
From: Ed DeVilbiss <eddevilbiss@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 28, 2016 2:59 PM
Subject: Fwd: FW: American Co. Eliminates Labor Day

Friends,

I have been corrected by a friend, and Tyson Foods modified their decision shortly after they made the unfortunate announcement. The following is rather long but complete for your interest. Sorry.
ED

Source: <http://www.foxnews.com/story/2008/08/05/tyson-plant-drops-labor-day-for-muslim-holiday.html>

<http://www.snopes.com/politics/religion/tyson.asp>

Update since August 2008: Embroiled Chicken--Tyson Foods has not dropped Labor Day as an employee holiday in favor of the Muslim celebration of Eid al-Fitr. Due to intense negative public pressure several days later; however, Tyson issued another press release announcing that the company had reached a new agreement with the union that reinstated Labor Day as a paid holiday and provided employees with a personal holiday which could be taken either for an employee's birthday or for Eid al-Fitr:

Tyson Foods, Inc. announced today (August 2008) it has reached a new agreement with the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU), an American union, reinstating Labor Day as one of the designated paid holidays under the contract for covered employees in the Shelbyville, Tennessee, plant.

Tyson made this request on behalf of its Shelbyville plant employees, some of whom had expressed concern about the new contract provisions relative to paid holidays. In an effort to be responsive, Tyson asked the union to reopen the contract to address the holiday issue, and the union agreed to do so. The union membership voted overwhelmingly Thursday to reinstate Labor Day as one of the plant's paid holidays, while keeping Eid al-Fitr as an additional paid holiday for this year only. This means that in 2008 only, Shelbyville employees will have nine paid holidays.

For the remainder of the five-year contract period, the eight paid holidays will include: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day,

Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and a Personal Holiday, which could either be the employee's birthday, Eid al-Fitr or another day requested and approved by their supervisor.

Tyson Plant Drops Labor Day for Muslim Holiday

Published August 05, 2008

FoxNews.com

SHELBYVILLE, Tenn. – Workers at a Tyson Foods poultry processing plant in Tennessee have opted to trade a paid Labor Day holiday for the Muslim celebration of Eid al-Fitr.

A 5-year contract approved by members of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union at the Shelbyville, Tenn., plant last November includes the change to accommodate Muslim workers.

"The negotiating committee made the holiday a top priority in contract talks," the union's Alabama and Mid-South Council Representative Randy Hadley said in a statement issued in June. "And we were able to get management to commit to it."

The change, which does not affect the company's 118 other plants, exchanges Labor Day for the Muslim holiday that marks the end of Ramadan. The new contract, negotiated last fall, also gives Muslim workers a prayer room.

"Eid al-Fitr is one of eight paid holidays for all team members covered by the contract, while Labor Day is not a paid holiday," Gary Mickelson, Tyson's media relations director, told the Shelbyville Times-Gazette.

But Tyson spokeswoman Libby Lawson told FOXNews.com that employees who are not a member of the union at that plant would still be eligible for Labor Day as a paid holiday.

The seven additional paid holidays are the employee's birthday, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas, Mickelson said.

"Given the nature of our work, many, many, many times we have to work holidays anyway, and Labor Day is usually one of those holidays that our workers have to work," Lawson said. "And, of course, they are paid holiday pay when they have to work any holiday that is recognized at our facility."

Tyson officials said that approximately 250 of the plant's 1,200 employees are Somalis who entered the United States as political refugees. Most, if not all, are believed to be Muslim — among them, Abdillahi Jama.

"This new contract is good because it allows me to work on the second shift and still pray when I need to," Jama said in the union's press release. "It's very important to us, and the Eid is one of our most sacred holidays. It shows how the union helps us."

Lawson said that the Shelbyville plant is one of a handful that have designated prayer areas that can be used by groups of all faiths.

News of the holiday change has prompted some anger on local Web message boards, with some writings urging readers to contact the AFL-CIO and boycott Tyson products.

The union's national president, Stuart Appelbaum, said it is the union's job "to stand up to win respect for every worker's right to practice their faith."

Tyson officials said the contract was agreed to by 80 percent of the union's 1,000 members at the plant.

This year Eid al-Fitr falls on Oct. 1.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

[Click here to read more on this story from the Shelbyville Times-Gazette.](#)