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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BEFORE THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

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| In re: | |
| WNC Livestock Exchange, LLC,<br>Steven Matthews,<br>and<br>Melissa Matthews,<br><br>Respondents. | P&S Docket No. D-25-0066<br>P&S Docket No. D-25-0067<br><br>P&S Docket No. D-25-0068 |

**CONSENT DECISION AND ORDER**

This proceeding was instituted under the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921, as amended and supplemented (7 U.S.C. §§ 181 *et seq.*) (the "Act"), and the regulations promulgated thereunder by the Secretary of Agriculture (9 C.F.R. § 201.1 *et seq.*) (the "Regulations"), by a Complaint filed on May 22, 2025 by the Acting Deputy Administrator of the Packers and Stockyards Division, Fair Trade Practices Program, Agricultural Marketing Service, United States Department of Agriculture ("Complainant"). The Complaint alleges the Respondents named herein willfully violated the Act and Regulations. This Consent Decision and Order ("Consent Decision") is entered pursuant to the consent decision provision of the Rules of Practice applicable to this proceeding (7 C.F.R. § 1.138).

Respondents admit the jurisdictional allegations specified in paragraph I of the Complaint and specifically admit that the Secretary has jurisdiction in this matter. Respondents neither admit nor deny the remaining allegations. Respondents waive any and all rights or defenses the Respondents have or might have for the matter to be adjudicated in a federal district court in the first instance, including any associated right to a jury trial, waive further procedure or oral hearing, waive all rights to seek judicial review in any court of competent

jurisdiction and otherwise challenge or contest the validity of this Consent Decision, including waiving challenges to the Administrative Law Judge's authority to enter this Consent Decision under the Administrative Procedure Act and the Constitution of the United States, and waive any action against the United States Department of Agriculture under the Equal Access to Justice Act of 1980 (5 U.S.C. § 504 *et seq.*) for fees and other expenses incurred by Respondents in connection with this proceeding or any action against any USDA employee in their individual capacity.

Respondents consent and agree, for the purpose of settling this matter, to the entry of this Consent Decision as set forth herein. Complainant agrees to the entry of this Consent Decision.

Findings of Fact

(a) WNC Livestock Exchange, LLC ("Respondent WNC") is a limited liability company with a mailing and physical address of 474 Stock Drive, Canton, NC 28617.

(b) Respondent WNC is, and at all times material herein was:

(1) Engaged in the business of, and operating as, market agency selling livestock in commerce on a commission basis; and

(2) Registered with the Secretary of Agriculture as a market agency selling livestock in commerce on a commission basis.

(c) Steven Matthews ("Respondent Steven Matthews") is an individual whose current address is in the State of North Carolina. Respondent's address will not be stated in the Complaint to protect his privacy but will be provided to the Hearing Clerk, United States Department of Agriculture, for the purpose of service of this Complaint.

(d) Respondent Steven Matthews is, and at all times material herein was:

(1) A fifty percent (50%) owner of Respondent WNC;

(2) Engaged in the business as a market agency within the meaning of and subject to the provisions of the Act and regulations promulgated thereunder;

(3) Responsible, jointly with Respondent Melissa Matthews, for the direction, management, and control of Respondent WNC.

(e) Melissa Matthews ("Respondent Melissa Matthews") is an individual whose current address is in the State of North Carolina. Respondent's address will not be stated in the Complaint to protect her privacy but will be provided to the Hearing Clerk, United States Department of Agriculture, for the purpose of service of this Complaint.

(f) Respondent Melissa Matthews is, and at all times material herein was:

(1) A fifty percent (50%) owner of Respondent WNC;

(2) Engaged in the business as a market agency within the meaning of and subject to the provisions of the Act and regulations promulgated thereunder;

(3) Responsible, jointly with Respondent Steven Matthews, for the direction, management, and control of Respondent WNC.

(g) Respondent WNC, Respondent Steven Matthews and Respondent Melissa Matthews shall, where applicable and appropriate, collectively be referred to herein as "Respondents".

## Conclusions of Law

Respondents having admitted the jurisdictional facts and the parties having agreed to the entry of this Consent Decision, the Consent Decision will be entered.

## Order

(a) Respondents, their agents and employees, directly or through any corporate or other device, in connection with their operations subject to the Act, shall cease and desist

from:

(1) Failing to deposit into their Custodial Account for Shippers' Proceeds an amount equal to the proceeds receivable from the sale of consigned livestock within the time prescribed by section 201.42 of the Regulations (9 C.F.R. § 201.42); and

(2) Failing to otherwise use and maintain the Custodial Account for Shippers' Proceeds in strict conformance with the Act and section 201.42 of the Regulations (9 C.F.R. § 201.42).

(b) In accordance with section 312 of the Act (7 U.S.C. § 213), Respondents are jointly and severally assessed a civil penalty in the amount of eight-thousand-dollars ($8,000.00). The civil penalty shall be paid in monthly one-thousand-dollar ($1,000) installments over the course of eight (8) consecutive months on the 1st of each month beginning on March 1, 2026. The civil penalty shall be made via the following methods:

(1) Certified check or money order made payable to the Treasurer of the United States and sent to USDA, AMS, General, PO Box 790257, St. Louis, Missouri 63179-0257. The certified check or money order must include reference to Respondents' respective docket numbers: P&S Docket Nos. D-25-J-0066, 67 and 68, or

(2) Online payment through PAY.GOV using the following payment methods: Bank Account (ACH), PayPal Account; Venmo Account, or Credit or Debit Card. If payments are made using PAY.GOV, Respondents must provide proof of payment via email to PSDWashingtonDC@usda.gov with reference to

Respondents' respective docket numbers: P&S Docket Nos. D-25-J-0066, 67 and 68.

This Order shall have the same force and effect as if entered after a full hearing. The provisions of this Order shall become effective on the day after service of this Order on Respondents.

Copies of this Consent Decision and Order shall be served upon the parties.

[redacted] 2/12/26

Respondent Date
*(On behalf of WNC Livestock Exchange, LLC)*

[redacted] 2/12/26

Steven Matthews Date
Respondent

[redacted] 2/12/26

Melissa Matthews Date
Respondent

SAMANTHA STAKNIS Digitally signed by SAMANTHA STAKNIS Date: 2026.02.13 07:44:19 -05'00'

Samantha M. Dorsey Staknis Date
Attorney for Complainant

Issued in Washington D.C.
this 13th day of February 2026

Tierney Carlos

Tierney Carlos
Administrative Law Judge