## Maple Leaf issues expanded recall and offers apology

from HALTON on page A1

individuals, pregnant women, newborns and those with weakened immune systems, according to PHAC.

People who believe they are experiencing symptoms of the illness are urged to contact a doctor.

The expanded recall and plant cleanup will cost the company an estimated \$20 million, as well as the loss of public confidence in the company.

On its website — www.mapleleaf.ca — Maple Leaf posted an apology and a link to a YouTube message from company President and CEO Michael H. McCain, describing the company's regret for the outbreak.

"On behalf of the 23,000 people of Maple Leaf Foods who live a culture of food safety, we offer deep and sincere sympathy to those who are ill, or who have lost loved ones," McCain said on the message. "But we commit to you that Maple Leaf Foods exceeds federal food safety standards, and that our management of the listeria outbreak will be motivated by one thing only — the best public health interests of Canadians and specifically, our customers.

"That's why we've started an expanded recall of all products made at that plant from January 2008, even though we have no evidence that the bacteria could have spread beyond the two lines (at the Toronto plant) that were identified as being linked to affected product(s)."

Products affected by the recall have the number 97B printed near the expiry or packaging date. To view a complete list of the recalled meat products, visit www.mapleleaf.ca or www.inspection.gc.ca and click on the listeria investigation and recall link on the right hand side of the page, under the heading, 'Hot Topics.'

## Widespread reaction to outbreak

Several food industry giants have also reacted quickly to the listeria outbreak. Tim Hortons has posted a sign saying its meats are not part of the recall.

The franchise's corporate website posted the following statement:

"We have been advised by Maple Leaf Foods they expanded their recall to include all meats produced at the Bartor road facility in the past year. The list of items includes Tim Hortons slow roast beef.

"Tim Hortons is not serving roast beef to customers as the sale of this product ended in early July. Please be advised that this is not a ready-to-eat product. Slow roast beef is subjected to a high cooking temperature of above 165°F which destroys any bacteria of concern. No other Tim Hortons products are affected by the recall."

Boston Pizza issued a news release Monday stating it had stopped serving roast beef supplied by Maple Leaf Foods' Toronto plant as a precautionary measure — even though the product has showed no evidence of contamination.

A Maple Leaf turkey product supplied to McDonalds is also on the lengthy list of recalled meats.

Meanwhile, Halton's health department has confirmed it is working with its provincial counterparts to help investigate and control the outbreak.

"Health department staff has been keeping Halton healthcare facilities up to date with information related to this outbreak, and has been providing local surveillance information to the provincial authorities," said Dr. Monir Taha, Halton's associate medical officer of health. "We are increasing communication with food vendors, and adding extra inspections to assist with the CFIA recall."

Ruf said two-dozen inspectors are attempting to visit independent, non-chain businesses across Halton to ensure they are aware of the recall and have removed any potentially-contaminated meat products.

So far, inspectors have not found any recalled products still on the shelf during their visits, which is good news, Ruf said. He added that the inspections would carry on at least for the rest of this week.

"(The inspections) are very intensive," he said.

The food safety manager stressed to residents that if they have meat in their fridge or freezer and aren't sure where it come from, they should get rid of it.

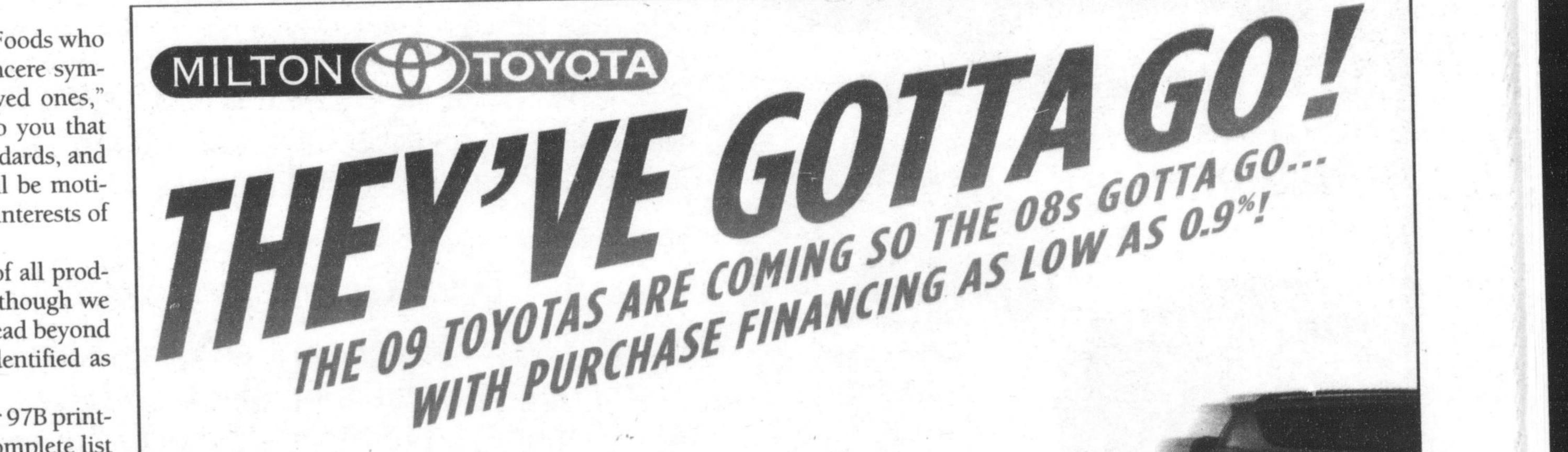
"Our motto is when in doubt, throw it out," he said.

On average, Halton has one to two cases of listeria per year, the health department noted.

— with files from Torstar News Service



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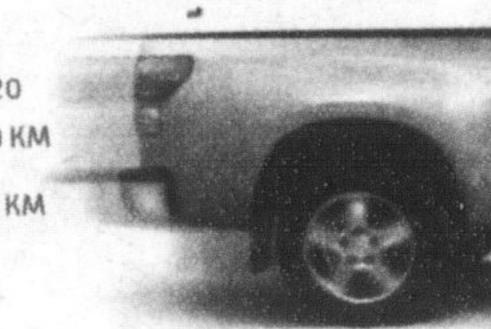
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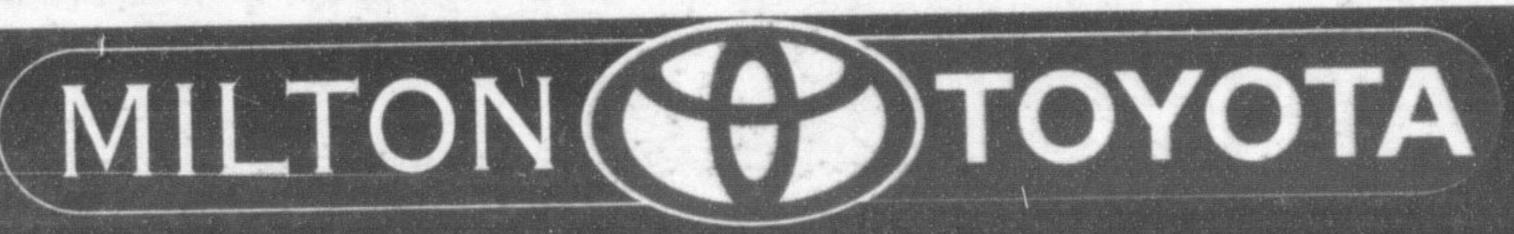


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