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Environmental Criminal Enforcement/Clean Water Act: Puerto Rico Meat Processing Facility Charged with Alleged Violations

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The United States Attorney's Office (Puerto Rico) stated in a news release that it has charged Ganaderos Borges Inc. ("GBI") for allegedly violating the Clean Water Act.

Four individuals were also charged.

The alleged violations included:

- Four violations of the Clean Water Act.
- Conspiracy to violate the Clean Water Act.

The news release describes GBI as operating a slaughterhouse and meat processing plant in Naguabo, Puerto Rico.

The indictment states that the defendants:

... conspired for the benefit of GBI, to knowingly discharge a pollutant — specifically wastewater from the meat processing waste retention lagoon — into waters of the United States without having obtained a Clean Water Act permit.

The meat processing plant and at least four of its employees are alleged to have conspired to pump animal flesh, blood, and feces into a creek that flows to the ocean and a public beach. They did this by using a submersible pump placed in the waste retention lagoon and connected to a hose, attempting to avoid millions of dollars in annual waste removal costs. The submersible pump and hose are alleged to have been concealed when it was not being used. GBI is alleged to have provided false and misleading statements and documents to authorities to hide the illegal activities.

The news release states that the defendants are scheduled to appear before Magistrate Judge Héctor Ramos Vega of the U.S. District Court for the District of Puerto Rico for their respective initial appearances, and if convicted, they face a maximum penalty of five years in prison and \$250,000 in fines for each charge. GBI faces a maximum penalty of \$500,000 in fines per charge.

A copy of the news release can be found [here](#).