

July 2008

## **Court Rules Del Monte Cannot Avoid Liability for Wage Violations of Contractor**

A federal court ruled that Fresh Del Monte Produce Southeast, Inc., is liable for worker wage violations by a labor contractor. The lawsuit was filed by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) in April 2006 on behalf of up to 500 field and factory H-2A agricultural workers working in Georgia on planting, harvesting, and packaging onions.

Mary Bauer, director of the SPLC's Immigrant Justice Project, said the decision was particularly significant "because it provides a roadblock to a disturbing trend by large corporate growers that import workers. Increasingly, those corporations attempt to evade responsibility for their workers by having middlemen — generally penniless crew leaders — submit the applications for H-2A workers, instead of the wealthy corporations doing so themselves."

Additional information about the case, *Luna v. Del Monte Fresh Produce*, is available at <http://www.splcenter.org/news/item.jsp?aid=304>.