

CALIFORNIA

Tainted spinach trail narrows

SAN FRANCISCO — Two bags of Dole baby spinach that tested positive for the *E. coli* strain that has sickened 175 people nationwide were packaged at the same plant on the same day, California health officials said Monday.

That information has helped investigators tracing the source of the tainted greens narrow their search at nine farms in three California counties, said Dr. Kevin Reilly, deputy director of prevention services for the California Department of Health Services.

The tainted bags, found in Utah over the weekend and in New Mexico last week, were processed at the San Juan Bautista plant of Natural Selection Foods during the same shift on Aug. 15, Reilly said.

Reilly said it was too soon to say whether any other brands besides Dole would turn out to have been contaminated. Inspectors are focusing exclusively on Natural Selection at this point, he added.