

## Immigration

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# Union: Fewer Hispanic immigrants hired since Swift raids

By OSKAR GARCIA  
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Fewer Hispanic immigrants are being hired to replace meatpacking workers arrested at Swift & Co. plants in Grand Island, Neb., and Greeley, Colo., during last week's immigration raid, union officials said today.

Local 22 union president Dan Hoppes said today that 40 to 50 new workers have been hired at the Grand Island plant since the raids.

"The lion's share of those people were Caucasian," Hoppes said.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials arrested nearly 1,300 people, most Hispanic, at six Swift & Co. plants in the sweep. Some experts say the raids could lead to a shortage of meatpackers, higher wages, and higher prices for the beef in homes and restaurants.

Several union officials said Swift, which has denied knowingly hiring illegal workers and has not been charged, has begun offering better wages, benefits and bonuses since the raid, which temporarily halted the company's operations.

"They're trying to staff up their plants and they've been raising their wages the past few weeks," said United Food and Commercial Workers spokeswoman Jill Cashen. "To me, it's an example that when you make the job more attractive you get a different kind of applicant."

Raids also were conducted at Swift plants in Cactus, Texas; Hyrum, Utah; Marshalltown, Iowa; and Worthington, Minn. Cashen did not provide phone numbers for union officials in Iowa and Minnesota, and said workers at the Utah plant are not union-represented.

A message left at Swift & Co. seeking comment was not immediately returned.

In Greeley, where Swift is headquartered, union local president Ernie Duran said about 75 new workers have been hired — including about 30 Caucasians, 15 Somali immigrants and seven Hispanic immigrants, with the rest U.S.-born Hispanics. But the raid has not dissuaded Hispanic immigrants from seeking work at the plant, he said.

Before the raids, roughly 90 percent of the Greeley plant workers were Hispanic, Duran said. It was unclear, of that 90 percent, how many were immigrants and how many were U.S.-born, as the union officials said they did not keep track of members' immigration status.



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