

Muppets in SPAM spat

By LAURA BAENEN
Associated Press Writer

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) - The maker of SPAM just can't stomach the latest attempt to poke fun at the canned luncheon meat. This time, as Miss Piggy would say, moi is not amused.

"We are sorry that Hormel does not share the Muppets' sense of humor and we certainly meant no offense."

Jim Henson Productions

Hormel Foods Corp. is concerned that a character named Spa'am in an upcoming Muppet movie will tarnish the image of the spiced ham product.

In "The Muppets Treasure Island," which is to hit theaters in February, Spa'am is the high priest of the wild boars who worship Miss Piggy as their Queen Boom Sha-Ka-La-Ka-La.

Spa'am does seem a bit nasty. He sentences the hero Kermit and

several others to an unspecified "terrible fate" for their offenses against the queen.

Hormel filed a trademark infringement lawsuit against Jim Henson Productions on Friday in federal court in New York. The suit seeks unspecified damages and demands that the boar's name be changed.

The lawsuit describes Spa'am as an "unsavory-appearing feral pig," and alleges that the movie's producer "has intentionally portrayed the Spa'am character to be evil in porcine form."

Austin-based Hormel Foods has made SPAM, which stands for spiced ham, since 1937.

Hormel has engaged in light-hearted promotions of the chopped pork shoulder meat and ham mixture. The annual SPAM Jamboree in Austin features SPAM sculpting, and the company sells watches, clocks, banks, clothes and other items with pictures of the cans.

Sales of the product are no joke - Hormel sells more than 100 million cans annually.

"We are sorry that Hormel does not share the Muppets' sense of humor and we certainly meant no offense," Jim Henson Productions' New York office said in a statement.

Marriage, birth, separation
NEW YORK (AP) - Seven months after their marriage and seven weeks after the birth of their son, Christie Brinkley and her husband are splitting up.

"After much thought and consideration, I have decided to separate from my husband," she said in a one-line statement issued today by a publicist.

The publicist, Fran Curtis, would not provide any other details.

The 42-year-old supermodel and Richard Taubman, 46, a millionaire real estate developer, were married Dec. 22, eight months after surviving a helicopter crash during a Colorado ski trip. They exchanged vows on Telluride Mountain, about five miles from the crash site.

Their son, Jack Paris Brinkley Taubman, was born June 2.

Brinkley is divorced from her first husband, piano man Billy Joel. She has a 9-year-old daughter, Alexa, from that marriage.

Taubman has an 8-year-old son from a previous marriage.

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