Fines Levied in Child Labor

A blueberry farm in New Jersey, its owners and a crew leader, have been ordered to pay fines in connection with child labor and migrant worker violations.

The US Department of Labor’s Wage and Hour Division investigated Columbia Fruit Farms Inc.’s Hammonton blueberry farm and cited violations of the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act, including the farm’s failure to post housing conditions and ensure housing safety and health. Other citations allege the use of an unregistered crew leader, overcrowding, failure to provide safe transport, failure to ensure drivers were licensed and failure to register employees.

The farm was also cited for employing children under age 12, failure to maintain a record of these minor employees and failure to meet field sanitation requirements under the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

Owners Anthony DiMeo and William DiMeo, along with crew leader Sorel Rinvil, have been ordered to pay $28,449 plus interest. The owners have also agreed to ensure that any facility or property they own or control that is used for housing migrant agricultural workers complies with federal and state safety and health standards.