

# FACTORY FARM OFFENDER

## GOLD KIST INC.

Gold Kist Inc.  
244 Perimeter Center Parkway NE  
Atlanta, GA 30346  
Phone: 770-393-5000  
Web Site: <http://www.goldkist.com/>

**CEO:** John Bekkers, Age: 61, Salary: \$ 1.83 million

**COMPANIES (dba):** Gold Kist Inc., Agvestments Inc., AgraTech Seeds Inc., AgraTrade Financing Inc., Cross Equipment Company Inc., GK Finance Corporation, GK Insurance Company, Luker Inc.

**FORTUNE 500 RANKING:** 694

**ANNUAL REVENUE:** 2.30 billion

**NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:** 16,500

**HEADQUARTERS:** Atlanta, Georgia

**LOCATIONS:** Gold Kist Inc. operates poultry processing plants in Boaz, Russellville and Guntersville, Alabama; Athens, Douglas, Ellijay and Carrollton, Georgia; Live Oak, Florida; Sumter, South Carolina; and Sanford and Siler City, North Carolina. These plants have a weekly processing capacity of over 14 million broilers. The plants are supported by hatcheries located at Albertville, Crossville, Cullman, Curry, Ranburne, Russellville and Scottsboro, Alabama; Blaine, Bowdon, Calhoun, Commerce, Carrollton, Douglas and Talmo, Georgia; Live Oak, Florida; Siler City and Staley, North Carolina; and Sumter, South Carolina. These hatcheries have a capacity of over 15 million chicks. They also have pork production facilities in Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi.

**BRANDS/PRODUCTS:** Gold Kist, Inc is one of the largest broiler companies in the U.S., accounting for nearly 10 percent of chicken meat produced in the U.S. Broiler production accounts for 99 percent of their revenue, and the remaining one percent is from pork production. They sell to grocery stores, fast food chains, schools, and the U.S. military. Gold Kist exports its products to Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Africa, South and Central America. Their brands include: Gold Kist Farms, Young 'n Tender, Early Bird, Dish in a Dash and McEver's.

### **POLLUTION VIOLATIONS:**

- **Tifton, GA** - In May 2002, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) filed a lawsuit against Gold Kist for contaminating and then abandoning a factory location, which was likely producing hazardous pesticides. Because of the extent of the pollution, the EPA deemed it necessary to declare this site a Superfund site. A Superfund site is any land in the U.S. that has been contaminated by hazardous waste and identified by the EPA as a candidate for cleanup because it poses a risk to human health and/or the environment. Superfund sites are the most potentially hazardous sites, often abandoned by their former owners. If the sites are abandoned or the owner refuses to pay for cleanup, it is paid for by Federal funding, U.S. tax dollars.

- **Cordele, GA** - The Georgia Environmental Protection Division has listed the site of Gold Kist's former chemical blending facility on Georgia's Hazardous Sites Inventory list under the state's Hazardous Sites Response Act due to the presence of pesticides and other hazardous materials, which exceed regulatory standards. Gold Kist sold the polluted property in 1985.

#### **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY VIOLATIONS & LABOR STANDARDS VIOLATIONS:**

- **National** - The U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Health & Safety Administration (OSHA) assessed Tyson slaughter and processing operations and issued more than 35 violations and fines between 2001 and 2006 for failing to provide employees with a safe work environment.
- **Alabama** - On November 3, 2005, a Gold Kist employee filed the case of Nicholas Leech v. Gold Kist Inc. in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Alabama, claiming that Gold Kist violated the Fair Labor Standards Act by requiring employees to perform unpaid work on a regular basis. The employee has permitted other employees with similar complaints to join him in a class action lawsuit against the company.
- **Georgia** - In June 2005, four female employees of the Corporate Office filed a sex discrimination suit, Cody, et al v. Gold Kist et al., in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia, asserting gender-based claims about employment and promotion decisions at Gold Kist.

#### **FOOD SAFETY VIOLATIONS:**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety & Inspection Service (FSIS) took the following enforcement actions against Gold Kist slaughter and processing plants in 2005 :

- **Russellville, AL** - Plant was issued a Notice of Intended Enforcement for Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOP) and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point System (HACCP) on June 17, 2005.

#### **PRODUCT RECALLS:**

- **Sumter, SC** - A Gold Kist processing plant recalled approximately 421,000 pounds of chicken products due to potential contamination with the pesticide Aldicarb on February 16, 2001. Aldicarb is an extremely toxic systemic insecticide used to control mites and aphids. If consumed by humans, it can result in death due to paralysis of the respiratory system.
- **Boaz, AL** - Gold Kist recalled approximately 114,000 pounds of breaded chicken nuggets and chicken patties due to potential contamination with *Listeria monocytogenes* on February 23, 2000. The potentially contaminated products were produced for the USDA school lunch program and were shipped to schools in Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Texas, Colorado, and Ohio.