CA Meatpacker Settles Discrimination Claim

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A meatpacker that makes Farmer John products and Dodger Dogs agreed to pay nearly $440,000 and offer women hundreds of jobs to settle allegations of gender discrimination, federal officials announced Tuesday.

Clougherty Packing Co. will pay the money to about 2,000 women whose applications for entry-level jobs were rejected between 2007 and 2009.

The women had sought jobs packaging, cutting and slicing meat products at the company's Los Angeles-area plant, said Jose A. Carnevali, a spokesman for the U.S. Department of Labor.

Clougherty agreed to offer 700 of the women jobs as the positions become available.

The Hormel Foods Corp. subsidiary didn't acknowledge any wrongdoing in the agreement, which was reached on Oct. 31.

"We strongly deny any wrongdoing and reiterate our commitment to a discrimination-free workplace for our employees," a Hormel statement said. "That said, we believe a settlement at this time is the right thing to do to allow Clougherty Packing to move forward with our business."

The agreement followed an investigation by the labor department's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs.

"So many Americans grew up eating Dodger Dogs and other Hormel products. These are uniquely American brands that ought to reflect American values, particularly when it comes to ensuring fairness in the workplace," compliance program Director Patricia A. Shiu said in a statement.

Clougherty makes more than 400 million pounds of pork products a year, including the hot dogs sold at Los Angeles Dodgers home games. About 20 percent of its workforce is female, Carnevali said.

The company also has a nearly $4 million federal contract to provide products to food banks and other assistance programs.

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