

Missouri Farmers Sue Tyson Foods for Practices Destructive to the Economy

by Marcia Merry Baker

July 27—Three poultry farms in the state of Missouri filed a lawsuit in June against Tyson Foods, Inc., in Stoddard County Circuit Court, in which the plaintiffs’ attorneys are seeking certification as a class-action suit, to represent other affected farmers, on the charge that Tyson, in shutting down its chicken processing plant in Dexter, Missouri, in October 2023, engaged in an “anticompetitive and fraudulent scheme.”

The lawsuit has special significance, because it raises points of principle about how the economy should function to serve the general welfare of the public, not globalist mega-firms, and in all economic sectors, not just concerning agriculture and the food supply.

The [lawsuit](#) says that, “The Tyson chicken processing plant was the lifeblood of the Dexter community,” a town of 7,900 people. It operated for 25 years, and farmers within more than 50 miles of the



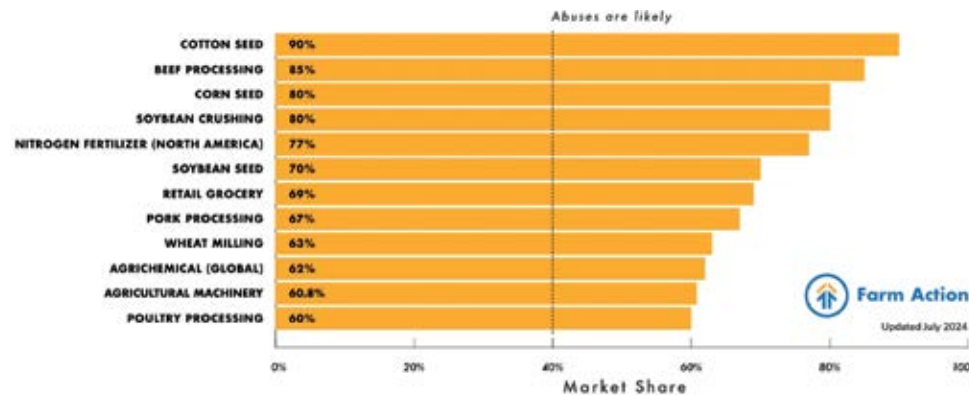
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A Tyson Foods delivery truck. Missouri farmers are suing the company for engaging in an “anticompetitive and fraudulent scheme.”

plant were oriented, at great financial expense, to grow and sell to Tyson’s specifications, then Tyson shut the plant down, preventing any other operator from taking over its processing functions.

“The [farmers’] chicken houses built to Tyson’s specifications and financed by poultry banks could be used for one thing and one thing only: Raising chickens for slaughter at Tyson’s plant in Dexter,” the lawsuit states. This is typical of the poultry raising and processing all across the United States. The cartels dictate terms of production as well as price.

Percentage of U.S. Market Controlled by Top Four Corporations



This graph by Farm Action shows the stranglehold of just a few companies, including Tyson Foods, over America’s farmers and food supply.

Cartel Control

Tyson and Pilgrim’s Pride together control 45%

of the U.S.-processed chicken market. They and a couple of other firms together exert over 60% control. The degree of U.S. market share under control of just four companies, in many major food and agriculture categories, is documented in a new report out this week from Farm Action, [*The Food System: Concentration and its Impacts*](#).

Tyson is also one of the top four transnational monopoly companies controlling 85% of beef processing (with Cargill, National Beef/Marfrig, and JBS). Pork processing is similar.

The cartel-owned processing plants, whether in the U.S., in Europe, or elsewhere, typically “shut and run” whenever their profit “math” indicates they will make more by closing a slaughtering facility, and opening a new or amalgamated one somewhere else. In Europe in recent years, the transnationals, for example, moved much of the famous, traditional German pork processing to Spain.

In the U.S., over 60% of the total Tyson Foods workforce is said to be immigrants and refugees, whom the corporate system regards as relatively easy to toss aside. For example, at the end of June, Tyson closed its pork processing plant in Perry, Iowa, eliminating 1,276 jobs in the town of 8,000 people.

