



National Grain and Feed Association Arbitration Decision

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February 21, 2014

CASE NUMBER 2661

Plaintiff: Gavilon Grain, LLC, Omaha, Neb.

Defendant: Buford Lake Planting Partnership / John Seely, Lyon, Miss.

FACTUAL AND PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

The plaintiff, Gavilon Grain, LLC (Gavilon), requested the entry of a default judgment in the amount of \$81,518.39 against the defendant, Buford Lake Planting Partnership / John Seely (Buford). The default judgment is granted for the reasons set forth below.

Gavilon submitted an arbitration complaint to the National Grain and Feed Association (NGFA). The complaint alleged that Buford failed to perform on duly signed Gavilon contract nos. PS5617152, PS5617381 and PS5617747 for 18,000 bushels of U.S. #1 yellow soybeans and contract nos. PC5616707 and PC5617746 for 22,397 bushels of U.S. #2 yellow corn.

Each contract stated, "Governing Trade Rules NAT'L GRAIN & FEED ASSN." Each contract also stated under "ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS - PURCHASE CONTRACT CONFIRMATION" as follows:

3. Unless otherwise provided herein, this Contract shall be subject to the National Grain and Feed Association (NGFA) Trade Rules, which Trade Rules are incorporated herein by reference. The parties agree that the sole forum for resolution of all disagreements or disputes between the parties arising under this Contract or relating to the formation of this Contract shall be arbitration proceedings before NGFA pursuant to NGFA Arbitration Rules. The decision and award determined by such arbitration shall be final and binding upon both parties and judgment upon the award may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof. Copies of the NGFA Trade and Arbitration Rules are available from Seller upon request and are available at www.ngfa.org. This contract is governed by and is to be interpreted pursuant to the laws of the State of Missouri without taking into account its choice of law rules except that the NGFA Trade Rules supersede state law. Buyer hereby submits to and consents to the jurisdiction of the Courts for the State of Missouri and/or the federal courts for the District of Missouri except that the provisions concerning arbitration control over this provision. In the event of a contradiction between the terms set forth in this Contract and the NGFA Trade Rules the terms set forth herein shall control. **The parties hereby waive trial by jury in any and all litigation related to or arising out of this contract or the transactions contemplated hereby.** [Emphasis in original].

Acting upon Gavilon's complaint, NGFA prepared an arbitration services contract and submitted it to Gavilon for execution. By certified mail dated Jan. 22, 2013, NGFA also sent to Buford a letter providing notice of these proceedings with copies of Gavilon's complaint and attachments, as well as the NGFA Trade Rules and Arbitration Rules. The certified mail return receipt confirmed that this mailing to Buford was signed for and received on Jan. 29, 2013.

Upon receipt of the duly executed arbitration services contract from Gavilon, NGFA then sent it with accompanying correspondence to Buford on Sept. 6, 2013. Federal Express confirmed that this mailing was delivered on Sept. 20, 2013.

On Oct. 30, 2013, NGFA sent to Buford another letter by Federal Express delivery. Federal Express confirmed that this mailing was delivered on Oct. 31, 2013. NGFA's letter of Oct. 30, 2013 to Buford specifically provided notice that Sections 5(d) and (e) of the NGFA Arbitration Rules provide for the entry of a default judgment when a party fails to respond to notices from the NGFA regarding an arbitration complaint.

After still not receiving any response from Buford, or any indication that a response was forthcoming, NGFA sent another notice to Buford on Nov. 26, 2013 by Federal Express delivery. This notice further specifically stated as follows:

NGFA Arbitration Rules 5(d) and (e) provide for the entry of a default judgment when a party fails to execute the arbitration contract and pay the service fee within fifteen (15) days. Based upon the lack of any response from you thus far, we must anticipate that you do not intend to respond. *This is our last attempt to elicit a response from you. A default judgment may be entered against you at any time, which the Plaintiff may enforce in a court of law.* [Emphasis in original].

Federal Express delivery confirmed that this mailing was delivered to Buford on Nov. 29, 2013.

NGFA has yet to receive an executed arbitration services contract from Buford, despite the repeated attempts by NGFA to contact Buford.

DEFAULT JUDGMENT

NGFA established jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to the express terms of the contracts and by way of Gavilon's status as a NGFA active member.

Gavilon properly and in a timely manner filed its complaint under NGFA Arbitration Rules Section 5(a). Pursuant to Section 5(b), NGFA then submitted an arbitration services contract to the parties. Sections 5(d) and (e) of the NGFA Arbitration Rules specifically provide for the entry of a default judgment when a party fails to respond to notices from NGFA regarding an arbitration complaint. Buford refused to comply with the NGFA Arbitration Rules, and refused to respond to any requests from NGFA for the executed contract.

NGFA Arbitration Rule Section 5(e) provides for the following:

Where a party fails to pay the arbitration service fee and/or fails to execute the contract for arbitration, the National Secretary may without further submissions by the parties enter a default judgment or such other relief as the National Secretary deems appropriate.

As it appears that Buford made a conscious decision to disregard these arbitration proceedings, pursuant to Section 5(e) of the NGFA Arbitration Rules, the National Secretary finds that entry of default judgment against Buford is proper and warranted.

Therefore, on Jan. 13, 2014, NGFA entered a default judgment against the defendant. The defendant was also advised that NGFA Arbitration Rule Section 5(e) sets forth the requirements and conditions under which, "[a]ny party against whom a default judgment has been entered under this provision may apply for vacation of the default judgment within fifteen (15) days of entry of the default judgment." In this case, the defendant did not apply to vacate the default pursuant to Section 5(e).

THE AWARD

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED THAT:

1. Gavilon Grain, LLC is awarded judgment against Buford Lake Planting Partnership / John Seely for \$81,518.39.
2. Interest on the judgment shall accrue at the statutory rate available for judgments in the applicable jurisdiction from this date until paid in full. This award is not intended to preclude the plaintiff from pursuing an additional award for interest, legal fees or costs in a court of law.

Dated: January 13, 2014

NATIONAL GRAIN AND FEED ASSOCIATION

By: Charles M. Delacruz
National Secretary