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NEWS RELEASE



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Approved: SW
Date: May 17, 2023
Release No.: 23-061

Ojai Butcher Shop Ordered to Pay \$75,000 for False Advertising

VENTURA, Calif. -The Ventura County District Attorney's Office announced today that a \$75,000 judgment was ordered against Watkins Cattle Company over false advertising of their meat products.

The civil case, filed in Ventura County Superior Court, centered around beef advertisements claiming to be "from our pasture to your plate." The meat in many cases did not come from local pastures and was purchased from third parties out of county and out of state. Watkins Cattle Company also misrepresented to customers the amount of acreage they owned or leased.

"False advertising isn't just a violation of consumer trust, it's a betrayal of hardworking farmers and ranchers who actually put in the time and effort to raise their livestock locally," said Senior Deputy District Attorney Karen Wold, a member of the District Attorney's Office Consumer Protection Unit. "When companies choose to misrepresent their products, they not only deceive their customers, but they also cheat the very people who provide the backbone of our food system."

Watkins Cattle Company will pay \$75,000 made payable under the California Unlawful Competition Law and pursuant to Business and Professions Code section 17206. The money will be allocated to the Ventura County District Attorney's Office as follows:

- \$50,000 to civil penalties and placed in the Consumer Protection Trust Fund account for the Ventura County District Attorney's Office to enforce laws protecting the public against unlawful, unfair, and fraudulent business practices and deceptive advertising.
- \$25,000 will be used to cover the investigative costs incurred by the Ventura County District Attorney's Office.

Payment of the \$75,000 will be made in six installment payments beginning on or before June 1, 2023, and concluding by February 1, 2025.