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JUSTICE NEWS

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Former CEO Convicted of Fixing Prices For Canned Tuna

The former President and Chief Executive Officer of Bumble Bee Foods LLC was convicted today in San Francisco, California, for his participation in an antitrust conspiracy to fix prices of canned tuna, the Justice Department announced.

Following a four-week trial in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California in San Francisco, a jury convicted Christopher Lischewski, the former CEO of Bumble Bee, for conspiring to fix prices of canned tuna sold in the United States from in or about November 2010 until in or about December 2013.

"Today's verdict reaffirms the Division's commitment to rooting out collusion that robs American consumers of the benefits of competition when they purchase household staples like canned tuna," said Assistant Attorney General Makan Delrahim of the Department of Justice's Antitrust Division. "The jury's verdict is a reminder that no one, including members of the C-Suite, is above the law. Executives who conspire to cheat consumers for their own benefit will be held accountable for their illegal conduct."

"This guilty verdict demonstrates the FBI's commitment to working with our law enforcement partners to investigate price-fixing schemes that harm consumers," said FBI San Francisco Special Agent in Charge John F. Bennett. "A company's senior leadership sets the example for how it should operate, and in this case a CEO prioritized his own greed at the expense of American consumers."

According to evidence presented at trial, Lischewski participated in a conspiracy to fix prices of canned tuna that affected hundreds of millions of dollars in sales throughout the United States. He also authorized and supervised his subordinates' participation in the conspiracy. Lischewski and his co-conspirators employed measures to conceal their conspiratorial conduct, including meeting at offsite locations, using third-party e-mail addresses, and discouraging retention of documents concerning the conspiracy.

Bumble Bee pleaded guilty and was sentenced to pay a criminal fine of at least \$25 million. In September, StarKist Co. was sentenced to pay a \$100 million criminal fine. In addition to Bumble Bee and StarKist, four individuals, including Lischewski, have been charged in the investigation. The other three individuals pled guilty and testified in Lischewski's trial.

The Antitrust Division's investigation of collusion in the market for packaged seafood is ongoing. The investigation in today's case is being conducted by the Antitrust Division's San Francisco Office and the FBI's San Francisco Field Office. Anyone with information on price fixing, bid rigging or other anticompetitive conduct related to the packaged-seafood industry should contact the Antitrust Division's San Francisco Office at 415-934-5300, visit www.justice.gov/atr/contact/newcase.html, or call the FBI tip line at 415-553-7400.

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[Antitrust Division](#)
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