



SPLC FILES CLASS ACTION LAWSUIT TARGETING ARKANSAS FARM LABOR CONTRACTOR EXPLOITING MIGRANT WORKERS

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El Dorado, Ark. – Today, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) filed a class action lawsuit on behalf of migrant workers who have faced rampant wage theft by a major farm labor contractor, Lowry Farms, Inc. The guest workers planted sugarcane on farms throughout Louisiana for little pay after leaving their homes and families and spending considerable amounts of money to work for Lowry Farms.

In addition to two named plaintiffs, [Antonio-Benito v. Lowry Farms, Inc.](#) was brought on behalf of around 2,000 Mexican migrant workers who planted sugarcane at farms in Louisiana.

The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in the Western District of Arkansas, outlines Lowry Farms' ongoing failure to comply with federal and state laws that led to the workers earning less than the minimum wage due to improper reimbursement for visa and transportation costs, the underreporting of hours worked, and shifting required business expenses onto the workers.

“Lowry Farms is using the guest worker program to exploit workers by grossly underpaying them and forcing them to work under unacceptable and unfair conditions,” said SPLC’s Immigrant Justice Project Senior Supervising Attorney Anne Janet Hernandez Anderson, who is representing the workers. “This systematic failure to protect guest workers from the abuse the program enables and ignores must end.”

One of the workers spoke of his treatment saying, “We were treated like slaves; that’s what made me feel the worst. I felt pressured by the overall treatment we were receiving and the amount of work that was demanded of us.”

The plaintiffs are migrant workers who came to the United States on temporary H-2A visas. Their lawsuit seeks restitution of unpaid wages, an award of money damages and a court order requiring the defendants to comply with federal regulations governing the H-2A program.

For decades, the SPLC has fought for [guest worker rights](#) and against the exploitation of workers employed under the nation’s H-2 guest worker program, under which U.S. employers recruit more than 200,000 foreign workers each year to perform temporary labor in farming, forestry, seafood-processing, landscaping, tourism, construction and other labor-intensive industries.

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