



AR You Cereus?

Overview of *Bacillus cereus* outbreak at SW AR mobile food unit

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FDA

ARRT

Public health touches the lives of everyone in Arkansas, OUR state. ARRT has a key role in protecting and improving the health of Arkansans.

The Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) is a centralized agency, with the main office located in Little Rock. Local public and environmental health services are provided in each of the 75 counties by at least one public health unit in each county.

The pandemic brought public health into the spotlight. Since then, agencies have worked to improve preparedness, readiness, and responsiveness. ADH applied for partnership with FDA in developing and implementing a Rapid Response Team. Arkansas was one of three recipients in 2023 for funding to become an FDA partner.

In November, Chuck Dumas became the RRT Coordinator in AR. The initial implementation activities included classes, trainings, and travel. Now in year two of the developmental phase, the program has received recognition and participation is growing, both internally and externally to ADH. RRT has collaborated with OneHealth-AR, AR Game and Fish Commission (AGFC), Outbreak Response Nurses, Communicable Disease Nurse Specialists, and FDA RRT.

Successes have been numerous and include establishment of the ARRT SOC (Steering Oversight Committee). This committee is a 7-member panel whose role is to help guide the RRT in adherence to the ADH vision and mission. The SOC is comprised of RRT Coordinator, Retail Food Section Chief, Wholesale/Manufacturing Section Chief, ORS Coordinator, Regional EH Manager, Regional Retail Food Specialist, and one EHS. In addition, the ADH Senior Scientist and Deputy Director for Public Health Programs are included for reference and consultation.

"It is my honor and pleasure to help the ADH build a new program to rapidly respond to foodborne illness and outbreaks. I look forward to continuing to grow and build this program for our Arkansas." Chuck Dumas- RRT Coordinator

Notable Events- national and local (AR)

- Cinnamon Applesauce- Lead & Chromium- **national**
- Popular LR Asian Restaurant- *Salmonella spp.*- **local**
- Giardia in corrections facility- **local**
- Food Establishment Harrison- voluntary closure- **local**
- Shaved Ice truck in Pope Co- 100+ ill- **local**
- AR Girls State- NEA University- 70+ ill- **local**
- Diamond Shroomz- **national**
- Boar's Head deli meats- *Listeria*- **national**
- NWA Ramen Shop- *Salmonella spp.*- **local**
- SW AR Food Truck- *B. Cereus*- local**
- NEA Mobile Food Unit- *Salmonella spp.*- **local**
- Slivered Onions- *E. coli*- **national**
- Carrots- *E. coli*- **national**
- Super Brand ground cinnamon- Lead- local & national**

Cereusly- The Outbreak

07/09/24- Local EHS received info that there might be an issue with this Mobile Food Unit (MFU)- 3 ill persons but no lab confirmations.

- 07/09/24- Local EHS visits MFU and conducts risk-based assessment
- No CFM
 - Out of compliance for hand washing, cooling time and temperature, cold holding temperatures, date marking and disposition, facilities clean
 - Cooked rice samples collected

