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MONROE FOOD DISTRIBUTION COMPANY AND MANAGERS SENTENCED IN FEDERAL COURT ON CHARGES OF IMPROPER AND UNSANITARY STORAGE OF FOOD PRODUCTS

Downsville Food, LLC in Monroe operates distribution facility

Monroe, Louisiana . . . A Monroe area food distribution warehouse and two of its managers were sentenced yesterday in U.S. District Court for the improper and unsanitary storage of meat and poultry products, United States Attorney Donald W. Washington announced.

BRENT CREEL, age 30, and **CARL W. BROWN**, age 53, both of Monroe, were each sentenced to one year of probation. **CREEL** was ordered to pay a fine in the amount of \$500.00 and **BROWN** was ordered to pay a fine in the amount of \$250.00. **DOWNSVILLE FOOD, LLC**, was fined \$4,000 and was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$26,230.59 to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for restitution for the cost of the investigation.

These charges are the result of an investigation by the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service, Office of Program Evaluation Enforcement and Review Compliance Investigations Division, and were in violation of the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act.

CREEL and BROWN pled guilty in June of this year to holding and storing various beef and pork products, as well as various poultry products, in a warehouse in unsanitary conditions causing the products

to become adulterated. DOWNSVILLE FOOD, LLC also pled guilty to holding and storing adulterated meat in unsanitary conditions.

Congress enacted the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) and the Poultry Products Inspection Act (PPIA) to protect the health and welfare of consumers by assuring that meat and poultry products are wholesome, not adulterated, and properly marked, labeled, and packaged. The FMIA and PPIA empower the Secretary of Agriculture to regulate and inspect meat and poultry products prepared for distribution in interstate and foreign commerce and within states that have been designated under the Acts.

As defined by the Acts, “adulterated” applies to a meat or poultry product “if it consists in whole or in part of any filthy, putrid, or decomposed substance or is for any other reason unsound, unhealthful, unwholesome or otherwise unfit for human food.” The Acts also provide that “adulterated” applies to meat or poultry “if it has been prepared, packed or held under unsanitary conditions whereby it may have become contaminated with filth, or whereby it may have been rendered injurious to health.”

DOWNSVILLE operates a meat, poultry and food storage and distribution warehouse in Monroe, Louisiana. DOWNSVILLE stores meat, poultry and food products in its coolers and freezers and deliver them to small supermarkets and grocers in Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi and Texas. CREEL manages DOWNSVILLE and BROWN manages the warehouse.

According to the USDA, since the year 2000 DOWNSVILLE, CREEL and BROWN have repeatedly been issued notices of violations and warnings from federal and state regulators regarding the unsanitary conditions at the warehouse and rodent infestation. Grocers also repeatedly complained about receiving meat and poultry packages from DOWNSVILLE that contained rodent gnawings, feces and urine. Former employees consistently complained of the rodent infestation problem to the defendants. Employees were also instructed to repackage rodent infested and adulterated meat and poultry products in an effort to hide and conceal any evidence of rodent infestations.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Earl M. Campbell.

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