

West Liberty Foods Now IMAGE Certified
First Iowa business partners with ICE, joining "IMAGE" program



CEO Ed Garret (pictured right), receives IMAGE Certificate from Michael Feinberg, Special Agent in Charge SAC St. Paul.



WEST LIBERTY, Iowa (May 17, 2011) — West Liberty Foods, LLC today became the first Iowa-based business to be certified as a partner in a nationwide program with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to ensure a legal and more secure work force.

Officials with West Liberty Foods, LLC and ICE formally agreed to partner in the "IMAGE" or "ICE Mutual Agreement between Government and Employers" program during a signing ceremony held today at West Liberty Foods' corporate headquarters. IMAGE is a voluntary program that allows private industry to partner with ICE to reduce unauthorized employment and the use of fraudulent identity documents.

"By volunteering to become members of IMAGE, companies large and small can reduce unauthorized employment and the use of fraudulent identity documents," said Mike Feinberg, special agent in charge of ICE's Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in Bloomington, Minn.

To qualify for IMAGE certification, West Liberty Foods performed the following requirements:

- Conducted self-assessments of their hiring practices to uncover vulnerabilities that could be exploited by illegal aliens;
- Enrolled in employment eligibility verification programs, such as E-Verify and the Social Security Number Verification Service;
- Trained their staff on IMAGE Best Employment Practices and how to use the new screening tools;
- and Underwent a Form I-9 employment eligibility verification audit conducted by ICE.

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West Liberty Foods Now IMAGE Certified, p. 2

“The IMAGE program is the best way we can ensure our team members are eligible for employment,” said Tara Lindsay, vice president of human resources for West Liberty Foods. “This is an innovative program and represents our commitment to be a leader in the area of hiring and employment practices in our industry and in the state of Iowa.”

“While the process to achieve certification was rigorous, the decision to participate in IMAGE was an easy one,” Lindsay said. “It demonstrates our commitment to the highest standards of cooperation and compliance with Federal authorities in the hiring of the most stable, secure and fully documented workforce possible.”

All IMAGE members must participate in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) E-Verify employment eligibility verification program. Through this program, employers can verify that newly hired employees are eligible to work in the United States. This Internet-based system is available throughout the nation and is free to employers. It provides an automated link to the Social Security Administration database and DHS immigration records.

Upon enrollment in and commitment to the IMAGE Best Employment Practices, program participants are deemed "IMAGE certified," a distinction DHS and ICE believe will become an industry standard. IMAGE also provides free training on the Form I-9, fraudulent document detection, anti-discrimination and on building a solid immigration compliance model.

“Nationally, West Liberty Foods is among the early adopters qualifying for the IMAGE certified status,” said Feinberg. “We are pleased that West Liberty Foods has chosen to take the lead in their industry with their decision to participate. Doing so puts them in select company enhancing the reputation of their company and their brand.”

West Liberty Foods, LLC is a leading processor of sliced meat products in the United States with headquarters in West Liberty, Iowa. For more information, visit www.wlfoods.com.

Companies interested in more information on the IMAGE program can call the ICE office in Bloomington at (952) 853-2602 or visit www.ICE.gov/image.

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