



Department of Justice

Carlton S. Shier, IV
Acting United States Attorney
Eastern District of Kentucky

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, February 23, 2021
www.usdoj.gov/usao/kye

CONTACT: Gabrielle Dudgeon
PHONE: (859) 685-4887
E-MAIL: gabrielle.dudgeon@usdoj.gov

Two Martin County Men Sentenced for Violating Federal Law Governing Ginseng Sales

PIKEVILLE, Ky. – Two Lovely, Kentucky men, Sherman Jude, 73, and Johnathon Jude, 40, were sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Robert Wier, for violations of the Lacey Act, regarding ginseng purchases and required record keeping. Sherman Jude received two years of probation with a \$30,000 fine. Johnathon Jude received one-year probation with a \$1,500.00 fine.

The harvesting and sale of ginseng is governed by regulations, which include record keeping requirements and a limited harvest season. According to their guilty plea agreements, Sherman Jude was a dealer of wild American ginseng; and his son, Johnathon Jude, worked with him to keep records of the ginseng purchased from diggers and harvesters.

The investigation by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service revealed that over a period of years, the Judes falsified the required Kentucky Ginseng Purchase Forms, for multiple purchases of wild ginseng. This included failing to keep records of all the purchases and purchasing ginseng that was known to have been harvested from another state, without being properly certified before entering Kentucky, in violation of the regulations. Sherman Jude also acknowledged that, as of August 2019, he had purchased 12.5 pounds of ginseng that had been harvested improperly, out of season.

The Judes pleaded guilty in October 2020. Carlton S. Shier, IV, Acting United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, jointly announced the sentencing.

The investigation was directed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Kentucky Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. The United States was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Emily K. Greenfield.

– END –