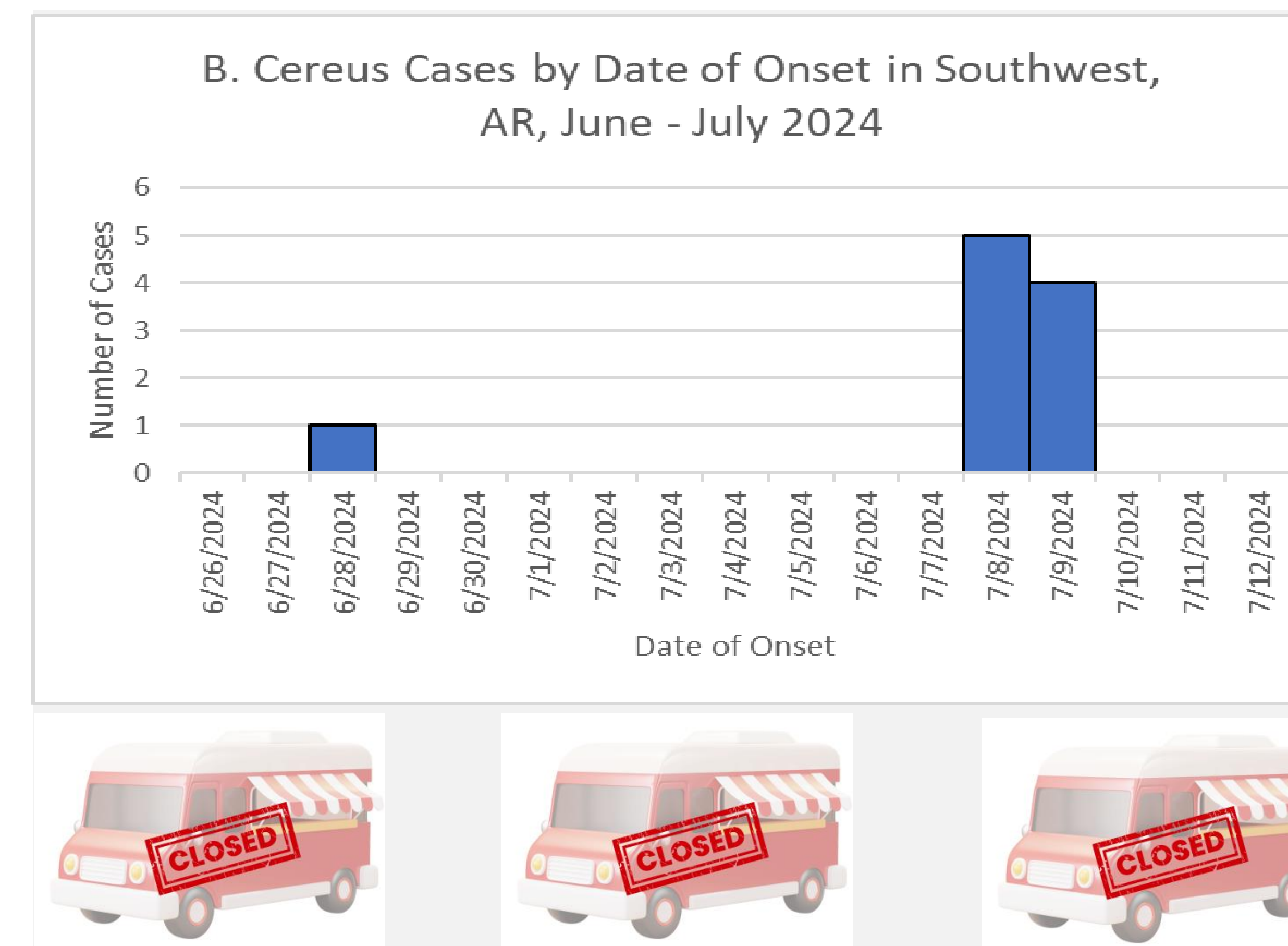
07/09/24- ADH central office notified of social media posts/comments- gaining traction and momentum

