

## Company settles suit over toxic dog food

by UPI

META, Mo. -- A pet food company has agreed to pay more than \$3 million to settle a lawsuit over contaminated dog food made in South Carolina. The dog food, produced at a Diamond Pet Foods plant in Gaston, S.C., in late 2005, included corn contaminated with aflatoxin, a fungus that causes kidney damage in dogs. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration reported that by January 2006, 76 deaths and 21 illnesses in dogs in 23 states had been linked to eating the contaminated food. The company said that the money will be used to reimburse buyers of recalled dog food, who didn't return cans for a refund, and to pay veterinary bills for owners whose animals were affected by the dog food, The State newspaper of Columbia, S.C., reported. Diamond, which has its headquarters in Meta, Mo., hasn't admitted any wrongdoing, although the company has acknowledged that the corn wasn't caught by its screening. Lawyers involved in the class-action suit have asked for a fee of \$465,000.

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