

Justice News

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StarKist Ordered to Pay \$100 Million Criminal Fine for Antitrust Violation

Leading Producer Receives Highest Corporate Fine in Packaged Seafood Investigation

StarKist Co. was sentenced to pay a criminal fine of \$100 million, the statutory maximum, for its role in a conspiracy to fix prices for canned tuna sold in the United States. StarKist was also sentenced to a 13-month term of probation.

StarKist faced a criminal fine of up to \$100 million, the statutory maximum, for its participation in a conspiracy to fix the prices of canned tuna fish from as early as November 2011 through at least as late as December 2013. As part of today's sentencing hearing, U.S. District Judge Edward M. Chen found that StarKist had not proven that its financial circumstances justified a lower criminal fine. The Antitrust Division opposed StarKist's request for a fine reduction, arguing that StarKist had sufficient financial resources to pay a \$100 million criminal fine. In addition to the criminal fine and term of probation, StarKist has also agreed to cooperate in the Antitrust Division's ongoing investigation.

"Today's result demonstrates our commitment to enforcing the antitrust laws aggressively against companies that fix prices," said Assistant Attorney General Makan Delrahim of the Justice Department's Antitrust Division. "Hard-working Americans deserve the benefits of open competition when they spend their hard-earned money on items that stock kitchen shelves. When a corporation cheats customers at the checkout line, the Antitrust Division will hold it accountable to the greatest extent."

"The consequences for greedy companies who cheat the marketplace and American consumers are significant and clear," said FBI San Francisco Special Agent in Charge John F. Bennett. "The FBI, along with our law enforcement colleagues, will continue to pursue those who conspire to fix prices and bring them to justice."

A total of six charges have resulted from an ongoing federal antitrust investigation into the packaged-seafood industry, which is being conducted by the Antitrust Division's San Francisco Office and the FBI's San Francisco Field Office. Anyone with information on price fixing, bid

rigging or other anticompetitive conduct related to the packaged-seafood industry should contact the Antitrust Division's San Francisco Office at 415-934-5300, visit www.justice.gov/atr/contact/newcase.html, or call the FBI tip line at 415-553-7400.