

## Central Agrees To Settle USDA Complaint

Washington (March 1, 2001) - On December 1, 2000, the U.S. Department of Agriculture entered into a consent decision with Central Livestock Association, Inc. (Central), a livestock marketing agency located in Albany, Minnesota. Under applicable provisions of the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921, Central was assessed a civil penalty of \$8,000 and ordered to cease and desist from:

1. Engaging in any act, practice or course of business for the purpose of obtaining money from the purchasers of livestock by false and deceptive practices in connection with the purchase or sale of livestock;
2. Failing to accurately represent to its principals or other purchasers of livestock, or aiding and assisting any person to misrepresent to such principals or purchasers, the original purchase prices, weights, freight charges, or shrinkage allowances of such livestock;
3. Preparing and issuing accounts of purchases, invoices, billings or any other documents showing false, inaccurate or misleading price, weight, freight charges, or shrinkage allowances for such livestock;
4. Inserting or failing to insert in accounts of purchase invoices, billings or any other document prepared in connection with the purchase or sale of livestock, any statement or information where such insertion or omission results, in whole or in part, in a false, inaccurate or misleading record of such livestock purchase or sale transaction; and
5. Collecting payment from principals or other purchasers of livestock, or aiding or assisting any person to collect from such persons, on the basis of false, inaccurate or misleading invoices or billings.

Central, while agreeing to the Secretary of Agriculture's jurisdiction in this matter, neither admitted nor denied the material allegations set forth in a complaint issued on September 22, 2000. However, to settle the matter, Central waived an oral hearing and consented to the entry of the order in this case.

The Packers and Stockyards Act is a fair trade practice and payment protection law that promotes a fair and competitive marketing environment for livestock, meat and poultry.

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