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COURIER 05/19/2008

400 march to NCC

JENS MANUEL KROGSTAD, Courier Staff Writer

WATERLOO - As protestors approached the National Cattle Congress, some linked arms.

Others curled their fingers around the chain-link fence, faced a group of federal agents staring stoically through the barrier, and held up signs.

More than 400 people from across Iowa and neighboring states had just marched nearly three miles along River Road on Sunday afternoon.

They started at Queen of Peace Catholic Church, where clergy, union workers and activists denounced last week's immigration raid in Postville.

On May 12, Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents detained 389 workers at Agriprocessors in the largest single raid in U.S. history. A majority have been charged criminally with identity theft and related crimes.

Humberto Naba leaned wearily against the fence and wiped his eye as he gazed into the Cattle Congress grounds, oblivious to the speakers leading a vigil at the NCC gates.

"I'm thinking of the people who were in here," he said in Spanish. "They treat them like terrorists. We're not terrorists. We're immigrants fighting to put food on the table."

Read today's Courier and online updates for more details.