

Tamworth potato processor fined £6,500 for pollution incident

- Over 450 fish found dead in Langley Brook
- Pollution caused by trade effluent
- Total financial penalty of £21,264 (fine plus prosecution costs)

The Environment Agency has successfully prosecuted Edima Holdings Ltd, a Tamworth potato processing company, for causing a pollution which killed over 450 fish.

Cannock Magistrates Court fined the company £6,500 in a case heard on Wednesday 7 July 2021. A total financial penalty of £21,264 was imposed on the company which included a contribution to prosecution costs of £10,000.

The court heard that the company operate under the name 'Mike's Potatoes' from premises at Langley Brook Farm, Middleton, Tamworth.

The company pleaded guilty to an offence under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations, 2010. The company had previously been cautioned for a similar offence.

The Environment Agency mounted an investigation after a member of the public reported seeing two dead fish and milky froth on the water of the Langley Brook in September 2016. Officers found more than 450 dead fish along the brook.

The source of the pollution was traced to a trade effluent lagoon at Edima Holdings Ltd. A pipe pumping into the lagoon was split, and a crude attempt had been made to repair it. This was discharging into a ditch then into the brook.

Officers gave advice on remedial action needed to prevent further pollution, but a month later, the Environment Agency received a report of pollution at Middleton Hall Lake on Langley Brook. Following this report, the company agreed to the necessary work.

During the Sentencing Hearing, District Judge Grego took into account the previous caution that the company had received and found the offending was highly reckless.

He found that the emergency response plan was so vague it rendered it pointless and praised the quick action of the Environment Agency in responding to the incident.

It was accepted that the offending was not financially motivated and the impact that the pandemic has had on the business was also taken into account.

A spokesman for the Environment Agency, following the hearing, said:

This was a serious case of pollution that resulted in a large number of fish dying.

We take all such cases seriously and this prosecution sends out a message to companies that they must take their environmental responsibilities with equal seriousness.

If people have concerns about pollution incidents they should call the Environment Agency's 24/7 hotline on 0800-80-70-60.

Notes to editors: Edima Holdings Ltd was charged with one offence contrary to Regulations 12 (1) (b) and 38 (1) (a) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations, 2010.