FSA's NFCU urges vigilance against food fraud, as man jailed after investigation into over half a million pound turkey and chicken theft

Today [Tuesday 27 January, 2026] Liam Dooney, age 53 from Wigan, received a custodial sentence after an NFCU joint investigation into food fraud.

At Bolton Crown Court, Dooney was sentenced to two years and six months imprisonment for handling stolen goods worth in excess of £500,000. He must serve at least half of his sentence in custody. He was also disqualified as a director for seven years.

Dooney previously operated a food cold-storage company in the Wigan area. He had earlier pleaded guilty in Bolton Crown Court to handling stolen goods, and had been granted bail.

The NFCU compiled evidence after it was alerted of a series of offences in which fraudsters impersonated legitimate food businesses in the UK to secure deliveries of food from overseas suppliers and one UK-based supplier. This involved cloned details from McDonald's franchises in order to steal cargo – in this case, chicken and turkey.

16.8 metric tonnes of stolen poultry was recovered. This later had to be downgraded to pet food due to a loss in traceability.

> "We are pleased with this custodial sentence as it shows there is no place in the food industry for any form of criminal activity.
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> We work with partners, supporting industry to meet their responsibilities and minimise the risk of any food theft resulting in food fraud. This complex case investigation has included Greater Manchester Police, Wigan Council, and the Crown Prosecution Service.
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> Food businesses should be vigilant to the risk of food fraud and safeguard against this, and be alert to the potential of being offered stolen goods.? Food businesses can help ensure they don't become victims of theft by doing their due diligence with suppliers and customers.
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> We've advised hundreds of businesses on how to increase their resilience to fraud so people can trust the food they buy is safe, and what it says it is."
>
> Andrew Quinn, Head of the FSA's NFCU

Theft should be reported to the police and if you suspect food fraud, report it to Food Crime Confidential on food.gov.uk/report or by phoning 0800 028 1180 (0207 276 8787 for non-UK

mobiles and calls).