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## **FOOD DISTRIBUTOR PLEADS GUILTY TO MISDEMEANOR FOR ADULTERATED FOOD PRODUCTS**

*Doerle Food Service must pay \$129,317 after  
inspection reveals rodent infestations*

**Lafayette, Louisiana . . .** United States Attorney Donald W. Washington announced that **DOERLE FOOD SERVICE, INC.** pleaded guilty and was sentenced today in federal court before United States District Judge Richard T. Haik to 6 months unsupervised probation for holding adulterated food products. The Court also ordered DOERLE FOODS to pay a total of \$129,317.98 to include a fine, the cost of the investigation, and a food contribution worth \$25,000 to hurricane relief organizations.

A Bill of Information charging DOERLE FOOD SERVICE was filed in federal court in March 2006 following an investigation by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service, Office of Program Evaluation Enforcement and Review Compliance Investigations Division regarding the violation of the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act. DOERLE FOOD SERVICE was charged with, acknowledged, and was sentenced for holding meat and poultry products in a manner that may have had the effect of causing the meat and poultry products to

become adulterated due to being held 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.”

DOERLE FOOD SERVICES, INC. (DOERLE FOODS) is incorporated in the State of Louisiana and its business includes a 100,000 square foot freezer/warehouse facility located in Iberia Parish, Louisiana. DOERLE FOOD SERVICE stores and distributes meat, poultry and other food items primarily to daycare facilities, nursing homes, schools, hospitals, restaurants, prisons, and offshore oil rigs. DOERLE FOOD SERVICE receives meat, poultry and other food items in commerce and stores them in their warehouse facility in New Iberia, Louisiana.

In October 2002, a Food Safety and Inspection Service compliance officer with the USDA inspected DOERLE FOOD SERVICE’s facility and observed rodent activity on meat and poultry products. Various meats and poultry items were observed to have rodent feces and rodent gnaw marks. Photographs and samples were obtained from the facility and sent to the USDA laboratory for further analysis. The products analysis came back positive for rodent feces, hair, and gnaw marks. Additionally, monthly extermination

reports showed evidence of rodent presence within the warehouse facility.

The investigation determined that the rodent problem was a result of certain product rotation practices as well as structural deficiencies at the DOERLE FOOD SERVICE warehouse. USDA investigations determined that even though the meat and poultry products were held under unsanitary conditions, there is no evidence that adulterated meat and poultry products entered into commerce.

U.S. Attorney Washington stated, “Our first concern is the public’s health and safety. We want the public to understand that no meat and poultry products distributed out of the facility was found to be harmful to the public.”

As a result of today’s plea and sentencing, DOERLE FOOD SERVICE must perform any remediation necessary and required by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) , U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and/or the State of Louisiana. DOERLE FOOD SERVICE must also review, evaluate, publish, and implement standards, protocols, and internal control measures to be followed by employees with respect to product sanitation conditions and provide the USDA with copies of such policies, procedures, standards, and protocols. The defendant must also provide detailed monthly pest control information to the USDA during the period of unsupervised probation.

Sentencing in federal court is determined by the discretion of federal judges and the governing statute. Parole has been abolished in the federal system.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Howard C. Parker.

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