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Detainee intends to leave U.S.

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POSTVILLE - Rosa showed up for her first day of work at Agriprocessors at 9:40 a.m. Monday.

Like many people in the United States, her family was feeling the pinch of rising costs for food and fuel. So on Sunday she went to the plant to fill out necessary paperwork. She joined her husband at the kosher meat-processing facility the next day.

About 20 minutes into her first shift, she heard someone yell: "It's immigration!"

Rosa, who did not want her last name published, talked in Spanish about what happened next.

Turning around, she saw federal agents. Rosa stopped working and dropped her helmet, robe, protective sleeves, gloves and scissors, as directed.

Some of the workers were pushed and yelled at, she said, but there also were some agents who were apologetic. They sent the workers into a room, where Rosa said an agent asked her, "Why are you crying?"

She and other women told the female agent they wondered when they would see their children again. A while later, she saw agents put male workers in chains and lead them away.

Federal authorities eventually moved Rosa and other women to a bus, where she sat until 8 p.m. Before letting her go to care for her two young children, Rosa said agents collected her fingerprints, took her picture and asked for names of family members. They also attached an ankle bracelet, which will track her location until her court date.

On Wednesday, three days after the raid, Rosa said she wants to return to her home in Guatemala. But not before she talks with her husband, who she assumes is detained in Waterloo.

"I don't know how long this will last," she said.

For now, Rosa said she is sleeping in her home. But she returns to St. Bridget Catholic Church every day because she has no money to buy food for her children.

Rosa said her 5-year-old daughter wants to stay with her teacher. She also often asks for her father, Rosa said with tears in her eyes.

"I tell her no, because he's gone now. We have to go to Guatemala and see him there," she said.

Though she has a court date, Rosa hopes she can leave for her homeland before then.

"If they won't let us work, why should I wait for them to deport us?" she asked.