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## **Swift production suffers after raid**

### **Many stay away to avoid deportation in second roundup**

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Marshalltown, Ia. - Three days after an immigration raid, workers leaving Swift & Co. on Friday said production has fallen up to a third because of an exodus of workers.

Many Swift workers are staying away from the job for fear they will be caught in another roundup, their co-workers said.

Roberto Ibarra of Marshalltown, who has worked at the plant for eight years, said the first shift work force, from which 90 people were detained on Tuesday, had about 65 percent of its workers on the job Friday.

"They're working as fast as they can," said Ibarra, who has been a U.S. citizen for 10 years.

David Hessenius, 52, of Marshalltown said shifts that had been working for 9 hours are down to 8 hours because of the smaller work force.

Normally, 1,200 hogs would be processed an hour, he said, and that has dropped to 800 to 1,000 hogs an hour.

Sean McHugh, a spokesman for the Greeley, Colo.-based Swift, said the company won't know how much its staff has been reduced for several days. Some workers who weren't arrested may be off the job caring for their families or other employees' families, he said.

"I think it will take the better part of six to 10 days for all the aftershocks to settle out," he said.

Nearly 1,300 people were arrested at six Swift plants. The company is not disclosing at what capacity the six plants are running. Four, including Marshalltown, that had double shifts before the raids are still operating with two shifts, McHugh said.

Swift slaughters 11 percent of U.S. hogs and 16 percent of beef cattle. If the raids' impact slows production for an extended period, then prices paid to farmers for livestock would fall due to reduced demand.

Eventually, meat supplies could tighten and push up prices at the supermarket.

Gut Gasimgam, 35, a native of southern Sudan who is a permanent legal resident, has been at Swift for two years, where he works the second shift.

Many people on the second shift have stopped showing up for work, he said, even though immigration agents checked no worker documents on the second shift, which begins at about 2:30 p.m.

"They think there'll be another raid," he said.

Graciella Orozco, 34, said managers have been working the line to keep productivity up. They've shut down some lines so they can keep the more important ones working, she said.

"Many people have left," said Orozco, who has had permanent residency for nine years and worked at Swift for that time.

"They're afraid. Every family has people without documents."

Antonio Alvez, 37, of Marshalltown estimated that about 10 percent of the people on the line where the guts are removed from hog carcasses are gone.

"It's almost normal processing speed, but with fewer people," he said.

Alvez said he has a work permit and has been waiting to hear about his application for permanent residency

for four or five years.

Hessenius was undismayed by the raid three days ago.

"After 30 years, nothing surprises me," he said. "I knew it was going to happen. It was just a matter of time."

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