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## Tainted cider draws legal action

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PITTSFIELD — Unpasteurized cider that was blamed for causing more than 100 people to fall ill after a Pike County fall festival has resulted in a lawsuit against several groups, including the Pike County Chamber of Commerce and the Barry Business Association.

Melissa Kinman of Quincy filed the civil action against Steven and Linda Yoder of Yoder Brothers Dairy Farm, the Pike County Chamber of Commerce and the Barry Business Association. In it, she contends the Yoders were selling and offering free samples of unpasteurized cider that was tainted with cryptosporidium.

Cryptosporidium is a microscopic parasite that is one of the leading causes of waterborne disease in the United States. It can be especially severe and even life-threatening to children under age 2, pregnant women, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems.

There was an outbreak of gastrointestinal illnesses that started in November 2015 following the annual Pike County Fall Color Drive. It was determined those who became sick had consumed apple cider bought at one of several locations along the route.

The outbreak sickened people ranging in age from less than 1 year old to 89 years old.

Health workers from Pike and Adams counties, the state and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention began investigating reports of profuse or bloody diarrhea, abdominal cramping and vomiting. Tests done in December 2015 by the CDC confirmed there was cider contaminated with cryptosporidium.

Kinman said in the lawsuit, which presents only one side of a claim, that in the days following the festival, she began feeling tired and ill, with symptoms of nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, blood in her stool, cramps and other flu-like symptoms. She sought medical treatment but was sent home. The

following day, her conditions worsened and she went to an emergency room, where she was diagnosed with the parasite, she said.

She is seeking \$50,000 in damages from the Yoders for her claims of product liability and negligence as well as \$50,000 for each count of negligence and breach of warranty against the Pike County Chamber of Commerce and Barry Business Association.

The suit originally was filed in Adams County in October but moved to Pike County after a motion made by the Pike County Chamber of Commerce was granted last month.

Cider was not sold at last year's drive after officials decided to pull the product.

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