

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Section  
1000 East Grand—Des Moines, Iowa 50319  
DECISION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
68-0157 (7-97) – 3091078 - EI**

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PO BOX 142  
DENISON IA 51442-0142**

**FARMLAND FOODS INC  
c/o TALX UCM SERVICES  
PO BOX 283  
ST LOUIS MO 63166-0283**

**IKE ROCHA  
ROCHA INTERPRETERS LLC  
3919 FRANKLIN AVE  
DES MOINES IA 50310**

**Appeal Number: 06A-UI-02555-ET  
OC: 02-05-06 R: 01  
Claimant: Respondent (1)**

**This Decision Shall Become Final**, unless within fifteen (15) days from the date below, you or any interested party appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by submitting either a signed letter or a signed written Notice of Appeal, directly to the **Employment Appeal Board, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor—Lucas Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319**.

The appeal period will be extended to the next business day if the last day to appeal falls on a weekend or a legal holiday.

STATE CLEARLY

1. The name, address and social security number of the claimant.
2. A reference to the decision from which the appeal is taken.
3. That an appeal from such decision is being made and such appeal is signed.
4. The grounds upon which such appeal is based.

YOU MAY REPRESENT yourself in this appeal or you may obtain a lawyer or other interested party to do so provided there is no expense to Workforce Development. If you wish to be represented by a lawyer, you may obtain the services of either a private attorney or one whose services are paid for with public funds. It is important that you file your claim as directed, while this appeal is pending, to protect your continuing right to benefits.

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(Administrative Law Judge)

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(Decision Dated & Mailed)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge/Misconduct  
871 IAC 24.32(7) – Absenteeism

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer filed a timely appeal from the February 20, 2006, reference 01, decision that allowed benefits to the claimant. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call before Administrative Law Judge Julie Elder on March 23, 2006. The claimant did not respond to the hearing notice and did not participate in the hearing. Becky Jacobsen, Human Resource Coordinator, participated in the hearing on behalf of the employer.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant was employed as a full-time production worker for Farmland Foods from August 7,

2002 to February 2, 2006. The employer allows 12 attendance points before termination occurs. Every absence, except those covered by FMLA, counts as one point. Absences of more than one day count as one point if the employee provides a doctor's excuse. The claimant was absent due to properly reported illness but received points February 28, April 19, April 25, May 10, June 29, November 25, 26, and 28, December 5, 2005, and January 27, 2006. He also left early due to illness July 9 and September 3, 2005. The claimant received written warnings April 13 and July 5, 2005, and final written warnings September 9 and December 2, 2005. The employer terminated his employment for excessive absenteeism.

#### REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was discharged from employment for no disqualifying reason.

Iowa Code section 96.5-2-a provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits:

2. Discharge for misconduct. If the department finds that the individual has been discharged for misconduct in connection with the individual's employment:

a. The individual shall be disqualified for benefits until the individual has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the individual's weekly benefit amount, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

871 IAC 24.32(7) provides:

(7) Excessive unexcused absenteeism. Excessive unexcused absenteeism is an intentional disregard of the duty owed by the claimant to the employer and shall be considered misconduct except for illness or other reasonable grounds for which the employee was absent and that were properly reported to the employer.

Excessive absences are not considered misconduct unless unexcused. Absences due to properly reported illness cannot constitute job misconduct since they are not volitional. Cosper v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). Because the final absence for which the claimant was discharged was related to properly reported illness, no final or current incident of unexcused absenteeism has been established and no disqualification is imposed.

#### DECISION:

The February 20, 2006, reference 01, decision is affirmed. The claimant was discharged from employment for no disqualifying reason. Benefits are allowed, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

je/tjc