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# **News Release**

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## **Four Minnesota men plead guilty to running large marijuana grow operation**

MINNEAPOLIS – Last week in federal court in Duluth, three men from northern Minnesota pleaded guilty to their roles in a marijuana grow operation consisting of more than 925 plants. On October 21, 2011, David Donald Foote, age 42, and Steven John Hansen, age 50, both of Duluth, and Russell Gordon Fromberg, age 51, of Proctor, pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to manufacture 100 or more marijuana plants. The three were indicted on July 6, 2011, along with Craig Alan Modean, age 35, of Barnum. The pleas were entered before United States District Court Judge Richard H. Kyle.

In their plea agreements, Foote, Hansen, and Fromberg admitted that from January of 2008 through April 1, 2010, they conspired with others to manufacture marijuana. From March 24 through March 26, 2010, law enforcement executed search warrants at various residences and found hundreds of marijuana plants. Hansen admitted there were 96 plants at his home. He also admitted assisting at a second Duluth residence, where additional plants were recovered. Moreover, Hansen admitted selling marijuana and being responsible for manufacturing 554 plants during the course of the conspiracy.

In his plea agreement, Foote admitted that officers seized 458 plants from him, and that he was responsible for manufacturing 925 plants during the conspiracy. He also admitted setting up grow operations at a number of locations. In his plea agreement, Fromberg admitted that officers seized 46 plants at his residence, and that he was responsible for helping in the manufacturing of 600 plants. In addition, Fromberg admitted possessing seven firearms, including five rifles and two pistols.

On October 14, 2011, Modean pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy. In his plea agreement, he admitted joining the conspiracy in January of 2009. In addition, Modean admitted that officers seized 325 plants from his residence.

For their crimes, the four defendants in this case face a potential maximum penalty of 40 years in prison, with a mandatory minimum penalty of five years on the conspiracy charge. Judge Kyle will determine their sentences at a future hearing, yet to be scheduled.

This case is the result of an investigation by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the St. Louis County Sheriff's Office and the Carlton County Sheriff's Office. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney LeeAnn K. Bell.

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