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September 23, 2009

**MADIGAN: IROQUOIS COUNTY MAN SENTENCED ON THEFT AND
GRAIN CODE VIOLATIONS*****Prison Term to Run Concurrent to Federal Sentence***

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced that a Milford man entered guilty pleas Tuesday for his role in the downfall of two Iroquois County grain elevators two years ago.

Circuit Court Judge Gordon Lustfeldt sentenced Mikel Freeman, 57, to 10 years on one count of felony theft and to concurrent terms of seven years each on two counts of violating the Illinois Grain Code.

Freeman, the former President of A-Way, Inc. which operated grain elevators in Crescent City and Onarga, was indicted last February on charges that he sold grain that he did not own, benefited by concealing the activity from the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA), and used the money to pay business expenses on other ventures in which he had an interest.

"This defendant clearly defrauded the Department of Agriculture and took advantage of Illinois farmers whose products help drive our state's economy," Madigan said.

The IDOA investigation began in August 2007 when a routine inspection by the IDOA revealed a sizeable discrepancy between the amount of corn and beans actually stored at the Crescent City elevator and the amount shown on records Freeman provided to the IDOA inspector.

Freeman will serve his state prison sentence concurrent with a 10-year sentence that he received in federal court on Monday. Freeman is scheduled to report to federal prison on November 4, 2009.

Assistant Attorney General Martin VanKampen of Madigan's Criminal Prosecutions/Trials Assistance Bureau and Iroquois County State's Attorney James Devine prosecuted the case.

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