

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Sunny Isle Wendy's Management Issues Statement Following D.O.H. Shutdown Of Restaurant

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ST. CROIX -- Following the shutdown of the Wendy's restaurant in Sunny Isle on Tuesday, which was ordered to cease and desist by the Department of Health following the discovery of rats, rat droppings in ketchup boxes and on the floor of the facility, as well as cockroaches, the management of the local Wendy's -- an American international fast food restaurant chain founded by Dave Thomas on November 15, 1969, in Columbus, Ohio -- issued a statement on the matter.

"The restaurant environment that we provide our customers is very important to us and we are taking this matter very seriously," reads the statement, issued late Wednesday. "We are cooperating fully with the Health Department, and we are working with the pest

control company to resolve this situation as quickly as possible.” The statement did not make known which pest control firm Wendy's is working with as it attempts to come into compliance with local sanitary laws.

According to D.O.H. Director of Public Relations, Nykole Tyson, D.O.H. received a complaint on Monday by a concerned resident, who had visited the facility Sunday night, and stated that large rats were inside and outside of Wendy's.

During the inspection, which began at about noon on Tuesday, the inspector encountered rat droppings inside ketchup boxes and in a storage area, according to Ms. Tyson. The inspector also found cockroaches in the establishment, including in a food machine, and also crawling on walls.

The inspector immediately issued a cease and desist document directed to the local franchise owners of Wendy's, and a citation for closure of the facility until the violations were rectified.

Citing Virgin Islands Code, Ms. Tyson noted one of the violations as Abatement of Nuisance. She said the inspector found that employees would open the restaurant without cleaning it, leaving rat droppings visible. The inspector also found that a strong urine odor engulfed the dining area.

The second violation was Unsanitary Conditions, as the inspector found that Wendy's kitchen floor had grease buildup, and the kitchen walls were unsanitary. The inspector also found mold buildup behind an ice machine and trash was found on the floor in the storage area.

Ms. Tyson said the third violation was Accumulation Prohibited, as the inspector found that Wendy's, overall, was kept in an unsanitary manner, and employees would ignore trash visible on the floor. The fourth violation deals with insects and pests, as the inspector found rats and rat droppings inside Wendy's, in boxes of ketchup and on the kitchen floor.

“The citation was given on the spot,” Ms. Tyson said. “They were ordered to close the establishment until all violations were rectified.”