Amputations Fatality File



A meat plant worker who asked to remain anonymous told the Guardian that although he has managed to avoid injury himself, most of his friends have needed surgery at some point. “If you complain about your hands, they just say you’ll be fine … they want you to put ice on it during your break time or lunchtime” – rather than during production hours.

A 50 year-old worker, from Nebraska, adds, “When I get home I have to stretch my hands, I feel a pinch, it hurts… You never get used to the work. I do it because I have to support my family. I don’t have an education.”

Amanda Hitt, from the Food Integrity Campaign, said: “Increased line speeds pose a real threat to workers. In addition to heinous injuries resulting from speed such as amputations and physical injury, workers are also at risk from injuries resulting from repeated motions. A pork plant worker may make … hard-cutting knife motions while working on a line. This repetition puts the worker at risk [of] debilitating musculoskeletal problems.”

“Every co-worker I know has been injured at some point,” plant worker Eric Furstenberg told the USDA as they examined the case for implementing reforms that would include speeding up the line. “I can attest that the line speeds are already too fast to keep up with. Please, I am asking you not to increase them anymore.”