



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, JULY 23, 1984

AT
202-633-2016

The Department of Justice today filed a civil antitrust suit alleging that five firms that buy hops from growers and sell them to brewers conspired to fix prices for the sale of hops and related products and services.

Hops are an agricultural commodity which give beer its distinctive flavor and aroma. The defendants collectively sold about \$200 million worth of hops in 1981. They account for at least 80 percent of sales of hops by dealers to brewers in the United States.

Attorney General William French Smith said the suit, which charged a violation of Section 1 of the Sherman Act, was filed in U.S. District Court in Spokane, Washington.

Named as defendants are:

- John Barth, Inc., New York, New York;
- John I. Haas, Inc., Washington, D.C.;
- Lupofresh, Inc., New York, New York;
- S.S. Steiner, Inc., New York, New York; and
- Von Horst Company-Yakima, Yakima, Washington.

J. Paul McGrath, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Antitrust Division, said the suit alleges that, beginning in 1976 or earlier and continuing through the present, the defendants and

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co-conspirators agreed to fix prices or price ranges at which hops and related products and services were quoted and sold to U.S. brewers.

Hops are grown commercially principally in the Yakima Valley region of the State of Washington and to a lesser extent in other parts of the Pacific Northwest and Northern California. Hops are also grown in Europe.

The complaint seeks a court order prohibiting the continuation or renewal of the conspiracy.

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