

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL



NEWS RELEASE



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Information Management Division, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 9-E
Washington, DC 20250-2309 World Wide Web: www.usda.gov/oig

Nancy A. Bartel (202) 720-5677
nabartel@oig.usda.gov

38 FUGITIVE FELONS ARRESTED IN SALT LAKE CITY IN OPERATION TALON

WASHINGTON, Jan. 10, 2002—The U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of Inspector General announced today that 38 fugitive felons in the Salt Lake City metropolitan area have been arrested as a result of “Operation Talon.” The nationwide total now stands at approximately 8,000 arrests.

The operation in Salt Lake City identified 50 food stamp recipients who were also fugitive felons with active felony arrest warrants on file. Arrest teams made up of local police officers, deputy sheriffs, and the U.S. Marshals Service, along with Federal agents from OIG, have been searching the streets of Salt Lake City and surrounding counties to locate and arrest these wanted felons. Included in those who made it to Operation Talon’s wanted list in Salt Lake City were food stamp recipients who were wanted for assault, escape from incarceration, theft, narcotics violations, burglary, forgery, and numerous other crimes.

Operation Talon was made possible by the legislation commonly known as the Welfare Reform Act of 1996 and was designed to locate and arrest fugitive felons, many of them violent offenders, by matching law enforcement agencies’ felony fugitive files with the state social services agencies’ food stamp recipient files. As a result, law enforcement officers have current address information and are able to more readily locate and apprehend fugitives who also are receiving food stamp benefits illegally.

Joining special agents of OIG in bringing Operation Talon to fruition in Salt Lake City were deputies of the Salt Lake County Sheriff’s Department and the U.S. Marshals Service. Also supporting the operation were the West Jordan Police Department, Cache County Sheriff’s Department, Tooele County Sheriff’s Department, and the Northern Utah Criminal Apprehension Team. Operation Talon is continuing in other locations throughout the country.
