

**BEFORE THE ARKANSAS WORKERS' COMPENSATION COMMISSION
WCC NO. H501893**

**GABRIEL LARA FRANCO,
EMPLOYEE**

CLAIMANT

**LINDSEY GIN CO.,
EMPLOYER**

RESPONDENT

**AGRI GROUP-COMP SI FUND,
CARRIER/TPA**

RESPONDENT

OPINION FILED FEBRUARY 10, 2026

Hearing conducted on Friday, December 19, 2025, before the Arkansas Workers' Compensation Commission (the Commission), Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) Steven Porch, in Forrest City, St. Francis County, Arkansas.

The Claimant is *Pro Se*, of Marion, Arkansas.

The Respondents were represented by Mr. Guy Alton Wade, Attorney at Law, Little Rock, Arkansas.

I. BACKGROUND

This matter comes before the Commission on a Motion to Dismiss filed by Respondents on September 25, 2025. A hearing on the motion was conducted on December 19, 2025, in Forrest City, Arkansas. Claimant, according to Commission file is *Pro Se*, failed to appear at the hearing.

The Claimant worked for the Respondent/Employer as a seasonal gin laborer. The date for Claimant's alleged injury was on October 29, 2024. This incident was reported to the Respondent/Employer on October 30, 2024. Admitted into evidence was Respondents' Exhibit 1, pleadings, and correspondence, consisting of 11 pages, and Commission Ex. 1, emails, and U.S. Mail return receipts, consisting of 5 pages, *as discussed infra*.

The record reflects on March 26, 2025, a Form AR-C was filed by Claimants then-attorney, Mark Peoples, purporting that Claimant sustained an injury to his right knee in a work-related incident. On April 2, 2025, a Form AR-1 was filed with the Commission noting that Claimant injured his right knee while descending a ladder. On April 2, 2025, a Form AR-2 was filed denying compensability on the grounds that the alleged injury did not occur during employment.

Claimant's then-attorney, Mr. Peoples, filed a Motion to Withdraw as Counsel on August 25, 2025. Mr. Peoples's motion was granted on September 17, 2025. The Respondents filed a motion to dismiss for lack of prosecution on September 25, 2025. The Claimant was sent, on October 1, 2025, notice of the Motion to Dismiss, via certified and regular U.S. Mail, to his last known address. The certified motion notice was claimed by Claimant as noted on the October 10, 2025, return receipt. This notice was also sent regular U.S. Mail and did not return to the Commission. Despite this, the Claimant did not respond to the Motion, in writing, as required. Thus, in accordance with applicable Arkansas law, the Claimant was mailed due and proper legal notice of Respondents' Motion to Dismiss hearing date at his current address of record via the United States Postal Service (USPS), First Class Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested, and regular First-Class Mail, on November 3, 2025. The certified notice was claimed as noted by the November 10, 2025, return receipt. Likewise, the hearing notice sent regular First-Class was not returned to the Commission. The hearing took place on December 19, 2025. And as mentioned before, the Claimant did not show up to the hearing.

II. FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

After reviewing the record as a whole and other matters properly before the Commission, I hereby make the following findings of fact and conclusions of law in accordance with Ark. Code Ann. § 11-9-704 (Repl. 2012):

1. The Commission has jurisdiction over this claim.
2. The Claimant and Respondents both had reasonable notice of the December 19, 2025, hearing.
3. Respondents have proven by the preponderance of the evidence that Claimant has failed to prosecute his claim under 11 C.A.R. §25-110(d) (formerly AWCC Rule 099.13).
4. The Respondents' Motion to Dismiss should be granted.
5. This claim is hereby dismissed without prejudice.

III. DISCUSSION

11 C.A.R. §25-110(d) provides:

Upon meritorious application to the Commission from either party in an action pending before the Commission, requesting that the claim be dismissed for want of prosecution, the Commission may, upon reasonable notice to all parties, enter an order dismissing the claim for want of prosecution.

See generally Johnson v. Triple T Foods, 55 Ark. App. 83, 85, 929 S.W.2d 730 (1996).

Consistent with 11 C.A.R. §25-110(d), the Commission scheduled and conducted a hearing, with reasonable notice, on the Respondents' Motion to Dismiss. The certified hearing notice was claimed by Claimant, per the return postal notice bearing the November 10, 2025, date. Thus, I find by the preponderance of the evidence that reasonable notice was given to the Claimant.

Furthermore, 11 C.A.R. §25-110(d) allows the Commission, upon meritorious application, to dismiss an action pending before it due to a want of prosecution. The Claimant filed his Form AR-C on March 26, 2025. Since then, he has failed to request a bona fide hearing. Therefore, I do find by the preponderance of the evidence that Claimant has failed to prosecute his claim. Thus, Respondents' Motion to Dismiss should be granted.

CONCLUSION

Based on the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law set forth above, Respondents' Motion to Dismiss is hereby granted, and Claimant's claim is dismissed *without prejudice*.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

STEVEN PORCH
Administrative Law Judge