

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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STORM LAKE IA 50588-2412

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

SPANISH COMM SVS LLC  
11601 NW TIMBERRIDGE LN  
GRIMES IA 50111

Appeal Number: 06A-UI-06081-ET  
OC: 05-14-06 R: 01  
Claimant: Respondent (2)

**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, 2<sup>nd</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 96.5-1-d – Voluntary Leaving/Illness or Injury  
871 IAC 24.25(35) – Separation Due to Illness or Injury

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer filed a timely appeal from a decision dated June 1, 2006, reference 01, that allowed benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call before Administrative Law Judge Julie Elder on June 29, 2006. The claimant participated in the hearing with Interpreter Olga Ayla. Denise Baldwin, Human Resources Manager, participated in the hearing on behalf of the employer.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having heard the testimony and examined 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 25, 2005 to May 3, 2006. She was injured in a nonwork-related incident and was off work beginning January 13, 2006, and was unable to work pursuant to medical advice from a treating physician. The claimant returned to work April 3, 2006, but the employer would not allow her to return to work without a full doctor's release. The claimant called in to report her absences until May 1, 2006, when she lost her phone service. She has not yet received a full medical release from the treating physician.

The claimant has claimed and received unemployment insurance benefits since her separation from employment.

#### REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant is temporarily separated from her employment without good cause attributable to the employer.

Iowa Code section 96.5-1-d provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits:

1. Voluntary quitting. If the individual has left work voluntarily without good cause attributable to the individual's employer, if so found by the department. But the individual shall not be disqualified if the department finds that:

d. The individual left employment because of illness, injury or pregnancy upon the advice of a licensed and practicing physician, and upon knowledge of the necessity for absence immediately notified the employer, or the employer consented to the absence, and after recovering from the illness, injury or pregnancy, when recovery was certified by a licensed and practicing physician, the individual returned to the employer and offered to perform services and the individual's regular work or comparable suitable work was not available, if so found by the department, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

871 IAC 24.25(35) provides:

Voluntary quit without good cause. In general, a voluntary quit means discontinuing the employment because the employee no longer desires to remain in the relationship of an employee with the employer from whom the employee has separated. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.5. However, the claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving Iowa Code section 96.5, subsection (1), paragraphs "a" through "i," and subsection 10. The following reasons for a voluntary quit shall be presumed to be without good cause attributable to the employer:

(35) The claimant left because of illness or injury which was not caused or aggravated by the employment or pregnancy and failed to:

(a) Obtain the advice of a licensed and practicing physician;

(b) Obtain certification of release for work from a licensed and practicing physician;

(c) Return to the employer and offer services upon recovery and certification for work by a licensed and practicing physician; or

(d) Fully recover so that the claimant could perform all of the duties of the job.

The claimant has not been released to return to full work duties. Accordingly, the separation is without good cause attributable to the employer and benefits must be denied.

Iowa Code section 96.3-7 provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits. If an individual receives benefits for which the individual is subsequently determined to be ineligible, even though the individual acts in good faith and is not otherwise at fault, the benefits shall be recovered. The department in its discretion may recover the overpayment of benefits either by having a sum equal to the overpayment deducted from any future benefits payable to the individual or by having the individual pay to the department a sum equal to the overpayment.

If the department determines that an overpayment has been made, the charge for the overpayment against the employer's account shall be removed and the account shall be credited with an amount equal to the overpayment from the unemployment compensation trust fund and this credit shall include both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5.

Because the claimant's separation was disqualifying, benefits were paid to which the claimant was not entitled. Those benefits must be recovered in accordance with the provisions of Iowa law.

#### DECISION:

The June 1, 2006, reference 01, decision is reversed. The claimant's separation was without good cause attributable to the employer. Benefits are withheld until such time as the claimant obtains a full medical release without restriction to return to regular duties, offers services to the employer, and the employer has no comparable, suitable work available. The claimant is overpaid benefits in the amount of \$2,094.00.

je/pjs