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Aug-20-2009 11:50  

## Oregon Farm Settles Sex Harassment Suit, \$260K for Latina Worker

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**Wilcox Farms Settle EEOC Sexual Harassment Retaliation Suit; Federal Agency Obtains \$260,000 for Latina Forced to Quit to Escape Abusive Supervisor.**

(PORTLAND, Ore.) - Wilcox Farms, which operates dairy and egg production facilities in Oregon and Washington, will pay \$260,000 and provide remedial relief to settle a federal sexual harassment and retaliation suit, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) announced today.



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The EEOC's lawsuit charged that a male supervisor repeatedly grabbed, sought to forcibly undress and propositioned Wilcox Farms employee Diana Dominguez at its Aurora, Ore., facility. According to the federal agency's investigation, the harassment continued over many months despite Dominguez's complaints to management, to the point where she began to fear for her physical safety.

The EEOC found that Wilcox retaliated against Dominguez for reporting the harassment by isolating her from co-workers, forcing her to continue to work with the harasser and pressuring her to resign. Dominguez ultimately was forced to quit out of fear for her safety.

Sexual harassment and retaliation violate Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. After an investigation conducted by EEOC investigator Annalie Greer and after first attempting to reach a voluntary settlement, the EEOC filed suit on October 9, 2008 (EEOC v. Wilcox Farms, Inc., Wilcox Dairy Farms, LLC and Wilcox Farm Services, LLC, No. 08-CV-1141-MO) in U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon. Represented by the Oregon Law Center and Legal Aid Services of Oregon, Dominguez intervened in the EEOC lawsuit to add claims under state law.

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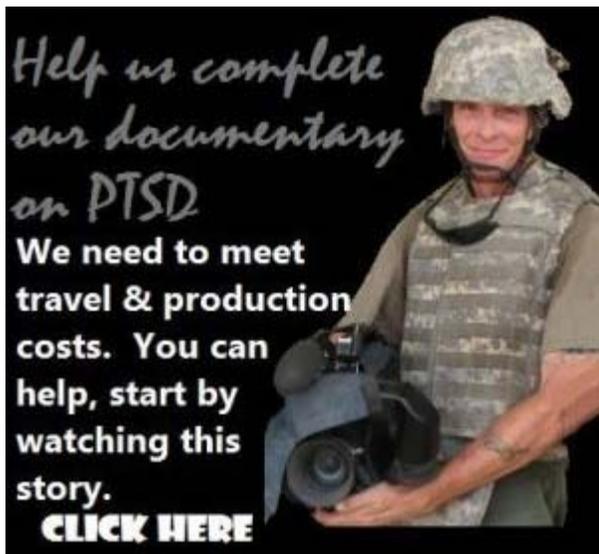
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Under the terms of the consent decree settling the suit, Wilcox Farms denied any wrongdoing but will pay Dominguez \$260,000. The company also agreed to adopt and to distribute to all employees a sexual harassment policy written in both English and Spanish, and to make its complaint procedures more convenient for employees to report

harassment and retaliation. Wilcox Farms has also agreed to conduct sexual harassment training in English and Spanish for all managers, supervisors and employees, and to provide various reports to the EEOC over a three-year period.

Dominguez said, "This job was important to me, but I had to leave it to feel safe. I am thankful to the EEOC, Oregon Law Center and Legal Aid Services for protecting my right to be safe at work. And I am glad that the company will make changes so that what happened to me doesn't happen to other workers."

EEOC Regional Attorney William R. Tamayo said, "This case involved a supervisor's serious abuse of power over a female employee. Employers must take every report of harassment seriously. They shouldn't dismiss such behavior as 'the cost of doing business' or ignore problems in hopes that they will go away. The law requires them to quickly and effectively respond to such complaints. Sexual harassment in the workplace is illegal – no one should be required to work in a hostile environment."

Director Michael Baldonado of the EEOC's San Francisco District Office added, "Agriculture is a key industry for Oregon, and the EEOC has received many charges of blatant discrimination in this sector. We also have found many workers in this industry often may not be familiar with their rights and may face obstacles such as language access. We commend the bravery of Ms. Dominguez to come forward, and hope that this settlement will encourage all workers to step forward and contact the EEOC to learn more about their rights."

The EEOC enforces federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. Further information about the EEOC is available on its web site at [eoc.gov](http://eoc.gov).

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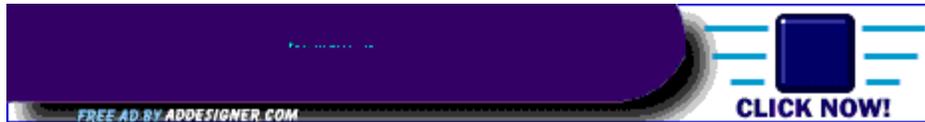
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