

For Immediate Release:

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**Attorney General Balderas Announces Two Arrested and Charged for Stealing
Hundreds of Thousands of Dollars from Valencia County Farm**

ALBUQUERQUE, NM--Today, Attorney General Balderas announced the filing of charges against Leo Martinez and Robbie Proffitt for embezzlement and defrauding of Pareo Farms, a family dairy farm in Valencia County. Martinez and Proffitt were each arrested and charged with five felony counts for stealing approximately \$500,000 worth of bulk hay that they were supposed to have delivered to the farm, selling that stolen hay to another business, and fraudulently billing Pareo Farms for delivery of the hay that was never delivered.

“Family farmers, ranchers, and all small businesses work tirelessly to provide the backbone of New Mexico’s economy, and we must do everything we can to protect them,” said Attorney General Balderas. “We will absolutely uphold and enforce the rule of law, and any person who seeks to harm our family businesses will be held accountable.”

According to the complaints, the two men are accused of conspiring to steal several thousand tons of hay between them. The two were entrusted to deliver for the farm and committed the crimes over approximately 100 deliveries in 2019. This case was investigated and will be prosecuted by the Office of the Attorney General.

The Office of the Attorney General warns all small businesses of increased fraud activity, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, and advises all businesses to contact the office at 1-844-255-9210 or nmag.gov if they suspect they’ve been the victim of theft or fraud.

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