



Department of Justice

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FEDERAL CROP INSURANCE VIOLATORS SENTENCED

Tampa, Florida - United States Attorney A. Brian Albritton announced today the sentencing of D&K Farms, Inc. to a term of 5 years of probation, \$402,471 in restitution, and \$402,471 to be forfeited to the United States Department of Agriculture, Risk Management Agency (USDA-RMA).

According to court documents, D & K Farms is a farm incorporated in Florida, with its registered office located in Plant City. Darryl Williams and William Keith Williams are the owners and operators of D & K Farms and employ numerous persons to grow, harvest, and pack strawberries and peppers. From July 2001 through June 2003, D & K Farms, through its officers and employees, obtained federal crop insurance to cover strawberry and pepper crops. During that time period, D & K Farms falsely and fraudulently claimed crop losses under the federal crop insurance program policies, when in fact D & K Farms had harvested and sold the crops. As a result, D & K Farms fraudulently obtained \$402,471 in federal crop insurance payments.

Darryl Williams and William Keith Williams already had been sentenced for filing false tax returns. William Keith Williams was sentenced on March 17, 2009, to 3 years of probation and agreed to pay \$39,078 in back taxes, interest, and penalties to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Darryl Williams was sentenced on April 17, 2009, to 3 months of

home detention and 3 years of probation and agreed to pay \$81,133 in back taxes, interest, and penalties to the IRS.

The D&K Farms case is one of many cases resulting from a joint investigation by the United States Department of Agriculture - Office of Inspector General, the IRS, and the USDA-RMA. The joint investigation focuses on farms and farmers in the Hillsborough County area engaged in crop insurance fraud and tax evasion.

The joint investigation already has produced convictions and sentences for a second farm, Goodson Farms, and its owner, Janet Goodson. According to court documents, Goodson Farms is a farm incorporated in Florida, with its registered office located in Balm, Florida. Goodson Farms owns and leases land and employs numerous persons to grow, harvest, pack, and sell peppers. From March 2001 through September 2004, Goodson Farms, through its officers and employees, obtained federal crop insurance to cover pepper crops, and, during that time period, Goodson Farms fraudulently claimed crop losses under its federal crop insurance program policies, when in fact Goodson Farms had harvested and sold the crops. As a result, Goodson Farms falsely and fraudulently obtained more than \$1 million in federal crop insurance payments. On March 18, 2009, Goodson Farms was sentenced to 5 years of probation and was ordered to pay \$1,098,441 in restitution to USDA-RMA and \$1,098,441 in forfeiture.

Goodson Farms' principle owner, Janet Goodson, was sentenced on March 31, 2009, to 1 month in federal prison, 60 days in a half-way house, 3 months of home detention, and 1 year of probation for filing a false tax return for tax year 2004 . Goodson agreed to pay \$1,564,258 in back taxes, interest, and penalties to the IRS.

The joint investigation also has led to the successful administrative recovery of an additional \$932,848 from other farms covered under the federal crop insurance program.

Before the joint fraud investigation commenced - according to USDA-RMA statistics- the indemnities to strawberry and pepper farmers in Hillsborough County based upon claimed crop losses had peaked at approximately \$9 million in 2004. Since the investigation began (in 2004), strawberry-crop and pepper-crop indemnity payments have fallen drastically. There were no indemnities paid in 2008.

The joint investigation is ongoing. The cases thus far were handled by Assistant United States Attorney Anthony Porcelli.