

Saugus man alleges Beneful pet food killed his dog

By Jack Newsham | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT MARCH 02, 2015

A Massachusetts man has filed suit against pet food maker Nestle Purina alleging that its Beneful food kills dogs.

It's the second potential class-action lawsuit filed against the company in less than a month. Rumors about the dog food line have swirled around the Internet since at least 2007, [according to the website Snopes.com](http://Snopes.com), and Nestle Purina has consistently asserted that its product is safe.

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The lawsuit, filed Feb. 27 in federal court in Boston, said that Saugus resident Paul Malcolm suffered “severe physical and emotional distress” after his Rotweiler-bulldog mix Ben died on February 26 after collapsing several times during the night of February 25 and the next morning. Although Malcolm rushed his 135-pound dog to Saugus Animal Hospital, the complaint says, the dog died en route.

Ben had been fed a diet of Beneful Healthy Weight for three to four years, which the complaint asserts had a “direct and proximate” role in the dog’s death. To support their claims, the attorneys offered 11 testimonials from pet owners culled from the Internet, as well as studies they claim prove the food to be toxic.

Malcolm's attorneys said in a filing they were seeking over \$5 million in damages for the entire class. Although they didn't know how many people were affected, dog food maker Nestle Purina has said 1.5 billion Beneful meals were served to dogs in 2014.

Nestle Purina didn't immediately reply to a request for comment left Monday morning. In past statements, the company has said its own tests have shown the food to be safe, including batches tied to claims of pet deaths. In a statement made to Snopes in February, the company called the California suit "baseless" and said two similar lawsuits had been dismissed.

"Bottom line: Consumers can continue to feed Beneful with total confidence," the company told Snopes.

Earlier in February, a California man named Frank Lucido filed a class-action suit against Purina with similar allegations about the dog food after three of his dogs fell ill and one later died. Nestle Purina Petcare Co., a subsidiary of the Swiss conglomerate Nestle, is based in St. Louis, Mo.

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