

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BEFORE THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

Docket No. 13-0219

In re: Alejo Grocers, Inc.,

Respondent

Default Decision and Order

Preliminary Statement

This is a disciplinary proceeding under the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act, 1930, as amended (7 U.S.C. § 499a et seq.)(the Act or PACA), instituted by a Complaint filed on April 19, 2013, by Bruce W. Summers, the Associate Deputy Administrator, Fruit and Vegetable Program, Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The Complaint filed by Complainant alleges that Respondent, during the period July 2010 through December 2011, failed to make full payment promptly to ten (10) sellers of the agreed purchase prices in the total amount of \$389,524.51 for 469 lots of perishable agricultural commodities, which Respondent purchased, received, and accepted in interstate and foreign commerce in willful violation of section 2(4) of the PACA (7 U.S.C. § 499b(4)).

The Complaint was mailed to Respondent by certified mail on April 19, 2013, but was returned as being “unclaimed.” Respondent was then served pursuant to the Rules of Practice by regular mail on May 31, 2013.

As Respondent failed to file an answer to the Complaint within the 20 day time period prescribed by section 1.136 of the Rules of Practice (7 C.F.R. § 1.136), the following Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Order will be entered pursuant to section 1.139 of the Rules of Practice (7 C.F.R. § 1.139).

Findings Of Fact

1. Respondent Alejo Grocers, Inc. is a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the state of California with a business address formerly in Los Angeles, California. Respondent is no longer operating and the Complaint was served at the company's last known mailing address and on its president and director.

2. At all times material herein, Respondent was licensed under the provisions of the PACA. License No. 2005 0857 was issued to Respondent on June 2, 2005, and is next scheduled for renewal on June 2, 2014.

3. Respondent, during the period July 2010 through December 2011, failed to make full payment promptly to ten (10) sellers of the agreed purchase prices in the total amount of \$389,524.51 for 469 lots of perishable agricultural commodities, which Respondent purchased, received, and accepted in interstate and foreign commerce.

Conclusions of Law

1. The Secretary has jurisdiction in this matter.

2. Respondent willfully, flagrantly and repeatedly violated section 2(4) of the PACA (7 U.S.C. § 499b(4)).

Order

1. The facts and circumstances of Respondent's violations shall be published.

2. Respondent's license shall be revoked.

3. This order shall take effect on the day that this Decision becomes final.

4. Pursuant to the Rules of Practice governing procedures under the Act, this Decision will become final without further proceedings 35 days after service hereof unless appealed to the Secretary by a party to the proceeding within 30 days after service as provided in sections 1.139 and 1.145 of the Rules of Practice (7 C.F.R. §§ 1.139 and 1.145).

Copies hereof shall be served upon parties.

December 20, 2013

Peter M. Davenport

Peter M. Davenport
Chief Administrative Law Judge