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News Releases

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ICE & Tyson Foods partner in an effort to protect the nation's lawful workforce ICE also announces creation of a center for I-9 inspections

WASHINGTON — Tyson Foods, Inc. is the newest member of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) nationwide program designed to encourage businesses to collaborate with ICE and use hiring best practices to ensure they are maintaining a lawful workforce. Tyson Foods Senior Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer Ken Kimbro and ICE Director John Morton signed the IMAGE or "ICE Mutual Agreement between Government and Employers," agreement during a ceremony at ICE headquarters.

Tyson Foods, Inc., which employs almost 100,000 people at locations throughout the United States, is the first major food company to become a full member of ICE's IMAGE program.

IMAGE is a voluntary program that allows businesses to partner with ICE as part of their efforts to maintain an authorized workforce and protect themselves from the use of fraudulent identity documents by current or prospective employees. This program compliments ICE's worksite enforcement strategy, which focuses on holding employers accountable who knowingly hire unauthorized workers to minimize operating costs and boost profits.

"ICE's collaboration with Tyson Foods illustrates this administration's commitment to working with industry to encourage a culture of compliance with U.S. employment laws," said Morton. "Tyson Foods is setting the gold standard for Fortune 500 companies everywhere, and ICE is proud to be partnering with the company in this significant effort to protect our nation's lawful workforce."

"We believe our participation in IMAGE confirms Tyson uses best hiring practices to maintain a lawful workforce," Kimbro said. "We use all available tools provided by the U.S. government to verify the documents of the people we hire. We've also gone beyond government tools, spending millions of dollars over the years on such things as training, computer systems and help from outside consultants to make sure we're employing people who are authorized to work in our country."

To become certified, Tyson was subject to an I-9 audit and other checks by ICE. The company met other IMAGE requirements with programs it already has in place. For example:

- The company conducts regular self-assessments or internal audits of its hiring activities. The company also uses an independent, outside company to conduct its own audits of the company's hiring practices.
- Tyson voluntarily participates in the online government employment verification program known as E-Verify and has since 1998. The company also voluntarily uses the 'Social Security Number Verification Service.'
- Tyson trains all of its employment managers on the hiring process, proper completion of the Form I-9 and on document examination and fraud detection.

Undocumented workers create vulnerabilities in today's marketplace by presenting false documents to gain employment, completing applications for fraudulent benefits, and stealing identities of legal United States workers. To combat this, ICE initiated the IMAGE program in 2006.

All IMAGE members must participate in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) E-Verify employment eligibility verification program. Through this program, employers can verify that newly hired employees are eligible to work in the United States. This Internet-based system is available throughout the nation and is free to employers. It provides an automated link to the Social Security Administration database and DHS immigration records.

Upon enrollment in and commitment to the IMAGE Best Employment Practices, program participants are deemed "IMAGE certified," a distinction DHS and ICE believe will become an industry standard. IMAGE also provides to all employers free training on the Form I-9, fraudulent document detection, and building a solid immigration compliance model.

During today's signing ceremony, Director Morton also announced the creation of an employment compliance inspection center in Crystal City, Va. This center will be home to 15 auditors who will support ICE's worksite enforcement strategy by helping agency field offices around the country expedite Form I-9 audits of businesses selected for inspection by ICE. Form I-9 audits are one of the most powerful tools the federal government has to ensure that businesses are complying with U.S. employment laws. From fiscal year 2009 to date, ICE has initiated Form I-9 inspections against 3,769 businesses across the nation.

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.

ICE is a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities. For more information, visit www.ICE.gov. To report suspicious activity, call 1-866-347-2423.