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DFEH Settles Sexual Harassment Case against Sandhu Brothers Growers in Stanislaus County

Farmworker woman alleged sexual harassment and indecent exposure by supervisor

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) has obtained a \$75,000 settlement in a sexual harassment case filed on behalf of a female farmworker who worked for Sandhu Brothers, a sweet potato farming operation in Stanislaus County.

The case stemmed from a complaint by a female farmworker that she was harassed by a supervisor while working for Sandhu Brothers. The complaint alleged that the supervisor exposed his genitals to members of the crew, masturbated in front of the workers while driving a tractor, and made unwanted sexual advances to several female crew members. The complainant also alleged that she was groped by the supervisor and was fired after complaining to the company. A separate sexual harassment complaint by another worker involving the same company and the same supervisor was filed and resolved with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 2013. After the allegations were investigated and substantiated by the DFEH, a complaint was filed in Stanislaus Superior Court in Modesto, California. The case was settled January 19, 2016. It would have gone to trial on February 2, 2016.

As part of the settlement, the company has agreed to undergo sexual harassment training and implement sexual harassment prevention policies.

“Sexual harassment is a serious problem, especially in agriculture where many workers are often afraid to speak out and are unaware of their rights,” said DFEH Director Kevin Kish. “We hope that this settlement will send a message to victims that the law will not tolerate this kind of behavior in the workplace and encourage employers to adopt effective training and prevention programs.”

The lawsuit was filed against defendants Sandhu Brothers Growers dba Yam Gro, Gurinder Sandhu, and Bhupinder Sandhu. The case is titled *DFEH v. Sandhu Brothers Poultry and Farming et al*, Stanislaus County Superior Court Case Number 2006626.

The DFEH is the state agency charged with enforcing California’s civil rights laws. The mission of the DFEH is to protect the people of California from unlawful discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations and from hate violence. For more information, visit the Department’s Web site at www.dfeh.ca.gov.