



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

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Eden Foods to Pay Over \$182,500 to Settle EEOC Sexual Harassment Lawsuit

Owner Regularly Harassed Female Employees, Federal Agency Charged

DETROIT, MI – Eden Foods, Inc., will pay more than \$182,500 to settle a sex discrimination lawsuit filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to obtain relief for former employees at the natural foods company’s Clinton, Michigan headquarters, the federal agency announced today.

According to the EEOC lawsuit, Eden’s male owner and president touched multiple female employees inappropriately on their backs, shoulders and legs, sometimes sitting with his leg pressed up against a female employee for hours at a time. He kissed multiple female employees without their consent and touched at least one on the buttocks. The owner also regularly made lewd comments, injected sex into marketing materials, and referred to females in crude sexual terms. Multiple employees complained to the company HR representative, who confronted the owner. In response, he laughed and said, “all these girls want me.”

Such conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits employers from discriminating based on sex. The EEOC filed suit (EEOC v. Eden Foods, Inc., Case No: 2:22-cv-10881) in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. The EEOC’s complaint asserted sexual harassment

claims with respect to a marketing department manager and three additional female employees. The manager then filed an intervening complaint, which included claims for retaliation and wrongful discharge.

The 3½-half year consent decree resolving the lawsuit requires Eden Foods to pay \$182,500 in compensatory damages to be distributed among the three additional female employees. Eden Foods will also pay substantial additional monetary compensation to the marketing department manager. Eden Foods must provide annual training to management (including the owner), submit annual reports to the EEOC, and maintain a hotline for employees to report complaints.

“The conduct of the Eden’s owner was egregious, continued unabated for years, and was verified by sworn affidavits and testimony of most of the marketing department, including multiple male employees,” said Miles Uhlar, a trial attorney in the Detroit Field Office of the EEOC’s Indianapolis District. “The EEOC will always stand up to company owners who believe they have free license to sexually harass employees.”

The EEOC is responsible for enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. Further information about the EEOC is available on its web site at www.eeoc.gov. (<http://www.eeoc.gov>) The Indianapolis District Office oversees Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky and parts of Ohio.