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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 22, 2016**

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Settlement with Mondelēz International, Inc., Formerly Kraft Foods

District Attorney Jeffrey S. Rosell announced today a landmark settlement with an agreement to protect consumers of Santa Cruz County and throughout the nation. The Santa Cruz County District Attorney's Office, through its Consumer Fraud Unit, in conjunction with nine other California District Attorney's Offices, the California Attorney General's Office, and the non-profit Center for Environmental Health, has reached a settlement with food industry giant Mondelēz International, Inc., formerly Kraft Foods, for selling ginger snap cookies in excess of California lead limits without a warning.

Mondelēz is the world's largest manufacturer of processed snack foods. Mondelēz brands include Nabisco, Oreo, Cadbury and Trident. Nabisco brand ginger snap cookies were the subject of the lawsuit. The ten district attorney's offices initiated an investigation of Nabisco Ginger Snaps in 2013 after being alerted to a California Environmental Health investigation into high lead levels in products containing ginger. Testing of the Nabisco brand Ginger Snaps revealed lead levels up to nine times the limit in one serving. The investigation included testing on different lots of the product throughout the state of California.

The settlement has a potential worldwide impact on the safety of processed snack foods. Mondelēz has agreed to strict testing protocols that limit lead in its Nabisco Ginger Snap cookies to no more than 30 parts per billion per serving. The company has also agreed to fund ongoing independent auditing of its products for lead, and will monitor supply chains to ensure raw materials are within acceptable limits for lead. Mondelēz will pay a total of \$758,250 in civil penalties, costs and attorneys' fees in the proposed settlement. Additionally, the auditing protocols and changes in supplier specifications by a company as large as Mondelēz should have a significant impact on the way other companies screen for lead in processed foods.

Lead sources in the cookies were linked to supplies of molasses and ginger. Lead is a neurotoxin that affects virtually every organ system, primarily the central nervous system, and particularly the developing brain. While no safe lead exposure threshold has been identified, California's proposition 65 limits lead exposure to 0.5 micrograms per serving per day without a warning.