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**(S.D.)-Two South Dakota Farms Agree To Pay \$170K In Fraud Case**

By: Dennis and Kathi Brown Posted at: 01/12/2013 08:33 AM

RAPID CITY, South Dakota (AP) - The owners of two tree farms linked to a Federal Crop Insurance Program fraud case have agreed to pay the federal government \$170,000 to settle the case.

The payment settled allegations Black Hills Tree Farm and Western Hills Tree Farm, both of Philip, cheated the government by falsifying the sales of trees damaged in a 2004 hailstorm.

The businesses were accused of conspiring to defraud the Federal Crop Insurance Program by reselling the damaged trees while collecting \$901,000 in insurance.

Under the terms of the settlement, Black Hills Tree Farm paid \$150,000 and Burns \$20,000.

The Rapid City Journal reports that the agreement says the owners of the tree farms deny the allegations but settled without admitting liability to avoid the inconvenience and expense of long litigation.