

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL



NEWS RELEASE



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MAN CAUGHT TAMPERING WITH FOOD SENTENCED TO JAIL

WASHINGTON, May 3, 2002—The U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of Inspector General announced today that Marvin L. Swick, 49, of Ponca, Neb., was sentenced May 2 to 40 months in prison for food tampering. The sentencing in federal court followed his Dec. 19, 2001, conviction on charges of tampering with consumer (food) products at a Sioux City, Iowa, grocery store.

Swick had been convicted after evidence at his trial showed that from Aug. 7-19, 1999, he had inserted sewing machine needles into various types of food products at the store, including packages of meat, fruit, and bakery products. The evidence submitted at trial included video footage of Swick tampering with meat products in the store, the wholesomeness of which is one of USDA's top priorities. Several instances of tampering occurred, but no injuries were reported.

This threat to public health and safety triggered an immediate criminal investigation. Eighteen OIG special agents and numerous officers from the Sioux City Police Department were dedicated to the case, which included weeks of round-the-clock surveillance culminating in the arrest of Swick.

The U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Iowa prosecuted the case.

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