

# Berkowitz Fat Company

Newark City, Essex County

June 2007

## NJDEP conducts emergency removal of rotting wastes and contamination at meat rendering plant

### Background

On June 12, 2007, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (NJDEP) Site Remediation Program mobilized its Bureau of Emergency Response to address large piles of rotting meat, bone meal, drums of grease, petroleum wastes and soils contaminated with blood and oil at the Berkowitz Fat Company on Bay Avenue in the Ironbound section of Newark.

On June 8, 2007, a New Jersey Superior Court judge ordered the meat rendering plant (also known as American Rendering Corporation) shut down in response to a lawsuit that NJDEP had filed against the company for failing to address numerous health and environmental problems at the facility. These included the following:

- Rendering large quantities of meat without an air pollution control system
- Improperly managing/storing meat wastes and petroleum products, causing discharges to the air, soil and ground water
- Burning grease instead of fuel oil in the boiler in violation of its permit
- Failing to install, calibrate and operate required air emission monitors

The Court granted NJDEP unfettered access to stabilize the site and address the gross contamination issues after Berkowitz Fat Company failed to comply with the judge's order to remove and properly dispose

of the piles of rotting meats, fats, bone meal and associated wastes by 4 p.m. on June 11, 2007. The company had also failed to comply with an order to immediately implement a pest control program to curb the vermin population at the site.

### Current Status

As of June 22, 2007, NJDEP had removed 398 cubic yards of meat waste. The waste was picked up by a waste hauler and will be incinerated. Petroleum products and other liquid wastes have been pumped or solidified.

An environmental contractor removed 10,000 pounds of meat/oily sludges, 480 cubic yards of soil saturated with meat parts, blood, fat and oil, and 21,366 gallons of liquid wastes.

Each area of the facility is being secured to address imminent threats to public health and the environment. As vehicles and people leave the site, NJDEP is decontaminating them with bleach, soap and water. Vehicles are being pressured washed or steam cleaned.

NJDEP representatives have worked 17 hour days at the facility for two weeks, and will continue to be on-site for several weeks.

**For more information please contact  
Gail Lemaldi, NJDEP Community  
Relations Coordinator,  
at (609) 292-0231**

**Jon S. Corzine**  
Governor

**Lisa P. Jackson**  
Commissioner

NJ Department of Environmental Protection  
Office of Community Relations  
PO Box 413, 401 East State Street  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
[www.nj.gov/dep/srp/community/](http://www.nj.gov/dep/srp/community/)

