

Shutdown threatens U.S. food safety

By Ron Nixon, New York Times

WASHINGTON – The government shutdown is endangering what America eats, food safety experts said this week, as all inspections of domestic food except meat and poultry have halted and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recalled furloughed workers to handle a salmonella outbreak that sickened hundreds of people in

Offices are dark across the federal agencies charged with making sure that the fruit, vegetables, dairy products and a vast array of other domestically produced food are safe to consume. Inspectors, administrative staff, lab technicians, communications specialists and other support staff members have been sent home while lawmakers wrangle over government spending.

“This is a self-inflicted wound that is putting people’s health at risk,” said Representative Rosa L. DeLauro, D-Conn., a longtime food safety advocate.

Because the shutdown comes on top of earlier budget cuts to the agencies, she said, “you’re creating the potential for a real public health crisis.”

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