



NEWS RELEASE

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Two Individuals Charged with Conspiring to
Defraud the United States and its agencies

FARGO - The United States Attorney's Office today announced that a federal grand jury returned a 17-count Indictment this week charging **Duane Huber**, Wimbledon, North Dakota; **Duane Huber, d/b/a Huber Farms General Partnership**, and **Steven Huber**, Fargo, North Dakota, with conspiring to defraud the United States.

Duane Huber, DOB 8/4/44; **Steven Huber**, DOB 12/2/74; and **Duane Huber, d/b/a Huber Farms General Partnership**, are charged with conspiracy to defraud the Farm Service Agency(FSA), the Risk Management Agency/Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (RMA/FCIC), and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), all agencies of the United States, during the period between January 1988 and March 2000. The indictment alleges that Duane Huber set up sham farming operations, through the use of third parties, in order to be able to avoid payment limitations on federal farm programs and to redirect and redistribute crop production, income, and expenses, in a way that would get him more crop insurance benefits and farm program money than he was entitled to receive. Steve Huber, during the time he was a full-time college student in Grand Forks, was one of the third parties who allegedly signed false documents at the Farm Service Agency certifying that he provided 100% of the active management of his farming operation when, in fact, Duane Huber was actually the person in charge.

Both individuals are also charged with two counts of making or aiding and abetting another to make false statements to the FSA, RMA/FCIC, and IRS.

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Duane Huber is further charged with six counts of filing false tax returns or assisting others in filing false income tax returns during the years 1994 through 1998, two counts of money laundering, and one count each of making false statements to the Commodity Credit Corporation, mail fraud, wire fraud, and conspiracy to commit money laundering. The indictment also includes a forfeiture count wherein, if Huber is convicted of the mail fraud, wire fraud, or money laundering offenses, the United States would request forfeiture of real and personal property in the amount of \$14,768,064.

Steven Huber is also charged in one count with filing false income tax returns for the years 1996, 1997, and 1998.

The statutory maximum penalty for each of the offenses of conspiring to defraud the United States; making false statements to the FSA, RMA/FCIC, and IRS; making false statements to the Commodity Credit Corporation; mail fraud; and wire fraud is 5 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. The statutory maximum penalty for the offenses of filing false tax returns or assisting another to file false tax returns is 3 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. The money laundering offenses carry maximum penalties of 20 years imprisonment and a fine of either \$500,000 or twice the value of the property involved in the transaction, whichever is greater.

The case is being investigated by the United States Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General; the Farm Service Agency; the Risk Management Agency/Federal Crop Insurance Corporation; and the Internal Revenue Service.

The U.S. Attorney's Office stressed that an indictment is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

An initial appearance is scheduled in United States District Court in Fargo, North Dakota, on December 14, 2000, at 11:00 a.m.

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