

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
DISTRICT OF MAINE**

MARGARET LONG,	)	
	)	
Plaintiff,	)	
	)	
v.	)	Docket no. 1:09-cv-592-GZS
	)	
FAIRBANK FARMS	)	
RECONSTRUCTION CORP.,	)	
	)	
Defendant & Third-Party	)	
Plaintiff,	)	
	)	
v.	)	
	)	
GREATER OMAHA PACKING	)	
COMPANY, INC.,	)	
	)	
Third-Party Defendant.	)	
	)	

**ORDER ON MOTION IN LIMINE**

**RE: GOPAC FSIS Documents**

Before the Court is the Motion in Limine to Exclude Evidence Relative to FSIS/GOPAC Documents (Docket # 281). The Motion is hereby DENIED WITHOUT PREJUDICE to GOPAC reasserting any of its objections at the appropriate time during trial.<sup>1</sup>

Via this Motion, GOPAC seeks a pre-trial exclusion of evidence related to the evaluations undertaken by the United States Department of Agriculture’s Food Safety and Inspection Service (“FSIS”) arguing that the evidence is irrelevant and has not been properly authenticated.

With respect to the authentication argument, Fairbank’s failure to timely utilize the Local Rule 44 process for self-authentication is not a basis for pre-trial exclusion. In response to this motion, Fairbank indicates it is prepared to authenticate the documents in questions. GOPAC is,

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<sup>1</sup> To the extent that GOPAC filed an addendum to this Motion (Docket # 315), the Court intends to rule on deposition designation objections via a separate order.

of course, free to reassert any authenticity objection at trial should it believe Fairbank is seeking to admit documents that are not properly authenticated.

Similarly, based on Fairbank's response, the Court cannot say these documents are irrelevant or otherwise subject to wholesale exclusion under Rule 403. Rather, on the available record, it appears that the documents in question are relevant. GOPAC is free to reassert these objections at trial and the Court will have a more complete record on which to consider any Rule 403 argument.

Finally, GOPAC's Addendum seeks to exclude the introduction of evidence of its potential negligence or failure to meet relevant standards of care because GOPAC asserts that such evidence is not relevant to the issue of whether or not GOPAC was the source of the *E. coli* contamination at issue in this case. To the extent that evidence of GOPAC's negligence and failure to meet relevant standards of care relates to GOPAC's obligations under the Fairbank Guarantee, such evidence is clearly relevant to the jury's determination of whether GOPAC breached the Fairbank Guarantee, and, therefore, the Court sees no basis for exclusion of this evidence before trial.

Nothing in this ruling prevents the parties from reaching an agreement that neither side will seek to admit all or some FSIS documents, as suggested in Fairbank's Response. However, in the absence of an agreement, at trial, each side may move to admit FSIS documents and the opposing side is free to then argue any properly preserved objection to that exhibit. If the Court overrules those objections, the document will be admitted and will not be sealed.

SO ORDERED.

/s/ George Z. Singal  
United States District Judge

Dated this 25th day of November, 2011.

**Plaintiff**

**MARGARET LONG**  
*TERMINATED: 03/11/2011*

represented by **DAVID W. BABCOCK**  
MARLER CLARK  
1301 2ND AVENUE  
SUITE 2800  
SEATTLE, WA 98101  
206-346-1885  
Email: dbabcock@marlerclark.com  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**PETER C. FELMLY**  
DRUMMOND WOODSUM  
84 MARGINAL WAY  
SUITE 600  
PORTLAND, ME 04101-2480  
(207) 772-1941  
Email: pfelmly@dwmlaw.com  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**WILLIAM D. MARLER**  
MARLER CLARK  
1301 2ND AVENUE  
SUITE 2800  
SEATTLE, WA 98101  
(206) 346-1984  
Email: bmarler@marlerclark.com  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

V.

