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TENNESSEE JOINS BIPARTISAN COALITION IN UNITED STATES' ANTITRUST LAWSUIT AGAINST AGRI STATS

Nashville - Today, Tennessee Attorney General Jonathan Skrmetti joined a bipartisan coalition of states in joining the United States' civil antitrust lawsuit against Agri Stats, Inc. for organizing and managing anticompetitive information exchanges among broiler chicken, pork and turkey processors.

The lawsuit alleges that Agri Stats violated Section 1 of the Sherman Act by collecting, integrating, and distributing competitively sensitive information related to price, cost, and output among competing meat processors, which has resulted in higher prices for American consumers.

“At a time when inflation has stressed family budgets to the breaking point, Agri-Stats drove food prices even higher by enabling producers to collude instead of compete,” Tennessee Attorney General Jonathan Skrmetti said. “Tennessee is part of a bipartisan coalition working to hold the company accountable and to let market competition lower prices. Life is hard enough these days without paying more for poultry and pork.”

The lawsuit, filed in the District of Minnesota, alleges that Agri Stats has for years produced comprehensive weekly and monthly reports for participating meat processors, which use the data to set prices and output levels. Spanning hundreds of pages, Agri Stats' reports contain recent data relating to sales prices, costs, such as worker and farmer compensation, and output that are often detailed by facility or company. Participating processors have accounted for more than 90% of broiler chicken sales, 80% of pork sales, and 90% of turkey sales in the United States.

The lawsuit alleges that Agri Stats understood that meat processors have used Agri Stats' reports for anticompetitive purposes and, in some instances, even encouraged meat processors to raise prices and reduce supply. Although Agri Stats distributes troves of competitively sensitive information among participating processors, Agri Stats withholds its reports from meat purchasers, workers, and American consumers. This imbalance of market knowledge further exacerbates the competitive harm of Agri Stats' information exchanges.

The lawsuit further alleges that Agri Stats' scheme continues to this day in the chicken processing industry, among others. Although Agri Stats paused its turkey and pork reporting after facing several private antitrust lawsuits, Agri Stats has expressed an intent to resume such reporting after these lawsuits end. In addition to Tennessee, the States of California, Minnesota, and North Carolina joined the lawsuit as plaintiffs.

You can read the lawsuit in its entirety [here](#).

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