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Tuesday, July 7, 2020

Westlake man sentenced for illegal slaughter and discharge of animals

Justin Herdman, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio, announced today that Amin M. Salem, age 61, of Westlake, was sentenced to 33-months imprisonment after entering a plea of guilty to money laundering, unpermitted discharge into a waterway of the United States, and the slaughter of animals for commercial use without a permit on December 17, 2019. According to court documents, Amin Salem operated an unregulated slaughterhouse in Elyria and polluted a stream by dumping animal blood and other fluids. Salem then laundered the profits from the illegal slaughterhouse operation at Cleveland-area gas stations.

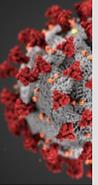
"Salem's blatant disregard for the rules and regulations governing our food and water supply put the health of countless people at risk, all so he could make a quick profit," said U.S. Attorney Justin Herdman. "These actions, combined with his admitted money laundering activities, all show that Salem's sentence was earned and justified."

"Amin Salem attempted to conceal the profits from the illegal sale of lamb through his legitimate gas station bank accounts, but the financial expertise of IRS Criminal Investigation and the joint investigative efforts of our federal, state and local counterparts unraveled this money laundering scheme," said Bryant Jackson, Special Agent in Charge, IRS Criminal Investigation, Cincinnati Field Office.

"The defendants blatantly disregarded environmental laws by discharging animal waste directly into a local stream," said Special Agent in Charge Jennifer Lynn of EPA's criminal investigation program in Ohio. "This sentencing demonstrates that EPA and its law enforcement partners will not tolerate actions that endanger communities and natural resources."

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According to the indictment, from September 2014 through March 2016, Salem owned two properties in Elyria, Ohio where he, and others, slaughtered animals for commercial sale and personal consumption without any licenses or permits. As part of the slaughterhouse operation, Salem discharged blood and other bodily fluids into Engle Ditch, a waterway that emptied into Beaver Creek and Lake Eire. In total, Salem slaughtered at least 400 lambs or goats weighing approximately 25,000 pounds.

From October 2010 through March 2016, Salem owned several Cleveland area gas stations where he sold his adulterated and uninspected meat. Proceeds from the sales of the meat were deposited into gas station bank accounts in an attempt to conceal their source and further facilitate the illegal slaughtering operation. In total, over \$695,000 was deposited into the banks accounts for the gas station located at 3934 West 117th Street in Cleveland, Ohio, with approximately \$88,000 coming from the illegal sale of meat.

Also indicted in this matter were Mohamed Salem (Amin Salem's son), age 34, of Westlake and Zahran Al-Qadan, age 57, of Cleveland. Al-Qadan was sentenced to two years of probation, the first four months as home confinement. Mohamed Salem is awaiting sentencing.

This case was investigated by the FBI, IRS-Criminal Investigations, USDA-OIG, USDA-FSIS, EPA-CID, Ohio Investigative Unit, Ohio Department of Taxation, Ohio Department of Agriculture, BCI, Ohio EPA, Lorain County Sheriff's Office, Guernsey County Sheriff's Department, Cleveland Division of Police, Westlake Police Department and Strongsville Police Department.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Duncan Brown and Brad Beeson.

Topic(s):
Environment

Component(s):
USAO - Ohio, Northern

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