**Defendant**

**FAIRBANK FARMS INC**  
*TERMINATED: 03/11/2011*

represented by **ELIZABETH G. KNOX PECK**  
THOMPSON & BOWIE, LLP  
THREE CANAL PLAZA  
P.O. BOX 4630  
PORTLAND, ME 04112  
774-2500  
Email: epeck@thompsonbowie.com  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**PAUL C. CATSOS**  
THOMPSON & BOWIE, LLP  
THREE CANAL PLAZA  
P.O. BOX 4630  
PORTLAND, ME 04112

207-774-2500  
Email: [pcatsos@thompsonbowie.com](mailto:pcatsos@thompsonbowie.com)  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**RALPH A. WEBER**  
GASS WEBER MULLINS LLC  
309 NORTH WATER STREET  
SUITE 700  
MILWAUKEE, WI 53202  
(414) 224-7698  
Email:  
[weber@gasswebermullins.com](mailto:weber@gasswebermullins.com)  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**SHAWN K. STEVENS**  
GASS WEBER MULLINS LLC  
309 NORTH WATER STREET  
SUITE 700  
MILWAUKEE, WI 53202  
(414) 224-7784  
Email:  
[stevens@gasswebermullins.com](mailto:stevens@gasswebermullins.com)  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**Defendant**

**FAIRBANK RECONSTRUCTION  
CORP**

*TERMINATED: 03/11/2011*

*doing business as*

**FAIRBANK FARMS**

*TERMINATED: 03/11/2011*

represented by **ELIZABETH G. KNOX PECK**  
(See above for address)  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**PAUL C. CATSOS**  
(See above for address)  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**RALPH A. WEBER**  
(See above for address)  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**SHAWN K. STEVENS**  
(See above for address)  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**Defendant**

**GREATER OMAHA PACKING  
COMPANY INC**

*TERMINATED: 03/11/2011*

represented by **ALISON DENHAM**  
DOUGLAS, DENHAM, BUCCINA  
& ERNST  
103 EXCHANGE STREET

P.O. BOX 7108  
PORTLAND, ME 04112-7108  
207-774-1486  
Email: adenham@dougden.com  
*LEAD ATTORNEY*  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**BRIAN DAVID NOLAN**  
NOLAN, OLSON & STRYKER,  
P.C., L.L.O.  
TWO OLD MILL  
SUITE 240  
10855 WEST DODGE ROAD  
OMAHA, NE 68154  
402-932-5126  
Email: bnolan@nolanolson.com  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**SUSAN LESLIE STRYKER**  
NOLAN, OLSON & STRYKER,  
P.C., L.L.O.  
TWO OLD MILL  
SUITE 240  
10855 WEST DODGE ROAD  
OMAHA, NE 68154  
402-932-5126  
Email: sstryker@nolanolson.com  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**ThirdParty Defendant**

**GREATER OMAHA PACKING  
COMPANY INC**

represented by **ALISON DENHAM**  
(See above for address)  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**BRIAN DAVID NOLAN**  
(See above for address)  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**DAVID PATTERSON GLOOR**  
GLOOR LAW GROUP  
225 W. WACKER DRIVE  
SUITE 1800  
CHICAGO, IL 60606  
312-752-3700  
Email: pgloor@gloorlaw.com  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**MARTICA S. DOUGLAS**  
DOUGLAS, DENHAM, BUCCINA  
& ERNST  
103 EXCHANGE STREET  
P.O. BOX 7108  
PORTLAND, ME 04112-7108  
207-774-1486  
Email: mdouglas@dougden.com  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**STEPHEN P ELLENBECKER**  
GLOOR LAW GROUP  
225 W. WACKER DRIVE  
SUITE 1800  
CHICAGO, IL 60606  
312-752-3700  
Email: sellenbecker@gloorlaw.com  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**SUSAN LESLIE STRYKER**  
(See above for address)  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**ThirdParty Plaintiff**

**FAIRBANK RECONSTRUCTION  
CORP**

represented by **ELIZABETH G. KNOX PECK**  
(See above for address)  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**PAUL C. CATSOS**  
(See above for address)  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**RALPH A. WEBER**  
(See above for address)  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**SHAWN K. STEVENS**  
(See above for address)  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**ThirdParty Plaintiff**

**FAIRBANK FARMS INC**  
*TERMINATED: 08/15/2011*

represented by **ELIZABETH G. KNOX PECK**  
(See above for address)  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**PAUL C. CATSOS**  
(See above for address)  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**RALPH A. WEBER**  
(See above for address)  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*

**SHAWN K. STEVENS**  
(See above for address)  
*ATTORNEY TO BE NOTICED*