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NORTH CAROLINA POULTRY PROCESSING WORKERS SEEK PAYMENT FOR ALL TIME WORKED FROM TOWNSENDS

MINNEAPOLIS, MN: Poultry processing employees filed a class action lawsuit against Townsends, Inc. for back wages alleged to be owed to hundreds of poultry workers at Townsends' Siler City and Pittsboro, North Carolina poultry processing plants. Townsends, a 118-year-old poultry company headquartered in Delaware, supplies value-added chicken products to the domestic and international food service and retail markets.

The class action lawsuit, filed on Monday December 21, 2009 in federal court in North Carolina, seeks to recover thousands of dollars in back wages for current or former employees at Townsends' plants in Siler City and Pittsboro, North Carolina. A similar lawsuit was filed in 2008 against Townsends in federal court in Arkansas on behalf of workers at the Townsends plant in Batesville, Arkansas.

The lawsuit alleges workers were not paid from the moment they start putting on and taking off protective clothing (donning and doffing), sanitizing gear and equipment, and walking to and from the production floor, as required by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and state law.

The workers are represented by the law firms of Larson King, LLP of St. Paul, MN and Zimmerman Reed, PLLP, of Minneapolis, MN.

Gordon Rudd, an attorney for the employees, said that "This lawsuit is just the first step in assuring these employees receive fair wages for their hard work. It's an important step that will allow us to inform employees at Townsends' poultry processing plants in North Carolina of their fundamental employment rights, and also provides the means for these employees to join this lawsuit."

The time workers spend getting ready for their shifts, and for finishing the end of their shifts, is significant – sometimes up to 30 minutes each day. "It appears that despite longstanding case law confirming that processing workers are entitled to pay for donning and doffing under the FLSA, the plants continue to not pay workers for all their time worked. Millions of dollars have been paid to settle similar cases, and some workers have been awarded thousands of dollars in back pay," said Joe Snodgrass, another attorney for the workers.

Current or former employees can get more information at www.fairpayattorneys.com or by calling 800.755.0098. The complaint is also available at www.fairpayattorneys.com.

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