



**U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**

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**Press Release**

09-29-2023

# **EEOC Sues Midwest Farms for Sexual Harassment and Retaliation**

Federal Agency Charges Colorado-Based Agribusiness Discriminated and Retaliated Against Female Employees

DENVER – Midwest Farms, an agribusiness company operating several farms in rural Colorado, violated federal law by subjecting female employees to sexual harassment and retaliation, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit filed yesterday.

According to the EEOC's lawsuit, a male farm manager entered the women's dressing room on at least three separate occasions without knocking while female employees were either undressed or undressing. Another male manager regularly subjected female employees to vulgar sexual language and sexual propositions.

The EEOC alleges that Midwest Farms failed to take preventative or corrective action when female employees complained about the harassment and at least one woman who could not tolerate the harassment was forced to resign. The EEOC also alleges that at least one other woman was discharged because she complained to management and human resources about sexual harassment.

Such alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits

employment discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment, and retaliation for complaining about it. The EEOC filed suit in U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado (EEOC v. Midwest Farms, LLC, Civil Action No. 1:23-cv-02531-MDB) after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its conciliation process.

The EEOC seeks relief in the form of Midwest Farms implementing new policies and practices to help eradicate sexual harassment and retaliation, including training for all managers, supervisors, and non-supervisory employees, in the future. The EEOC also seeks to compensate the female employees for their monetary losses and for the emotional pain, suffering, and inconvenience they experienced during their time at Midwest Farms.

“Sexual harassment remains a problem in the agricultural industry,” said Mary Jo O’Neill, regional attorney for the EEOC’s Phoenix District. “The EEOC will continue to enforce anti-discrimination laws on behalf of women farmworkers who are vulnerable to sexual harassment and retaliation in the workplace.”

Amy Burkholder, director of the EEOC’s Denver Field Office, added, “Every employee has a right to a workplace free from sexual harassment, discrimination, and retaliation. The EEOC will continue to hold employers accountable to their obligations under federal law.”

For more information on sex-based discrimination, please visit

[\*\*https://www.eeoc.gov/sex-based-discrimination\*\*](https://www.eeoc.gov/sex-based-discrimination) ([\*\*https://www.eeoc.gov/sex-based-discrimination\*\*](https://www.eeoc.gov/sex-based-discrimination)). For more information on sexual harassment, please visit

[\*\*https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment\*\*](https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment) ([\*\*https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment\*\*](https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment)). For more information on retaliation, please visit

[\*\*https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation\*\*](https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation) ([\*\*https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation\*\*](https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation)).

The EEOC’s Denver Field Office is one of three offices in the EEOC Phoenix District Office which has jurisdiction over Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming.

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. More information is available at [\*\*www.eeoc.gov\*\*](http://www.eeoc.gov) ([\*\*http://www.eeoc.gov\*\*](http://www.eeoc.gov)). Stay connected with the latest EEOC news by subscribing to our [\*\*email updates\*\*](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new) ([\*\*https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new\*\*](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new)).

