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Germany Declares End to E. coli O104:H4 Outbreak

BERLIN (Reuters) Jul 26 - Germany's federal disease control institute declared on Tuesday that an E. coli outbreak which killed more than 50 people is now over and no cases have been reported in the past three weeks.

More than 4,400 people in Europe and North America were infected in two outbreaks of E. coli infection - A large one centered in northern Germany and a smaller cluster focused around the French city of Bordeaux.

The outbreaks prompted Russia to ban imports of fresh fruit and vegetables from the European Union, and also caused western European consumers to shy away from fresh produce.

"The biggest E. coli outbreak in Germany is now over," said Reinhard Burger, president of the Robert Koch Institute, Germany's national disease control agency.

The agency said it was shutting down its operations center for monitoring the outbreak, but that it would continue with intensified surveillance in case the pathogen resurfaced.

Fenugreek seeds imported from Egypt are believed to have been the likeliest source of the outbreak.

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