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Canal Farms To Pay \$150,000 To Settle DFEH Sexual Harassment Lawsuit

Four women farmworkers alleged they were denied work after reporting pervasive harassment in Colusa County

Sacramento - The California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) has reached a settlement in a sexual harassment lawsuit filed on behalf of four women farm workers against Canal Farms, the L.C. Dennis Company, Inc., a Canal Farms foreman and a farm labor contractor.

The civil complaint (Colusa County Superior Court case number CV24272) alleged that from early 2014 to October 2016, a Canal Farms foreman sexually harassed four women workers with constant crude and demeaning sexualized remarks, creating an intolerable work environment. The foreman allegedly made comments about the women's bodies and asked them to have sexual intercourse. The complaint further alleged that in retaliation for their refusal to subject to his sexual advances, the foreman assigned the women the hardest physical jobs.

Soon after the women complained to the foreman's employer about his conduct, they were no longer assigned to work at Canal Farms by their employer, a farm labor contractor. DFEH alleged such conduct constituted retaliation and violated the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA).

A 2010 survey of 150 farmworker women in California's Central Valley showed eighty percent had experienced some form of sexual harassment. (Morales Waugh, Irma, *Examining the Sexual Harassment Experiences of Mexican Immigrant Farmworking Women* (2010) 16 Violence Against Women Journal.)

"DFEH is committed to eradicating sexual harassment and assault from agricultural workplaces in California" said DFEH Director Kevin Kish. "All workers have a right to make a living without being harassed."

In addition to a monetary settlement of \$150,000, Canal Farms will update its discrimination policies, provide harassment prevention training, and report to DFEH all internal complaints of discrimination for a three-year period.

Associate Chief Counsel Melanie Proctor and Staff Counsel Jenet Zapata represented DFEH in this matter.

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 and human trafficking. For more information, visit the DFEH's web site at www.dfeh.ca.gov.

