

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

68-0157 (9-06) - 3091078 - EI

STEVE L BOLEYN
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 11A-UI-06712-M2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

AGRI STAR MEAT & POULTRY LLC
Employer

**OC: 04/03/111
Claimant: Appellant (2)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct
Section 96.3-7 – Recovery of Overpayment of Benefits

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Claimant filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated May 10, 2011, reference 01, which held claimant ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice, a telephone conference hearing was scheduled for and held on June 16, 2011. Employer participated by Laura Althouse. Claimant participated.

ISSUE:

The issue in this matter is whether claimant was discharged for misconduct.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and having considered all of the evidence in the record, finds: The claimant was discharged on April 11, 2011 because he was alleged to have stolen meat product from the employer by eating it. The claimant denies the allegation. Employer's witness had no firsthand knowledge, had not reviewed the tape that supposedly shows the incident, and did not even know what meat product claimant was to have eaten.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

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(1)a provides:

Discharge for misconduct.

(1) Definition.

a. "Misconduct" is defined as a deliberate act or omission by a worker which constitutes a material breach of the duties and obligations arising out of such worker's contract of employment. Misconduct as the term is used in the disqualification provision as being limited to conduct evincing such willful or wanton disregard of an employer's interest as is found in deliberate violation or disregard of standards of behavior which the employer has the right to expect of employees, or in carelessness or negligence of such degree of recurrence as to manifest equal culpability, wrongful intent or evil design, or to show an intentional and substantial disregard of the employer's interests or of the employee's duties and obligations to the employer. On the other hand mere inefficiency, unsatisfactory conduct, failure in good performance as the result of inability or incapacity, inadvertencies or ordinary negligence in isolated instances, or good faith errors in judgment or discretion are not to be deemed misconduct within the meaning of the statute.

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The gravity of the incident, number of policy violations, and prior warnings are factors considered when analyzing misconduct. The lack of a current warning may detract from a finding of an intentional policy violation.

The administrative law judge holds that the evidence does not establish that claimant was discharged for an act of misconduct when claimant was discharged for allegedly stealing/eating product when firsthand evidence was submitted and claimant denies the allegations. When it is in a party's power to produce more direct and satisfactory evidence than is actually produced, it may fairly be inferred that the more direct evidence will expose deficiencies in that party's case. Crosser v. Iowa Dep't of Public Safety, 240 N.W.2d 682 (Iowa 1976).

DECISION:

The decision of the representative dated May 10, 2011, reference 01, is reversed. Claimant is eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits, provided claimant meets all other eligibility requirements.

Stan McElderry
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

srm/kjw