April 2019

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Agriprocessors fighting to replace lost workers

POSTVILLE - In a press release issued Thursday, officials with the Agriprocessors Inc. meat plant said they continue to make "meaningful progress" in addressing the challenges presented by the work site enforcement action by Immigration and Customs Enforcement and other agencies on Monday, which resulted in the detention of 390 employees, roughly more than a third of its work force.

According to Chaim Abrahams, a company representative, Agriprocessors is concentrating its efforts on production.

"We were able to bring the plant back into operation the next day, and even though we're not running at full capacity, we are able to resume production," Abrahams said. "We are in the process of replacing workers so we can avoid any interruption of meeting customer needs for high quality products."

Abrahams also noted that the company was in the process of enhancing its immigration compliance procedures.

"We are working with experts in immigration compliance to help us bolster our compliance efforts to employ only properly documented employees," he said. "We have signed up for a government electronic verification program, and are working with our consultants on additional compliance measures that will enhance our hiring process."

Agriprocessors officials also said they have launched an independent investigation into the circumstances which led to the work site enforcement action, and is cooperating fully with the government.

"We extend our heartfelt sympathies to the families whose lives were disrupted and wish them the best," Abrahams said.