



The
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Crusader

To The Unconquerable Host of Afro-Americans Who Are Laying Their Sacrifices Upon The Editorial Altar For Their Race

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SARA LEE AND BIL MAR CITED FOR CONTAMINATED MEATS

By Benjamin Tillman-EL

Since August of 1998, contaminated hot dogs and other meat products manufactured by Sara Lee and Bil Mar Foodservice, a division of Sara Lee Corporation, has resulted in at least four deaths and other confirmed cases of food poisoning, according to Attorney Kenneth B. Moll. The contamination is linked to a food-borne disease — Listeriosis. Listeriosis is a serious and fatal infection caused by food contaminated with the bacteria *Listeria monocytogenes*. Attorney Moll indicated that several consumers from Chicago Heights, IL, have been infected and treated.

A nationwide lawsuit was filed December 30, 1998, by Kenneth B. Moll and Associates, Ltd., of Chicago, on behalf of affected consumers. The products in question have the establishment numbers P261 for poultry and 6911 for non-poultry.

Moll said, "A primary goal of the Sara Lee Class Action is to, inform the public that consumers of Sara Lee hot dogs and other meat products may have been contaminated with Listeriosis and to establish a medical monitoring fund so that every consumer may be informed of and tested for the adverse effects of Listeriosis."

Moll said, "Approximately 25% of persons infected with Listeriosis die each

year." According to Stephen J. Ostroff, a doctor at the Centers of Disease Control's National Center of Infectious Dis-

eases, "The severity of illness related to Listeria and the proportion of cases we find that actually end-up with severe

consequences and death is among the highest of all food-borne pathogens.

Where illnesses are the result of contaminated foods, the strain of bacteria is traceable because each bacteria has its own fingerprint. In September, 1998, Bil Mar Foodservice recalled 15,000 pounds of turkey franks after a worker discovered high moisture levels in some of the packaged product.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture said that "The turkey franks were distributed in 13 states and were being recalled because the meat may not have been fully cooked and could make people sick. Thomas Billy, administrator of the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, stated, "Because of the potential food-borne illness hazard, we urge consumers who have purchased the suspect product to return it to the place of purchase."

A representative of Bil Mar called the case "an isolated one" and said that it had taken steps to make sure its turkey franks are always cooked thoroughly. On December 22, 1998, before the CDC completed its investigation and testing of additional meat products manufactured by Sara Lee, the company voluntarily recalled specific production lots costing approximately \$50-70 million.

Moll, notwithstanding assurances of

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"MCDONALD'S DELIVERS HOLIDAY Beanies with the help of Ronald and Friends" — The Black McDonald's Operators Association delivered Teenie Beanie Babies to the pediatric units of Roseland Community Hospital and Cook County Hospital on the eve of Christmas Eve. Owner/Operators Linda Simmons and Herb Bias (pictured above with Cook County pediatric patient) were on hand to help Ronald McDonald and the Hamburgler deliver Teenie Beanie Babies and a load of smiles to the faces of the young patients who were unable to spend the Christmas holidays with their families. Founded over 30 years ago, the BMOA is comprised of approximately 25 African-American McDonald's franchise owners who continually seek to make positive contributions to enhance the lives of thousands of African-Americans in the communities they serve. McDonald's is the largest and best-known global food retailer, with more than 21,000 restaurants in 103 countries. Approximately 84 percent of McDonald's U.S. restaurants are owned and operated by independent franchisees.

SARA LEE AND BIL MAR . . .

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safety issued by Sara Lee, wants to continue to sound a note of urgency: "The CDC has indicated that we are going to see more reported cases of Listeriosis from Sara Lee Products for two main reasons: The bacteria involved has average incubation period of three weeks, and as high as five weeks. Many people don't know about this because it was publicized

The NAACP is gearing up for its 90th Anniversary next year. Both Bond and Mfume agree that in 1999 the NAACP will combine "doing the old things better with doing the new things better" all with the sole purpose of making the NAACP's voice on civil rights stronger and more viable than ever before.

Bond said, "I want to make sure that whatever race is discussed, from the Oval Office to corporate suites to the neighborhood beauty parlor, someone says — Here's what the NAACP thinks about that."

around December 22, 1998, and it was actually given low media attention because of holiday focus, bombings in Iraq and the impeachment distraction. The subject was simply not ranked by the media as a prominent news feature."

Moll said, "The public must also be aware that a lot of the products had a sell-by-date, of January 27, 1999. It is possible that some of these products are sitting in consumers' freezers. In view of such a probability, the consumer must be warned not to use these products." Moll also said that it is important to inform the public that Listeria targets particular groups: Pregnant women; newborns; persons with weakened immune systems and the elderly. The symptoms of infection are fever, muscle ache, nausea, diarrhea and gastrointestinal irritations. There are antibiotics that can treat infection if it is detected early. If it is allowed to spread to the nervous system it will become serious and can cause death.