



Maple Leaf Foods Class-Action Suits Are Settled

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Maple Leaf Foods, Canada's largest food processor, will pay as much as \$22.5 million to settle consumer class-action lawsuits filed in the wake of an outbreak of listeriosis in August.

The accord, announced today by the Toronto-based company and that city's Falconer Charney law firm, resolves cases in Saskatchewan, Quebec and Ontario. The agreement requires court approval, both sides said.

"This was a tragic experience," Maple Leaf Chief Executive Officer Michael H. McCain said today in a statement. The listeria bacterium, which was found in the company's meat products, was linked to the deaths of about 20 people.

The company recalled deli meats and halted production at a Toronto plant identified as the source of the outbreak on Aug. 20. The facility was reopened on Sept. 17. The bacteria can cause listeriosis, which has symptoms including severe headaches, fever and nausea, and which poses a danger for infants and the elderly.

"We are working towards obtaining court approval and ensuring that the class members are paid immediately," attorney Ted Charney of Falconer Charney said in a statement. Eight other Canadian law firms participated in the litigation.

Source: Bloomberg