The Dexter Case

Elected officials in Missouri had made noises since Fall 2023, insisting that Tyson must not block the sale of its Dexter facility to another operator, which would continue to process chickens, and Tyson made noises about respecting these politicians. Then Tyson sold its Dexter property to a non-slaughtering company, Cal-Maine, which processes eggs. Raising laying hens is an entirely different farm operation from raising birds for meat, so the Dexter region growers and community have been thrown into severe economic crisis. The politicians remain inactive, as they have for decades, refusing to enforce anti-trust laws on the books, and refusing to back farm community infrastructure and economic improvements.

Moreover, the farmers’ new lawsuit addresses other aspects of the Tyson sale. The inference from



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Dexter, Missouri, where Tyson closed its chicken-processing plant, leaving the area’s heavily invested farm community and support economy stranded. It recently did the same in Perry, Iowa, with a pork-processing plant.

what sections are redacted in the sales transaction is that the terms set by Tyson for selling to Cal-Maine actually specified that no other slaughtering facilities were to be established on the former Tyson property, thus potentially boosting Tyson profits by reducing the supply of processed chicken.

The chicken growers’ legal initiative against Tyson Foods is a fight-back action not only on the part of farmers and residents of Missouri, but representative of farmers and citizens everywhere—including abroad—demanding action to restore economic activity serving the public interest.

A Midwest Farmer Leader Explains: Criminality

Soon after the Missouri class action lawsuit was filed, a Midwest farm leader provided his written, first reaction and evaluation to EIR on June 15.

This is but the tip of the proverbial iceberg in the takeover of the animal agriculture food supply-chain plan. Get the farmers to commit large amounts of capital equity in order for them to have access to market. Then close that plant, (market), shift production to another area, because the original plant is obsolete and uncompetitive now, of course, thereby destroying the farmers and the community in which they live—at least the ones that don’t off themselves.

This story has yet another nuance that is starting to happen in the poultry industry. They are giving the distraught chicken farmers the option to spend hundreds of thousands, if not millions of dollars if they switch to egg production. A totally different industry, even if the animals are ostensibly the same. Of course

they are far different in reality, as breeding has become so specific. I'm sure that many of the farmers are so desperate that they will fall for it.

Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me? This lawsuit is going after these bastards for the right things, in my opinion: the destruction of the farmers; the theft of their market and the ability to earn a living; the devaluation of their assets; the devastation to the economic viability of the surrounding area and the community which called it home.

The only thing I would change is the court in which it was filed. This should be a criminal case because this is nothing less than a crime. The only difference is that these corrupt companies are using contracts and a pen, not a gun to the head. It's the farmer, financially destroyed and feeling like a failure, who all too often puts the gun to his head.

This scheme, and others like it, are being perpetrated in every area of agriculture. Get the farmer hooked on debt, then markets collapse, (because, well, you know, "that is what markets do"), weed out the small, inefficient farmers—the ones without enough capital reserves to withstand the hit.

This has been going on for a long time. I was fourteen

in 1974, when Ag Secretary Earl Butz made his famous proclamation, "Get big or get out!" I believe that was when this plan was accelerated. We are now seeing the end results of the plan. A couple of years earlier, Henry Kissinger had made the statement, "Control the food, control the people." These two statements, coming within the span of three or four years are not coincidence. I do not believe so anyway.

How the courts react to this lawsuit will be very telling. So far, in all of these group class action suits, even when the plaintiff wins, the penalty is a slap on the wrist and then back to business as usual. This one is asking for more. At least that's how it looks to a layman.

Whether or not the plaintiffs prevail in this case, there needs to be a shift in the narrative around the monopolistic control of the food industry and the social and economic devastation it is causing to rural America. This is nothing less than criminal, and these actions should be charged and tried as such. They are deliberately trying to restrict and control the food supply, literally the whole world over. Crimes against humanity are not always accomplished with guns, bombs and drones. Sometimes they are committed with contracts and a pen.

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Already being implemented, this plan is taking over the direction of national economies from sovereign governments, using the power of central banks and the too-big-to-fail private financial institutions, cutting off credit to fossil fuel power generation and to industrial and agricultural enterprises claimed to emit too much carbon. Meanwhile it is creating a new huge bubble in the "sustainable fuel" sector, hoping to prop up the increasingly bankrupt financial system.

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