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NARA Statement On Federal Indictments In Multi-State Used Cooking Oil Theft Case; A Call For Enhanced Industry Security Measures

ALEXANDRIA, VA, December 15, 2025 – The North American Renderers Association (NARA) today acknowledged federal law enforcement actions [announced December 11, 2025](#), involving a multi-state indictment returned by a federal grand jury in the Southern District of Iowa charging multiple individuals with theft and re-sale of restaurant used cooking oil (UCO). The alleged thefts, which spanned numerous states and involved transportation of stolen UCO to warehouses for resale, underscore the growing problem of organized theft in the UCO supply chain.

NARA represents rendering companies and allied sectors that collect and recycle UCO into valuable products such as biodiesel and renewable fuels. The federal indictment exemplifies the kinds of criminal activity impacting restaurants, collectors, biodiesel producers, and the broader recycling ecosystem.

“While our industry works every day to divert valuable feedstocks from landfills into sustainable end-uses, we continue to see criminals target UCO because of its legitimate economic value,” said Kent Swisher, President and CEO of NARA. “These indictments reinforce the need for better preventive measures, stronger collaboration between industry and law enforcement, and broader awareness of this issue across the U.S. supply chain.”

In October 2025, [NARA updated its annual estimate for UCO theft in the United States](#) to an estimated **\$300-500 million per year**, based on input from members, allied industries, and law enforcement partners. This estimate — a substantial revision from widely cited figures dating back decades — highlights the significant scale of theft and its economic impact. NARA is currently conducting a comprehensive industry study to produce more precise data to aid in prevention efforts.

The Southern District of Iowa indictment illustrates the real-world consequences of this illicit activity, including interstate transportation of stolen property, racketeering conspiracy, and money laundering charges connected with stolen UCO.

To better protect the industry, NARA urges:

- **Restaurants and businesses** to secure UCO collection points and verify credentials of any collectors;
- **Renderers, traders, and brokers** to strengthen tracking and documentation practices;

- **State and federal partners** to deploy targeted enforcement strategies and share intelligence across jurisdictions.

“NARA is committed to supporting lawful commerce in UCO and safeguarding legitimate recycling markets,” Mr. Swisher added. “We applaud the efforts of federal and local law enforcement in this case and stand ready to work with stakeholders to reduce theft and protect supply chains.”

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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 and beneficial reuse of animal byproducts and UCO, 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 the bi-monthly trade magazine *Render* and provides research, policy development, and educational resources on rendering and recycling operations. For more information, visit www.nara.org