



## Ex-Employees Sue Meatpacking Company Targeted in Illegal Immigration Raid for Wage Manipulation

Monday , December 18, 2006

Associated Press

DALLAS — Former employees are suing [Swift & Co.](#) for \$23 million, alleging the meatpacking company conspired to keep wages down by hiring [illegal immigrants](#).

The 18 former employees are legal residents who worked at a plant in Cactus, Texas, north of Amarillo. The plant was one of six facilities raided in a multistate federal sweep that led to the arrests of nearly 1,300 employees and temporarily halted Swift's operations.

"These plaintiffs are ... victims in a long-standing scheme by Swift to depress and artificially lower the wages of its workers by knowingly hiring illegal workers," said their attorney, Angel Reyes. "By lessening its labor costs and increasing its profits, Swift has severely damaged the potential earnings and livelihood of these hardworking men and women."

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Swift, which is based in Greeley, Colo., and the Dallas firm that owns it didn't immediately return calls Monday.

The lawsuit was filed late Friday against Swift and investment firm HM Capital Partners LLC, in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas. They contend Swift and HM Capital Partners engaged in racketeering to manipulate commerce.

"When the Swift plant opened in Cactus, wages were approximately \$20 an hour," said another plaintiffs attorney, Michael Haygood. "Now, the average wage is approximately \$12 to \$13 an hour. Illegal immigration has fueled this depression in wages."

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