

A federal grand jury has indicted former Agriculture Commissioner Richie Farmer on four felony counts of misappropriating state funds and one of solicitation.

The indictment unsealed Monday in Lexington charges Farmer with using his state position to obtain thousands of dollars' worth of gifts, hotel rooms, clothing and computers. It also charges him with hiring friends who did little or no work for the state.

Kerry Harvey, U-S Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky, says Farmer misused public funds for his own benefit. One accusation is that Farmer had hotel reservations made by Ag employees for the state fair, even though they wouldn't attend, which were then used by members of Farmer's extended family.

{audio}<http://wcluradio.com/newscuts/0422harvey.mp3>{/audio}

Harvey also says Farmer had Ag Department employees perform work at Farmer's home on state time, and he took state property for his own use, including computers, two refrigerators, and two filing cabinets.

They are also seeking the forfeiture of 450-thousand dollars, which Harvey says is the value of the misappropriations.

Farmer faces up to ten years in prison on each for the five counts, and is scheduled to be arraigned April 30th, at U-S District Court in Lexington.

Farmer's attorney, Guthrie True, said Monday he is reviewing the indictment and saw no surprises in it.

RICHE FARMER INDICTED ON FEDERAL CHARGES OF MISAPPROPRIATING STATE FUNDS

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