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News Releases

AUGUST 26, 2011 TUCSON, AZ

Arizona tomato producer fined in ICE worksite enforcement investigation

TUCSON, Ariz. — A large tomato producer in southern Arizona pleaded guilty Friday and was sentenced for knowingly hiring and engaging in a pattern and practice of employing unauthorized aliens following an investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI).

As part of a plea agreement, the court issued a criminal forfeiture judgment against Eurofresh, Inc. for \$600,000. The company will also be required to remain on probation for five years until the judgment is satisfied in full.

"This judgment is a message to other employers who engage in illegal practices that there is a real cost to their actions," said U.S. Attorney Dennis K. Burke. "We will continue to work with our partners at the Department of Homeland Security to ensure our nation's laws are followed."

"Through the hard work and dedication of ICE and the U.S. Attorney's Office, Eurofresh will be paying a significant penalty for circumventing our laws," said Matt Allen, special agent in charge of ICE HSI in Arizona. "Easy access to employment is a clear driver for illegal immigration into the United States, and by holding companies responsible for their criminal behavior we will reduce that draw."

According to the factual basis of the plea, from August 2000 through December 2006, Eurofresh, Inc., through its former human resources director, knowingly hired, and continued to employ in southern Arizona, at least 17 supervisory-level employees despite the human resources director's actual knowledge that these employees were unauthorized by law to work in the United States. The parties further agreed that, for the purposes of the plea agreement, Eurofresh, Inc. received \$600,000 as direct proceeds from this unlawful conduct.

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