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**USDA restricts PACA violators in California, Texas**

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture imposed sanctions on four produce businesses for failing to meet contractual obligations to the sellers of produce they purchased and failing to pay reparation awards issued under the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act. These sanctions include suspending the businesses' PACA licenses and barring the principal operators of the businesses from engaging in PACA-licensed business or other activities without approval from USDA.

The following businesses and individuals are currently restricted from operating in the produce industry:

- Monarca Natural Foods Inc., operating out of Los Angeles, for failing to pay a \$54,745 award in favor of a Texas seller. As of the issuance date of the reparation order, Carolina Reynoso was listed as the sole officer, director and stockholder of the business.
- Florencio Torres, doing business as Torres Fresh Herbs, operating out of Houston, TX, for failing to pay a \$19,633 award in favor of a Pennsylvania seller. As of the issuance date of the reparation order, Florencio Torres was listed as the sole proprietor of the business.
- Soltierra Inc., operating out of Villa Park, CA, for failing to pay a \$17,798 award in favor of a California seller. As of the issuance date of the reparation order, Scott Castanon was listed as the sole officer, director and stockholder of the business.
- Produce and More Enterprise LLC, operating out of Houston, for failing to pay a \$7,477 award in favor of a Texas seller. As of the issuance date of the reparation order, Anatana Capital Sapi DE CV and Miguel Pedraza Villareal were listed as the managers and members of the business.

PACA provides an administrative forum to handle disputes involving produce transactions. This may result in USDA's issuance of a reparation order that requires damages to be paid by those not meeting their contractual obligations in buying and selling fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables.

In the past three years, USDA resolved over 3,000 PACA claims involving approximately \$147 million. PACA staff also assisted more than 5,900 callers with issues valued at approximately \$163 million.

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