

Decision Reached In GIPSA's Case Against Chris Britten D/B/A Chris Britten Cattle

WASHINGTON, July 9, 2003 - On June 25, 2003, USDA's Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) reached a consent decision with Chris Britten d.b.a. Chris Britten Cattle (Britten) of Groom, Texas. Britten allegedly operated as a dealer buying and selling livestock in commerce, and as a market agency buying livestock on a commission basis (order buyer) in violation of the bonding requirements of the Packers and Stockyards Act (P&S Act).

The complaint alleged that the \$95,000 surety bond Britten maintained to secure the performance of his livestock obligations under the P&S Act was terminated on September 7, 2001, and that Britten failed to replace the bond or obtain a bond equivalent. GIPSA informed Britten that he needed to obtain a \$95,000 bond or its equivalent before continuing his livestock operations. The complaint alleged that despite this notice Britten continued to engage in the business of a dealer and a market agency without maintaining an adequate bond or its equivalent.

The consent decision orders Britten to stop engaging in any business in any capacity for which bonding is required without filing and maintaining an adequate bond or bond equivalent as required by the P&S Act and regulations. Britten was also assessed a civil penalty of \$2,500.00. The provisions of this order became effective on the sixth day after service of this order. Britten recently filed the required \$95,000 bond equivalent coverage with GIPSA.

The P&S Act is a fair trade practice and payment protection law that promotes fair and competitive marketing environments for the livestock, meat, and poultry industries.

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Leah Tahiry (202) 720-4998
Leah.P.Tahiry@usda.gov