

Settlement of \$24 Million Reached in Pet Food Recall Case

The deal requires companies to pay pet owners' documented expenses.

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The agreement would resolve more than 100 lawsuits brought by cat and dog owners. Canada-based Menu Foods and other companies that were involved in the massive 2007 recall of pet foods have agreed to pay a combined \$24 million to pet owners.

The settlement, which was outlined in papers filed Thursday in U.S. District Court in Camden, N.J., needs court approval. A hearing is scheduled for May 30.

Under the settlement, the companies are required to pay all of the pet owners' documented expenses for the injury and death of their pets as a result of consuming the recalled products, Reuters reports. The recalls were announced in March 2007 after cats and dogs became ill or died as a result of eating the tainted food.

The contaminants were discovered to be melamine and cyanuric acid, which were in ingredients from China that went into pet food in the United States.

If the settlement gets court approval, the cash fund would be set up and paid out over a period of months. The agreement would resolve more than 100 lawsuits by more than 250 plaintiffs brought in the United States and a dozen in Canada.

Any settlement funds remaining after the payment of claims will be donated to animal-welfare charities.