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Northwest Missouri Farmer Indicted for \$800,000 Crop Insurance Fraud

News Release |

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Farmer was indicted for fraud scheme to receive federal crop insurance payments to which he was not entitled.

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Tammy Dickinson, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that an Albany, Mo., farmer was indicted by a federal grand jury today for a nearly \$800,000 fraud scheme to receive federal crop insurance payments to which he was not entitled.

Ryan A. Ruckman, 60, of Albany, was charged in an eight-count indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Kansas City, Mo.

Ruckman owned and operated farms in the Missouri counties of Gentry, Davies, Nodaway, Worth and Harrison, as well as counties in southern Iowa. The indictment alleges that Ruckman defrauded the government by claiming federal benefits in his son's name in order to receive additional payments from the U.S. Department of Agriculture under the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), the Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment program and the Multiple Peril Crop Insurance program.

In order to be eligible to receive those payments, an applicant must be actively engaged in farming. Ruckman's son, the indictment says, was a full-time student at Logan University College of Chiropractic in St. Louis, Mo. Ruckman allegedly placed

crop ownership/production in his son's name in order to increase the number of persons eligible to receive federal benefits.

From February 2007 to May 2010, the indictment says, Ruckman submitted documentation to provide the appearance that his son was the producer of the crops and to conceal the fact that he was the actual producer of the crops. According to the indictment, losses incurred by the government as a result of Ruckman's fraud scheme totaled approximately \$795,935.

According to the indictment, Ruckman used the proceeds of the fraud scheme to make payments on approximately \$2.9 million in farm operating loans at Midstates Bank in Harlan, Iowa.

Today's indictment charges Ruckman with eight counts of loan application fraud. The indictment also contains a forfeiture allegation, which would require Ruckman to forfeit to the government any property obtained from the proceeds of the alleged fraud.

Dickinson cautioned that the charges contained in this indictment are simply accusations, and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

This case is being prosecuted by Senior Litigation Counsel Gregg R. Coonrod. It was investigated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of Inspector General and Risk Management Agency.

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