

Uniting Food, Farm and Hotel Workers Worldwide



Workplace slaughter and rights abuses continue at Talleys/AFFCO

On January 15, a German tourist with a 'working holiday' visa was caught in a machine while working on the slaughter line at the Talleys/AFFCO meat plant in Rangiora New Zealand. He was knocked unconscious and suffered injuries to the head, face and teeth. He was working in one of the most dangerous areas in the plant with negligible training. Two years ago, an experienced worker was impaled by a hook on the same machine and dragged along the line. Ninety minutes were needed to extricate the hook, which had entered the back of his head and emerged from under his eye.

According to the New Zealand government's Accident Compensation Corporation, over the last three years nearly 5,000 Talley's workers have been awarded over USD

4.7 million in compensation for workplace accidents; 1,286 Talley's workers were injured on the job in 2014 alone. While the Talley family was lobbying against reforms to New Zealand's health and safety legislation, a worker whose arm was sliced open at the company's South Pacific Meats plant had to transport himself to hospital. His boss later told the employment tribunal "he was too busy to deal with the matter."

Talleys/AFFCO is a serial rights abuser. This employer with a horrific record of workplace accidents has fired union health and safety representatives for meeting with their members and locked out 200 workers at the company's Wairoa meat plant to force them to abandon collective bargaining and accept individual contracts.



Talleys/AFFCO lockout lifted by court order, rights abuses continue

26 February 2016 **News** Members of the New Zealand Meat Workers Union began returning to work at the Talleys/AFFCO Wairoa plant on February 22 following a court decision ordering the company to end the brutal **5-month lockout** of union workers. The court also determined that fixed-term seasonal workers must be regarded as employees during the off-season and found the company guilty of employing replacement workers during a lockout.

Talleys has been ordered to provisionally reinstate two workplace union leaders at the AFFCO Rangiora plant who were dismissed last year on bogus charges. In a separate case involving the Talleys-owned South Pacific Meats, the company was fined NZD 144,000 for refusing access to the Meat Workers Union. And a court decision is scheduled for March 5 in the government case against AFFCO initiated last year following a **serious accident** at the plant.

However Talleys continues to use the legal system to pursue its anti-union agenda and resist collective bargaining; a number of company appeals are still pending. Continued pressure will be needed to ensure that Talleys/AFFCO respects the rights of its employees, recognizes the union, negotiates in good faith and addresses the serious health and safety issues in its operations.

The union has warmly thanked the many thousands of supporters who responded to the IUFs appeal for solidarity and sent messages to the company.