

Illegal Immigration

Hormel's line jobs are "occupied largely by undocumented immigrants," and the company was the subject of multiple ICE raids under Ettinger's leadership:

- **As of 2013, line jobs at Hormel plants were "occupied largely by undocumented immigrants willing to work twice as fast for lower pay."** "In the past twenty years, roughly 3,000 Hispanics have arrived in Fremont – an increase from 0.7 percent to nearly 12 percent of the total population. Latino immigrants have saved the economies of the towns of northeast Nebraska from ruin, but many older residents feel threatened by these new arrivals. Spots on the line at Hormel were once the most coveted jobs in the area, but now they are occupied largely by undocumented immigrants willing to work twice as fast for lower pay." (Ted Genoways, "This Land Is Not Your Land," [Harper's Magazine](#), February 2013)
- **The meat industry relies heavily on foreign-born workers, and in 2007, Ettinger claimed it was "very hard" to tell whether immigrants were in the country legally.** "The meat industry relies heavily on foreign-born workers and ensuring those workers are in the country legally has been difficult for meat companies. Particularly with some illegal immigrants able to provide official looking documents. 'That makes it very hard for us to tell, next to impossible, as to whether to OK this validly issued drivers license that doesn't have any other evidence of being tampered with,' said Ettinger." ("Hormel wants long-term immigration plan," [Reuters](#), 3/7/07)
- **In 2007, an ICE raid led to the arrest of about 50 people in Willmar, MN, where many Hispanics worked at a plant owned by Hormel.** "Fifteen children were added Thursday to a lawsuit Willmar residents brought against the federal government over an immigration raid in April that resulted in dozens of arrests... More than 50 illegal immigrants were arrested in the April raid in Willmar, where many Hispanics work at a poultry processor owned by Austin-based Hormel Foods Corp. Investigators with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement said several of those arrested falsely claimed to be Puerto Rican citizens while 18 had criminal convictions." ("Willmar residents add children to case against federal government," [MPR News](#), 7/26/07)
- **In 2011, Mower County Sheriff Terese Amazi said it was "frustrating" that she could not conduct immigration raids on businesses like Hormel, "where undocumented workers are frequently discovered."** "When it comes to enforcing illegal immigration laws, Sheriff Terese Amazi's hands are tied. 'We cannot enforce immigration laws,' Amazi said. 'We can enforce forgery ... and violation of state law, but there is no state law that allows us to enforce immigration status. Period.' Amazi said because immigration laws are under federal jurisdiction and are not handled by state and local authorities, she and her deputies, along with the Austin Police Department, are unable to investigate potential illegal immigrants. This means local authorities are powerless when it comes to conducting raids on Hormel Foods Corp., Quality Pork Processors, Inc. and other businesses where undocumented workers are frequently discovered, she said... '(ICE) is doing the best they can,' she said. 'Their gloves need to be taken off, and until you have a federal administration that let's that happen, we will continue to have these issues.' 'This whole system is broken,' she added. 'It's just frustrating.'" (Amanda Lillie, "Sheriff: Illegal immigration process is out of our hands," [Austin Daily Herald](#), 1/31/11)

- **In 2014, an ICE raid led to the arrest of six people at a Hormel plant in Fremont, NE.** “FREMONT, Neb. – Federal authorities say six people arrested at a meatpacking plant outside Fremont this week are likely to face criminal charges related to identity theft, not immigration violations. Officers from Immigration and Customs Enforcement visited the Hormel plant and made the arrests Wednesday. An ICE spokesman declined to discuss details of the ongoing investigation.” (“Federal authorities arrest 6 at Neb. meat plant,” [KETV 7](#), 2/13/14)

Editor’s Note: Ettinger supports amnesty for illegal immigrants. For further information, please refer to the “Immigration” chapter of this document.

Wage Theft

In 2016, Hormel was ordered to pay \$195,000 in back wages to 330 workers for the time they spent putting on and taking off required clothing and equipment:

- **In 2016, the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled that Hormel owed workers wages for the time they spent putting on and taking off required clothing and equipment.** “Hormel Foods Corp. owes hundreds of workers at its Beloit canning plant back wages for the time they spent putting on and taking off required clothing and equipment, the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled Tuesday. Hormel attorney Thomas Krukowski had argued that the Minnesota-based company didn’t have to pay workers for the time they spent getting dressed and undressed. He maintained that wearing the gear wasn’t crucial to workers’ activities since they could accomplish their tasks without wearing it.” (Todd Richmond, “Court: Hormel workers owed for time putting on uniforms,” [Star Tribune](#), 3/1/16)
 - **Hormel was ordered to pay \$195,000 in back wages to 330 workers.** “‘Cleanliness and food safety are ‘intrinsic elements’ of preparing and canning food at the Hormel canning facility,’ Justice Shirley Abrahamson wrote for the majority. ‘The clothing and equipment is integral and indispensable to the performance of the employees’ job function ... of preparing canned food.’ The ruling upholds a 2014 decision from Rock County Circuit Judge Michael Fitzpatrick awarding 330 workers a total of \$195,000 in back wages.” (Todd Richmond, “Court: Hormel workers owed for time putting on uniforms,” [Star Tribune](#), 3/1/16)
- **Hormel said in a statement that it was “disappointed” with the decision.** “Hormel said in a statement: ‘While we are disappointed the decision was not in our favor, we value our employees and respect the court’s decision.’” (Todd Richmond, “Court: Hormel workers owed for time putting on uniforms,” [Star Tribune](#), 3/1/16)