

LAW TIMES

MAPLE LEAF SETTLES LAWSUITS

Court approvals in Saskatchewan, Quebec, and Ontario are all that it will now take for Maple Leaf Foods to close the book on a series of class action lawsuits related to a listeriosis outbreak.

The settlement provides that Maple Leaf will pay between \$25 million and \$27 million. The amount of money that each class member will receive depends upon the severity of their illness.

"Our goal throughout this legal process has been to negotiate a fair and early settlement so that we can obtain court approvals and promptly compensate families who were affected," says company president and CEO Michael McCain.

"This was a tragic experience and I want to acknowledge the co-operation of all the parties involved to ensure that people affected receive timely restitution."

The actions were started by those who consumed or bought Maple Leaf products that were included in an August recall after it was found that they could be contaminated with listeria monocytogenes. The outbreak was linked to 20 deaths across the country.

"We are very pleased all of the actions across Canada have been resolved quickly, efficiently, and in the best interest of the class," said Colin Stevenson of Stevensons LLP, who acted for the class along with a consortium of lawyers.

Ted Chamey of Falconer Chamey LLP, who also acted for the class, added, "Our clients are delighted with the result. We are working towards obtaining court approval and ensuring that the class members are paid immediately."

The courts in Ontario, Quebec, and Saskatchewan must approve the settlement. The approval hearing in Ontario is set to take place in early 2009 in the Ontario Superior Court of Justice.