

Department of Justice

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Western District of New York

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SCIO MAN ARRESTED FOR VIOLATING THE FEDERAL MEAT INSPECTION ACT

BUFFALO, N.Y.– U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Keith Middaugh, 37, of Scio, N.Y., was arrested and charged by Criminal Complaint with violating the Federal Meat Inspection Act and making false statements to government authorities. The charges carry a maximum penalty of eight years in prison, a \$260,000 fine or both.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Aaron J. Mango, who is handling the case, stated that the New York State Police (NYSP) executed a search warrant at the defendant's farm, located at 4105/4107 Irons Road in Scio, related to an animal cruelty investigation. During the search, officers observed evidence that Middaugh was processing and selling beef and pork products under unsanitary conditions, and selling the meat to the public. As a result, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) began an investigation to determine whether the defendant was processing meat without being properly inspected pursuant to the Federal Meat Inspection Act. During the USDA-FSIS inspection, Middaugh stated that the only meat he processed was for personal consumption of himself and family. However, USDA-FSIS identified at least one witness who stated that he paid the defendant \$80 to process a beef carcass into steaks, ribs, and ground meat.

According to the Complaint, the witness provided a sample of that meat to USDA-FSIS for testing, which revealed the presence of pork antigen, bovine hairs, striated hairs, **hundreds of** plant particles, **an** insect fragment, sand particles, **a** rubbery particle, and synthetic non-edible fibers. As such, the meat the defendant provided to the witness was adulterated, which is a crime under the FMIA. Middaugh was also charged with failing to register with the USDA to handle dead, dying, diseased, or disabled animals and products. Under the FMIA, any person involved in the business of handling such animals, must register with the USDA and keep detailed records, failure to do so is a criminal offense.

Middaugh made an initial appearance before U.S. Magistrate Judge H. Kenneth Schroeder, Jr. He was released on bond and ordered to comply with all local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

The arrest is the culmination of an investigation on the part of Special Agents of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General, and the New York State Police - Amity, under the direction of Captain Tim Talley.

Any individuals who have bought meat from or had meat processed by the defendant, are encouraged to call the USDA hotline at 1-800-447-8477.

The fact that a defendant has been charged with a crime is merely an accusation and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

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