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Peanut Butter Sales Rebounding

LUBBOCK, Texas – Although retail brands of peanut butter were never affected by the salmonella crisis caused by the Peanut Corporation of America (PCA), peanut butter sales dropped dramatically in late January and early February.

However, consumer confidence appears to be on the rise. March 2009 figures show an increase in volume sales of 5.6 percent over March 2008, according to data from Information Resources, Inc. Retail Sales Scan Data (I.R.I.).

The new sales numbers correlate with the findings of the National Peanut Board's ongoing independent consumer research, which measures consumer attitudes and behavior on the issue. According to NPB's research, more than 50 percent of consumers who are avoiding peanut products felt they would start to reengage within the next two months (March to May).

"Our entire industry really paid the price for what happened with PCA, and we've been battling to regain consumer confidence in peanut butter products ever since," said Shelly Nutt, executive director of the Texas Peanut Producers Board (TPPB). "Even though retail brand peanut butter was never affected by the PCA recalls, consumers were apprehensive to purchase any peanut butter products for a while."

Nutt said the sales rebound is evidence of the resilience of peanut producers and the industry and their dedication to producing a safe, quality product.

"This is good news for peanut farmers, shellers, manufacturers and others in the industry," said NPB Chairman Roger Neitsch, who farms near Seminole. "Consumer confidence and trust appears to be on the rebound for peanut butter since January and February."

TPPB and the National Peanut Board have been working diligently to restore consumer confidence by delivering strong, positive messages to consumers about peanut butter.

Working together with its partners and the entire industry, TPPB will continue to work to restore consumer confidence and encourage people to return to and enjoy the numerous benefits of peanut butter.

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The Texas Peanut Producers Board is a state-wide board funded by a \$2 per ton voluntary check-off program. For more information, contact Lindsay West, TPPB communications director, at lindsay@texaspeanutproducers.com or call 1-800-734-0086.