07/10/24- 4 complaints reported

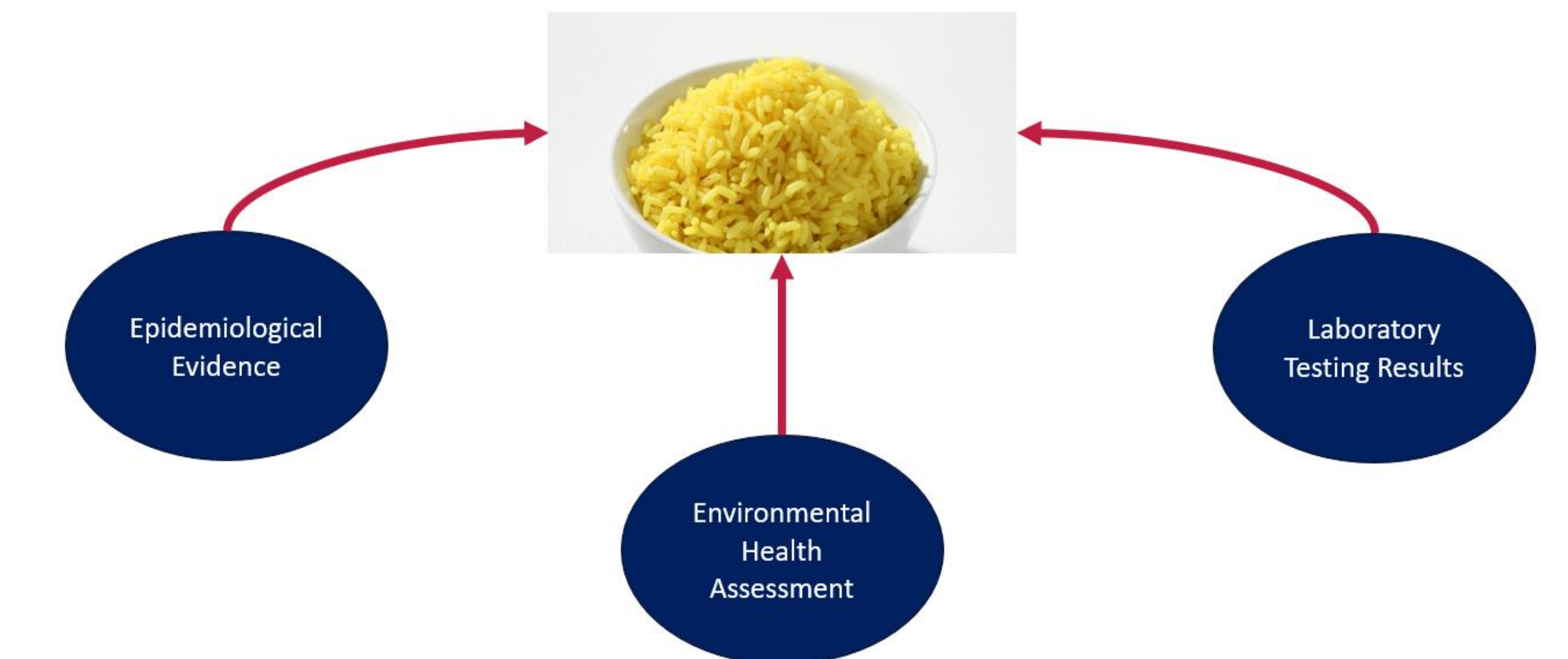
- 07/10/24- EH Manager visited the MFU as part of the investigation:
- Insects inside the unit
 - All rice from the previous day was discarded*
 - Samples of Big Yum sauce collected as there was nothing else available.

07/10/24- Samples delivered to Public Health Lab (PHL) in Little Rock

07/10/24- MFU voluntarily closed and remained closed until a follow up inspection was conducted.



Food items consumed by cases: fried rice (10/10), chicken (8/10), big yum sauce (7/10), broccoli (6/10), onion (6/10), zucchini (6/10), carrots (5/10), steak (5/10), and noodles (2/10).



07/12/24- EH Manager develops a Risk Control Plan based on the specific observations. The Risk control plan is discussed with and issued to owner.

07/15/24- PHL results identified *Bacillus cereus* at 17,000,000 CFU/g

07/15/24- Rice samples collected from 3 additional locations across SW AR

- All samples collected were negative

Final disposition- 10 cases identified; the owner has permanently closed the location

Leaded or Unleaded



In conjunction with the PHL Lab Flexible Funding Model (LFFM), ADH Wholesale/Manufacturing staff routinely collects samples for testing. Staff visited a central Arkansas Asian Supermarket and collected samples of Super Brand Dried Cinnamon Powder. LFFM requires a minimum of 12 samples from the same lot. After testing, the sample results indicated excessive amounts of lead which led to a national health alert and a recall.

Giant Apple Snail Collaboration



AGFC asked ADH for assistance with a potential nuisance concern. ARRT responded by working with AGFC to create a "1 Pager" information sheet. The ADH retail food team distributed the information to all fish, seafood, and crawfish markets, suppliers, and distributors in AR. This represented the first RRT partnership external to ADH.

Spring Training- Memphis- ER324



ADH sent 10 staff as part of the FDA sponsored Rapid Response Team partnership to the Epi-Ready for Response Teams class in Memphis. The classes focused on sharpening the preparedness and processes necessary for responding to foodborne illness outbreaks. Pictured(front L to R) Dawn Loyd-Davis, Michelle Yang, Angelica Chavez, Chuck Dumas, David Cornell; (rear L to R) Jeff Jackson, Ryan Gildner, David Farias, Dr. Savanna Ledford, Micheal Sullins