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NARA Updates Annual Used Cooking Oil Theft Estimate to \$300-500 Million Conservatively, Pending Results of Ongoing Industry Study

ALEXANDRIA, VA, October 24, 2025 - The North American Renderers Association (NARA) today announced an updated estimate for the annual value of used cooking oil (UCO) theft in the United States, ranging from \$300 million to \$500 million. This revision is based on anecdotal evidence, data from NARA members, allied industries, and other sources, including reports from law enforcement and industry partners. NARA leadership recently authorized a comprehensive study to provide more precise, updated information on the scope of this issue, with results expected in the coming months.

The widely cited previous industry figure of \$75 million originally derived from a 1980 industry survey reported in *Render* magazine has become outdated. That estimate reflected approximately 500 million pounds of stolen grease at values from that era. Adjusting for current market values, the figure would be significantly higher than the longstanding estimate. However, with the U.S. UCO market now totaling approximately 6.5 billion pounds annually, and anecdotal theft rates from industry sources suggesting a far greater prevalence of as much as 15-25%, the true scale could reach up to \$1 billion. NARA's conservative update to \$300-500 million accounts for a theft rate of roughly 11-15%.

"NARA recognizes the need for accurate, current data to combat UCO theft effectively, which is why we're prioritizing this study," said Kent Swisher, President and CEO of NARA. "In the interim, our updated estimate reflects real-world insights from our members and partners, highlighting the urgent need for enhanced security measures, collaboration with law enforcement, and awareness in the rendering, renewable fuel, and biodiesel industries. This theft not only impacts businesses financially but also undermines sustainability efforts by diverting valuable resources from legitimate recycling enterprises."

NARA encourages restaurants and allied industry sectors to report suspicious activities and adopt preventive measures to slow the occurrence of UCO theft.

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About the North American Renderers Association

The North American Renderers Association (NARA) represents the interests of the North American rendering industry to regulatory and other governmental agencies, promotes the greater use of animal byproducts, and fosters the opening and expansion of trade between foreign buyers and North American exporters. In addition to its U.S.-based headquarters, the association maintains offices in strategic locations around the world. NARA publishes a bi-monthly trade magazine, *Render*. For more information, visit www.nara.org.