Tropicale Foods closes its Modesto ice-cream plant — Stanislaus County, 2024

Tropicale Foods, maker of the La Michoacana and Helados Mexico brands of Mexican-style ice cream bars and sandwiches, closed its Modesto plant in July 2024 — the earliest of four commodity-processing closures this project has documented landing on Stanislaus County within about 21 months.

168

Jobs eliminated, confirmed directly against the official California WARN report.

290

Jobs the company itself reported to local press — unexplained discrepancy with the WARN figure, flagged below.

What happened

Tropicale Foods, LLC (also filing as PLM Operations, LLC) filed a WARN notice on May 15, 2024, for its plant at 2068 Lapham Drive in Modesto, with an effective closure date of July 12, 2024 — 168 employees, Closure, Permanent, per the official state WARN report. Local news coverage, citing a company spokesperson, gave a different closure date (July 19) and a much larger job count: 290 of the company's 814 total positions. No source found explains the gap between the WARN-filed 168 and the company-reported 290.

The company said production would shift to its existing plant in Ontario, California, and to a new facility in Lubbock, Texas. In a statement, Tropicale said it was "committed to treating its employees with dignity and respect throughout this process" and was "proud of the work done by its employees at the Modesto plant." The closure came roughly six weeks after a recall of more than 5,000 boxes of the company's mango-flavored bars over possible salmonella contamination — the FDA reported no illnesses tied to it. This project found no source connecting the recall to the closure decision; it's noted here as a fact, not a claim.

Stanislaus County Workforce Development said it had not received a WARN notice as of the initial news report, and planned to send a Rapid Response Coordinator to the company to

offer site visits, training workshops, résumé help, and individual job counseling for affected workers.

Impact — what we know, and what we don't

- **Jobs:** 168 confirmed by WARN filing; 290 is the company's own reported figure, cited in local press but not independently verified against a public filing.
- **What happened to the workers:** Beyond the county's offer of Rapid Response services, no source found tracks how many workers were placed in new jobs versus went unemployed.
- **A brand with particular resonance here:** La Michoacana and Helados Mexico are Mexican-heritage ice-cream brands sold heavily into the same Central Valley Latino communities that make up much of the commodity-ag processing workforce this project documents — not a causal factor in the closure, but a detail worth naming given who the project is ultimately about.

Part of a larger pattern

A systematic review of every Fresno, Stanislaus, and Tulare County WARN filing since 2014 — not just news search — placed this closure first, chronologically, inside a cluster of four landing on Stanislaus County within about 21 months: this one (July 2024), **Reyes Coca-Cola Bottling's Modesto facility** (Nov 2024, 101 jobs), **Foster Farms' Turlock turkey operations** (Jan 2025, 478+ jobs), and **Del Monte's Modesto/Hughson canneries** (April 2026, 765+ jobs) — the same compounding pattern already documented in Kings County, showing up independently in Stanislaus.

Sources

- California EDD WARN report, confirmed directly: Tropicale Foods, LLC, aka PLM Operations, LLC, 2068 Lapham Drive, Modesto, Stanislaus County — 168 employees, notice 05/15/2024, received 05/17/2024, effective 07/12/2024, Closure, Permanent. Access: obtained — taken directly from the agency's own filings rather than from a web page.
- **AOL/Modesto Bee syndication, "Modesto plant that manufactures Mexican-style ice cream will close, costing 290 jobs."**
- ABC10, "Tropicale Foods closing Modesto plant." Access: web-blocked — the outlet refuses automated requests, so no URL could be verified for it here.

- **Univision, "Cierra la fábrica de La Michoacana y Helados México en Modesto: advierten despidos"** (Spanish-language coverage).

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