

BUSINESS

Smithfield's slaughterhouse in Vernon fined \$237,537

Smithfield bought Clougherty Packing – which owned the Farmer John facility – in January 2017.



Activists with the animal rights network Direct Action Everywhere (DxE) hold a mock funeral in front of the Los Angeles River near the Farmer John slaughterhouse in Vernon to call attention to the meat processing factory's pollution of the river, Mar. 22, 2021. (Photo by Hans Gutknecht, Los Angeles Daily News/SCNG)

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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced a settlement today of alleged Clean Air Act violations at the Farmer John slaughterhouse and meat-packing facility in Vernon.

Smithfield Packaged Meats Corp. and Clougherty Packing will pay \$237,537 in civil penalties to resolve the allegations, according to the EPA. In addition, both entities made safety improvements to the facility to ensure the protection of their employees and the public.

“It is paramount that facilities properly manage regulated toxic substances and comply with federal requirements to protect employees, the environment and the local community,” EPA Pacific Southwest Regional Administrator Martha Guzman said in a statement. “Failure to do so can result in significant penalties.”

Smithfield bought Clougherty Packing — which owned the Farmer John facility — in January 2017. On Sept. 21, 2017, EPA conducted an inspection of the facility and found violations of the Clean Air Act’s Risk Management Program requirements, including:

- failure to identify hazards associated with discharge from emergency exhaust pipes and pressure relief valves;
- failure to repair a malfunctioning ammonia sensor and replace damaged or missing insulation, properly seal doors, protect electrical equipment, replace corroded piping and equipment, and properly label the facility’s process and emergency equipment; and;
- failure to maintain adequate process safety information for the facility’s alarms, process equipment and emergency ventilation system.

In addition to Smithfield and Clougherty Packing paying the civil penalties, Smithfield and Clougherty Packing undertook numerous safety improvements to the facility to ensure the protection of the public and first responders from dangerous chemicals, according to the EPA.

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