



Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2009
<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/txe>

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JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AND IMMIGRATION & CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT REACH \$4.5 MILLION AGREEMENT WITH PILGRIM'S PRIDE

BEAUMONT, TX – U.S. Attorney John M. Bales; John Chakwin, Special Agent in Charge, Dallas Office, Immigration and Customs Enforcement; and Donald Jackson, Chief Executive Officer of Pilgrim's Pride Corporation, announced today that the U. S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Texas, Pilgrim's Pride Corporation, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement have reached a non-prosecution agreement to resolve an investigation with respect to the hiring and employment of unauthorized aliens at Pilgrim's Pride's plants in the Eastern District of Texas.

Under the terms of the agreement, Pilgrim's Pride agrees to pay \$4.5 million and adopt more stringent immigration compliance practices to ensure that its work force is composed of employees legally entitled to work in the United States. In return, the U. S. Attorney's Office agrees to conclude its immigration-related investigation of Pilgrim's Pride and any current or former employees.

In a factual statement accompanying the agreement, the parties acknowledge that, at the beginning of the investigation, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) had reason to believe that a substantial number of unauthorized aliens were employed at several Pilgrim's Pride plants. As part of that investigation, twenty-five unauthorized aliens were arrested in the Eastern District of Texas in December 2007 and charged with misuse of a Social Security Account number. In early 2008, a number of worksite enforcement actions were conducted by ICE at five Pilgrim's Pride plants in Texas, Florida, West Virginia, Arkansas, and Tennessee, resulting in the apprehension of approximately 338 unauthorized aliens. Thirty-eight illegal aliens were convicted in the Eastern District of Texas for misuse of a Social Security Account number. Throughout the investigation, Pilgrim's Pride cooperated with the U. S. Attorney's Office and law enforcement agencies. In addition, Pilgrim's Pride implemented various measures designed to ensure a legal work force. As a result of this agreement, Pilgrim's Pride will continue to strengthen its workplace compliance programs and adopt measures recommended by ICE to identify and avoid the employment of unauthorized aliens. In reaching this agreement, Pilgrim's Pride did not admit to any criminal or civil misconduct.

"This case demonstrates that the government and business, working together, can go a long way to resolving the issue of employment of illegal aliens," said U.S. Attorney Bales.

"Pilgrim's Pride has cooperated with the United States during this investigation and acknowledged the company's desire to implement rigorous standards to comply with immigration-related laws. With this agreement, Pilgrim's Pride sets itself up as an industry leader in adopting recommended immigration practices. I commend the thorough investigation by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, without which this agreement would not have been possible," Bales said.

"ICE's goal is to reduce the opportunity for illegal work in the United States," said John Morton, Department of Homeland Security Assistant Secretary for ICE. "This settlement acknowledges that Pilgrim's Pride is committed to adopting a rigorous immigration compliance program."

This case was investigated by Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Department of Labor Office of Inspector General. District Criminal Chief Arnold Spencer and Assistant U.S. Attorney Alan R. Jackson represented the Eastern District of Texas.

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