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**U.S. Immigration
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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

News Releases

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Missouri poultry processing plant pays \$450,000 fine for hiring illegal aliens

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. - A southwest Missouri poultry-processing plant where 136 illegal alien workers were arrested in 2007 paid a \$450,000 administrative fine Friday as a result of a worksite enforcement investigation conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

George's Processing Inc. (George's) paid the fine on September 11 as part of a settlement agreement. George's was ordered to pay the fine within 30 days in federal court on Aug. 14, 2009. ICE will use the funds to promote future law enforcement programs and activities in worksite enforcement.

The settlement further directs George's to train its human resource managers and employees on how to avoid hiring illegal aliens, and to establish a compliance program to ensure that its hiring and employment practices are in accordance with U.S. immigration laws. The fine paid by George's does not constitute any admission of wrongdoing by the company.

"Significant fines help hold businesses accountable to ensure a legal workforce," said Homeland Security Assistant Secretary for ICE John Morton. "ICE works diligently to oversee corporate responsibility and to protect jobs for this country's lawful workers."

During a May 2007 enforcement action at the George's plant in Cassville, Mo., ICE agents administratively arrested 136 illegal alien workers from Mexico and Guatemala. Twenty-eight of those workers were criminally prosecuted for various immigration violations, including falsely claiming U.S. citizenship. Two of the company's hiring personnel were subsequently convicted of harboring illegal aliens and inducing illegal aliens to remain in the United States.

George's Processing Inc. is headquartered in Springdale, Ark., and employs 4,000 workers at its three poultry processing facilities in Arkansas, Missouri and Virginia.

This case was prosecuted by Supervisory Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael S. Oliver and Assistant U.S. Attorney Gary Milligan, Western District of Missouri. ICE was assisted in the investigation by the Social

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Security Administration's Office of Inspector General, the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the U.S. Marshals Service and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

In April, ICE implemented a new, comprehensive strategy to reduce the demand for illegal employment and protect employment opportunities for the nation's lawful workforce. Under this strategy, ICE is focusing its resources on auditing and investigating employers suspected of cultivating illegal workplaces by knowingly employing illegal workers.

-- ICE --

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.

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