

**BEFORE THE
EMPLOYMENT APPEAL BOARD
Lucas State Office Building
Fourth floor
Des Moines, Iowa 50319**

PERRY M KUHN

Claimant

and

HORMEL FOODS CORPORATION

Employer

HEARING NUMBER: 17BUI-06520

**EMPLOYMENT APPEAL BOARD
DECISION**

SECTION: 10A.601 Employment Appeal Board Review

D E C I S I O N

FINDINGS OF FACT:

A hearing in the above matter was scheduled for July 13, 2017 in which the issues to be determined were whether the claimant was laid off; discharged for misconduct; or whether the claimant voluntarily left for good cause attributable to the employer. At the hearing, the administrative law judge limited the Employer's ability to provide testimony regarding their investigation on the Claimant while he was on suspension.

The administrative law judge's decision was issued July 14, 2017, which determined that the "...employer has not met its burden of proof to establish job related misconduct..." The administrative law judge's decision has been appealed to the Employment Appeal Board.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code section 10A.601(4) (2015) provides:

5. Appeal board review. The appeal board may on its own motion affirm, modify, or set aside any decision of an administrative law judge on the basis of the evidence previously submitted in such case, or direct the taking of additional evidence, or may permit any of the parties to such decision to initiate further appeals before it. The appeal board shall permit such further appeal by any of the parties interested in a decision of an administrative law judge and by the representative whose decision has been overruled or modified by the administrative law judge. The appeal board shall review the case pursuant to rules adopted by the appeal board. The appeal board shall promptly notify the interested parties of its findings and decision.

The Employment Appeal Board concludes that the record as it stands is insufficient for the Board to issue a decision on the merits of the case. As the Iowa Court of Appeals noted in *Baker v. Employment Appeal Board*, 551 N.W. 2d 646 (Iowa App. 1996), the administrative law judge has a heightened duty to develop the record from available evidence and testimony given the administrative law judge's presumed expertise. The administrative law judge repeatedly cut off the Employer's attempts to provide testimony as to what led to the Claimant's termination; in particular, what were the results of the Employer's investigation while the Claimant was suspended. For this reason, the Board must remand this matter for a new hearing.

DECISION:

The decision of the administrative law judge dated July 14, 2017 is not vacated and remains in force unless and until the Department makes a differing determination pursuant to this remand. This matter is remanded to a different administrative law judge in the Unemployment Insurance Appeals Bureau, for further development of the record consistent with this decision, unless otherwise already addressed. The administrative law judge shall conduct a hearing following due notice, if necessary. If a hearing is held, then the administrative law judge shall issue a decision which provides the parties appeal rights.

Kim D. Schmett

Ashley R. Koopmans

James M. Strohman

AMG/fnv