



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gluten-free Certification Organization Withdraws Certification from Best Express Foods

05/31/2024 (Auburn, WA) – The Gluten Intolerance Group’s Gluten-free Certification Organization (GFCO) has made the decision to withdraw certification from Best Express Foods, Inc., the umbrella company to Universal Bakery (BEF/Universal Baking), and the producer of “Aussie Bites” and other products. This decision comes after a thorough investigation in the U.S. and Canada of BEF/Universal Baking’s “Aussie Bites” following a safety alert that was issued on May 15, 2024, revealing positive test results for gluten in excess of the FDA threshold.

“GFCO goes through an in-depth investigation process that includes consumer interviews, 3rd party testing, and requests for historical lot and ingredient testing every time that we receive a consumer complaint about a product,” says Channon Quinn, COO of the Gluten Intolerance Group. “Remedy of these situations requires meeting standards, supplying requested information, as well as fulfillment of contractual obligations surrounding product safety to remove non-compliant products from the marketplace. In this instance, BEF/Universal Baking failed to complete GFCO’s requirements to remedy, making the continuation of a certification relationship with the aforementioned company too high of a risk for both GFCO and the gluten-free public; therefore, we have withdrawn the certification of BEF/Universal Baking.”

The product of concern, Aussie Bites, has been certified by GFCO since October 2022 and initially met the GFCO’s standards for gluten-free certification. Aussie Bites, sold within the U.S. and Canada, have been identified to contain an unsafe level of gluten for gluten-free consumers.

GFCO has withdrawn certification of the following brands and products produced by Best Express Foods:

Universal Bakery:

Organic Aussie Bites
Organic Breakfast Energy Bars
Organic Paleo Bars
Organic Sunrise Energy Bars

SureLife Foods:

Paleo Bars

Las Fortunitas:

Corn Chips

Los Amigos:

Corn Chips

GFCO’s requirements for gluten-free certification are designed to ensure that each product meets the highest safety standards. This comprehensive evaluation includes rigorous testing requirements, ingredient verification, and ongoing audits to maintain compliance. GFCO exists to protect the public. Companies who do not maintain the requirements of the certification or otherwise fail to adhere to their contractual obligations to GFCO are subject to having their certification revoked.

“The protection of the gluten-free community is our top priority, therefore we are taking decisive action to ensure gluten-free consumers’ safety,” stated Cynthia Kelly, CEO of the Gluten Intolerance Group.



Consumers are encouraged to be vigilant and check product labels for the GFCO certification mark and report any questions or concerns about a product's safety at <https://gfco.org/contact/>. GFCO will continue to work diligently to protect the gluten-free community and maintain the integrity of its certification process.

For more information and updates regarding this certification rescission, please visit the GFCO website at www.gfco.org.

About the Gluten-free Certification Organization (GFCO): The Gluten-free Certification Organization (GFCO), a program of the Gluten Intolerance Group, is a leading certification program for gluten-free products. Established in 2005, GFCO provides independent verification and certification of over 65,000 gluten-free products, ensuring the safety and trust of consumers. With a rigorous certification process and ongoing surveillance, GFCO aims to protect the gluten-free community and promote the availability of safe gluten-free options. For more information, please visit www.gfco.org.

About the Gluten Intolerance Group (GIG): The Gluten Intolerance Group (GIG) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit association funded by private donations, sponsorship opportunities, and food safety programs. It relies on tax-deductible contributions to support its many innovative industry, service, social, and awareness programs. GIG has been a highly respected leader in the gluten-free community since it was founded in 1974. In addition to more than 80 local support groups across the United States, GIG's mission is make life easier for everyone living gluten-free and accomplishes that through consumer support, education, and its food safety initiatives. The Gluten-Free Certification Organization (GFCO), a program of GIG, is a leader in the verification of quality, integrity, and purity of gluten-free products. The Gluten-Free Food Service (GFFS) program is a proven model of established best practices for foodservice facilities offering gluten-free options. GIG is committed to ongoing food safety research to assure customers and consumers the highest level of excellence in its gluten-free programs and services. For more information, visit www.gluten.org.

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Media Contact: Gluten Intolerance Group
Jeanne Reid, Marketing Manager
gig.marketing@gluten.org
253.293.4286