully herein.

64. By offering cantaloupe for sale to the general public, Frontera and Walmart impliedly warranted that such cantaloupe was safe to eat, that it was not adulterated with a deadly pathogen, and that the cantaloupe had been safely prepared under sanitary conditions.

65. Frontera and Walmart breached the implied warranties with regard to the food and drink they manufactured and sold to Mr. Wallace.

66. The Plaintiff's injuries proximately and directly resulted from Defendant Frontera and Walmart's breach of implied warranties, and the Plaintiff is thus entitled to recover for all actual, consequential, and incidental damages that flow directly and in a foreseeable fashion from these breaches.

VI: CAUSE OF ACTION AGAINST PRIMUS: NEGLIGENCE

67. Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate each and every allegation contained in paragraphs 1 through 66, above, as though set forth fully herein.

68. Defendant Primus, as principal in the agency relationship between itself and Bio Food Safety, the auditor that conducted the audit of Jensen Farms ranchlands and packing house described at paragraph 19, is bound by, and liable for, the acts and omissions of negligence of Bio Food Safety and its employees.

69. As the primary contractor for the Jensen Farms audit in July 2011, Primus owed a duty to those people that it knew, or had reason to know, would be the ultimate consumers of Jensen Farms products, including Mr. Wallace, to act with reasonable care in the selection, approval, and monitoring of subcontractors. Primus breached this duty.

70. The audit done by James Dilorio on July 25, 2011 was not done with reasonable care, and constituted a breach of the duty of reasonable care that Primus owed to the consumers of Jensen Farms/Frontera cantaloupes. Mr. Dilorio's various acts and omissions of negligence in

the conduct of the audit include specifically, but not exclusively, his failures to identify that the equipment and facility design and maintenance generally posed an unreasonable risk of harm to consumers of the facility's cantaloupes because the equipment and facility design and maintenance encouraged bacterial growth and proliferation, and ultimately contamination of cantaloupes, and other failures described at paragraphs 25 – 30.

71. Mr. Dilorio's various acts and omissions of negligence, in conjunction with the negligence of Primus in selecting, approving, and monitoring Bio Food Safety as auditor of Jensen Farms' facility, and with Bio Food Safety's negligence in hiring, training, and supervising Mr. Dilorio as auditor, constituted a proximate cause of Mr. Wallace's Listeriosis illness and related injuries.

72. Because Bio Food Safety was an agent of Primus for purposes of Mr. Dilorio's negligently conducted audit of Jensen Farms on July 25, 2011, and because Primus committed acts and omissions of negligence that constituted a proximate cause of Mr. Wallace's injuries and damages, Defendant Primus is liable to the Plaintiff for all injuries, damages and losses.

VII. DAMAGES

73. Plaintiff realleges and incorporates each and every allegation contained in paragraphs 1 through 72, above, as though set forth fully herein.

74. As the direct and proximate result of the Defendants' acts and omissions, the Plaintiff suffered and is entitled to recover compensation for damages including medical expenses both past and future, pain and suffering, disfigurement, the loss of enjoyment of his life, lost wages and lost earning capacity, loss of consortium damages and other damages as would be anticipated to arise under the circumstances, which shall be fully proven at the time of trial. Further, Defendants' acts were malicious, willful, reckless, wanton, fraudulent and in bad

faith necessitating the award of punitive damages.

VIII. PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff prays as follows:

(1) That the Court award the Plaintiff judgment against Defendant to fully and fairly compensate the Plaintiff for all general, special, incidental, and consequential damages incurred, or to be incurred, by the Plaintiff as the direct and proximate result of the acts and omissions of the Defendants.

(2) That the Court award punitive damages against the Defendants for their malicious, willful, reckless, wanton, fraudulent and bad faith conduct.

(3) That the Court award all such other sums as shall be determined to fully and fairly compensate the Plaintiff for all general, special, incidental and consequential damages incurred, or to be incurred, by the Plaintiff as the direct and proximate result of the acts and omissions of the Defendants;

(4) That the Court award the Plaintiff his costs, disbursements, and reasonable attorneys' fees incurred;

(5) That the Court award the Plaintiff the opportunity to amend or modify the provisions of this Complaint as necessary or appropriate after additional or further discovery is completed in this matter, and after all appropriate parties have been served;

(6) That the Court award such other and further relief as it deems necessary and proper in the circumstances.

DATED this 6TH day of August, 2013.

Respectfully submitted,

YOUTZ & VALDEZ, P.C.

Electronically signed /s/ Gabrielle M. Valdez

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