



# Food and Drugs Authority

Head Office  
P. O. Box CT 2783,  
Cantonments, Accra-Ghana  
Tel: (+233-302)233200, 235100  
Fax: (+233-302)229794, 225502  
Email: fda@fdaghana.govgh

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**The News Editor**

Dear Sir/ Madam,

**PUBLIC NOTICE – UPDATE ON DEATHS IN THE VOLTA REGION (AFTER CONSUMPTION OF BANKU AND OKRO SOUP)**

Following the recent deaths at Akakpokope, a village in the South Tongu District of the Volta Region after the consumption of Banku and Okro soup, the FDA took samples of the food for analysis and forwarded samples to the Ghana Standard Authority (GSA) for further analysis.

It may be recalled that on 4<sup>th</sup> of March, 2018, the Food and Drugs Authority's (FDA's) Volta Regional Office was alerted on a purported food poisoning incident involving two households after consuming a popular delicacy, Banku and Okro soup where the corn dough was made from tailings also known as "Gatemewor" by the locals which was bought from a corn mill owned by one of the affected families.

As indicated in our earlier communication, the FDA alerted the Regional Foodborne Disease Focal Person, other Public Health experts, officials from the Ghana Health Service, Municipal Assembly, the Ghana Police Service and the Municipal Health Directorate went to the scene.

The initial investigations of the team revealed that 8 people had been affected but five had passed on as at the time they arrived at the scene and the three others were at the hospital. Samples of the corn dough and left over banku were taken and forwarded to the FDA Quality Control Laboratory on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2018 for analysis of which part of same samples were sent to the Ghana Standards Authority (GSA) for further analysis.

Laboratory results received from the GSA on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March, 2018 indicated the presence of Chlorpyrifos, a very toxic substance found in commonly used pesticides which when ingested can cause death. This result confirmed the initial laboratory analysis conducted by the FDA Quality Control Laboratory on 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2018.



In toxicological analysis, there is normally no fixed turnaround time as being suggested by the Consumer Advocacy Centre in their statement since the analyte is not known from the beginning.

The FDA is forwarding its findings to the Public Health Directorate of the Ghana Health Service for further action.

As earlier communicated when the news broke out, the FDA is not mandated to determine the cause of death. This can only be established after a pathological Investigation.

We wish to state emphatically that as a Regulator, we need to be factual in every information put out to the public in order to avoid creating fear and panic.

The FDA would like to assure the general public that there is no cause for alarm as the corn mill from which the corn dough was sourced remains closed and the situation is under control.

The FDA appreciates the fact that increased consumer awareness of food safety issues has raised concerns regarding the authenticity of some foods on the Ghanaian market and the FDA is committed to addressing these concerns.

You can contact the FDA with your complaints on any of the following contacts:

- 0800151000 (Toll free on Vodafone and Airtel only)
- 0299802932 or 0299802933 (Hotline)
- 4015 (SMS short code)
- 0206973065 ( Call and WhatsApp)
- Facebook (Food and Drugs Authority-GH)
- Twitter (@ GH\_FDA)



DELESE A.A DARKO (MRS)

AG.CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER