

Friday, 29 February 2008

WARNING - GLAZING ON CERAMIC TAGINE CONTAINS LEAD

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Jennifer Rankine, is warning people about a potentially dangerous 'tagine.' The ceramic cooking pot imported from Morocco contains excessive lead levels that may contaminate cooked food.

The Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) and SA Department of Health have tested tagines after one person had used theirs for the first time and became concerned when he saw a silvery grey residue form on the inside of the lid.

"Anyone who's purchased a tagine from the Sahara Moroccan Casbah store, located in Sturt Street, Adelaide, should stop using it immediately and return it to the store for a full refund. Testing has found that the ceramic cooking pot contains high concentrations of lead that exceed the permissible level for imported glazed cookware," Ms Rankine said

A tagine is glazed ceramic pot with a round base and conical shaped lid commonly used to cook stews. They are found on sale in specialist cookware stores in a variety of sizes, costing between \$44.95 and \$129.00

At this stage the problem appears to be limited to tagines imported from Morocco by this particular trader. OCBA is currently investigating the extent of the problem and will be conducting inspections to check whether other traders are selling similar products.

If people are unsure about the quality of these products, imported from developing countries such as Morocco, they should not use them for food preparation or storage. They should check with the product retailer about the quality of the product and whether it been tested for leeching of heavy metals.

The South Australian trader, Sahara Moroccan Casbah, has since ceased selling the Moroccan tagines.

Health authorities advise the community not to be alarmed or panic if they have a tagine but are urging people to be wary of this potentially dangerous product. If lead is consumed in significant quantities it could pose serious health risks and anyone concerned should contact their local GP about the associated symptoms or phone Public Health on 8226 7100.

Customs regulate these goods, but once they enter the marketplace it's the responsibility of Government to ensure the safety of consumers.

"We are currently canvassing all of the options available with regards to regulating these sorts of products, which include imposing restrictions on ceramic cookware products that contain excessive levels of lead or other heavy metals that can contaminate food," Ms Rankine said.

For further information about this product contact OCBA's Product Safety section on 8152 0732.



For further information please contact Emma Cox on 8463 5659 or 0438 777 454