



Department of Justice

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Missouri River Ag., Inc. Sentenced for False Official Certificate

BISMARCK - United States Attorney Drew H. Wrigley announced that on April 14, 2008, **Missouri River Ag., Inc.** of Crosby, North Dakota, through its representative, pleaded guilty and was sentenced before United States District Court Chief Judge Daniel L. Hovland on a charge of causing false official certificate or official form. Judge Hovland sentenced **Missouri River Ag., Inc.** to one year probation, a fine of \$40,000 and \$400 in special assessments to the Crime Victim's Fund.

Between November and December 2005, **Missouri River Ag., Inc.** caused the issuance of a false official certificate, and other official forms, by exporting whole yellow peas, which were produced in the United States, from a Crosby, North Dakota, facility to Belle Pullses, Saskatchewan, Canada. The peas were split in Canada and imported back to North Dakota, in an effort to fulfill a PL-480, U.S. Government contract for split peas. The contract required that all peas delivered be U.S. products. Whole peas produced in the United States, but exported for processing, such as splitting, and re-imported, are not U.S. products.

In addition to exporting whole peas for splitting and re-import, **Missouri River Ag., Inc.** purchased and imported approximately 54 to 60 metric tons of split yellow peas that were produced in Canada and were not U.S. products. **Missouri River Ag., Inc.** then falsely presented the non-U.S. product to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for inspection; and, **Missouri River Ag., Inc.** deceptively loaded the non-U.S. product peas for delivery to agents of the USDA Kansas City, Kansas, Commodities Office, in satisfaction of the contract, and in violation of law. The non-U.S. product was discovered by USDA officials before shipment overseas and **Missouri River Ag., Inc.** replaced the peas with the proper product.

The case was investigated by the United States Department of Agriculture Office of Inspector General.

Assistant United States Attorney Clare Hochhalter prosecuted the case.

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