



Department of Justice

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DARKE COUNTY FARMER PLEADS GUILTY TO FRAUD IN CROP INSURANCE CLAIM

DAYTON – Douglas J. Zimmerman, 44, of Englewood, pleaded guilty Thursday in United States District Court in Cincinnati to one count of conversion of property pledged to the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and one count of submitting a false crop insurance claim against the United States on farming operations in Randolph County, Indiana.

William E. Hunt, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, and Derrick Hurst, Assistant Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Office of the Inspector General, Columbus Field Office, announced the plea entered Thursday before U.S. District Judge Michael R. Barrett.

According to the statement of facts filed with his plea agreement, Zimmerman secured a USDA \$49,735 loan from the Farm Service Agency, using his soybean crop as collateral for the loan. Between December 2003 and March, 2004, Zimmerman fraudulently sold over 16,000 bushels of soybeans that were previously pledged to the CCC as security for the loan but converted over \$80,000 in proceeds for his own use. Zimmerman then made a fraudulent crop insurance claim in January, 2005 against the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, a program administered by the Risk Management Agency of the United States Department of Agriculture.

Zimmerman owned, leased and operated a number of farming operations in Darke County, Ohio, and Randolph and Jay Counties, Indiana for investment purposes.

Zimmerman faces up to five years imprisonment, a \$10,000 fine, and three years of supervised release, on the conversion charge and up to five years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, and three years of supervised release on the false claim charge. Zimmerman agreed to pay restitution up to an amount not to exceed \$44,810. His sentencing will be scheduled at a later date.

Hunt commended the efforts of U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Inspector General agents, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Dwight Keller, who is prosecuting the case.

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