



AWC Immigration Reform Outreach Toolkit

Working toward a reliable and skilled workforce for American Agriculture

August 2013

AWC
AGRICULTURE
WORKFORCE COALITION



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Agriculture is a strong advocate for fixing the nation's broken immigration system that can no longer ensure a predictable supply of legal workers to harvest the crops and care for the livestock. Without change in immigration policy, the viability of American agriculture is threatened and global competitiveness of U.S. farmers and ranchers is weakened.

Overview

As members of Congress head to their home districts for August recess, it is important that we as the Agricultural Workforce Coalition maintain our momentum by reaching out both to them and to their constituents to encourage action on immigration reform. We must keep the need for a better system for agriculture on the forefront and continue to articulate the AWC's priorities.

The following toolkit is meant to provide a collection of customizable resources for you to use in reaching local media and their readers, members of Congress and your own members. We have also updated the print ad series and these ads are available for download on the AWC website. Please reach out to media@agworkforcecoalition.org if you need the ads resized for placement in your area publications.

If you have additional needs or questions regarding any of the resources provided, please don't hesitate to reach out. As you are able to secure media placements, events and positive activity, please be sure to share it with the AWC at media@agworkforcecoalition.org so we can monitor activity across the country during recess.

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Media Outreach Tools

Sample email to media

Subject Line: (STATE) Farmers and Rural Communities Will Gain From Immigration Reform

As you report on Congressional action on immigration reform this fall, please keep in mind that this is literally a bread-and-butter issue for your audience. If we do not fix this broken immigration system, the U.S. will be exporting more American ag-related jobs and industries and importing more food products from other nations.

The Agricultural Workforce Coalition and United Farm Workers have developed a landmark agreement to fix the immigration system to the benefit of employers and employees. Now we hope Congress can come to an agreement too.

Our organization is one of more than 70 agricultural groups that comprise the Coalition. A news release about our straightforward recommendation is attached. More information is available at www.agworkforcecoalition.org

For a hometown perspective on agriculture's stake in immigration reform, please call me at (PHONE). I look forward to talking with you.

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Sample Media Pitch

DATE

EDITOR/REPORTER

TITLE

PUBLICATION

Dear (NAME):

Agriculture is a strong advocate for fixing the nation's broken immigration system that can no longer ensure a predictable supply of legal workers to harvest the crops and care for the livestock. Without change in immigration policy, the viability of American agriculture is threatened and global competitiveness of U.S. farmers and ranchers is weakened.

Farmers, ranchers and others are delivering a simple message to members of Congress over the August recess—American agriculture needs immigration reform to address critical labor shortages across the country.

As one of more than 70 organizations that comprise the Agricultural Workforce Coalition, I am requesting an opportunity to share our perspective on immigration reform with your publication. Would you consider a meeting with me and one or two of our organization's farmer-directors so we can explain why immigration reform is a bread-and-butter issue for your readers?

The immigration reform American agriculture is recommending to Congress is straightforward - change the immigration status of current unauthorized farm workers and create a new visa program for future workers.

This recommendation is based on a landmark agreement between the Agricultural Workforce Coalition, which represents employers, and the United Farm Workers, representing employees. Now we are asking Congress to come to an agreement too.

Our recommendation is based on the fact that U.S. agriculture faces a shortage of workers every year. Farmers must rely on foreign-born workers for jobs that U.S. citizens will not take. Between 60 and 70 percent of the existing workforce is unauthorized to work in the U.S. under current immigration law. This can change with a simple two-step process:

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1. Make it possible for experienced farm workers now living and working in the U.S. without legal status to earn an adjustment of immigration status, and
2. Create a new market-based visa program that would ensure farmers a sustainable source of employees as current workers move on to other employment opportunities.

Thank you for your consideration. I will follow up to determine your interest in this timely issue.

Sincerely,

NAME

TITLE

ORGANIZATION

About the Agriculture Workforce Coalition

The Agriculture Workforce Coalition (AWC) brings together organizations representing the diverse needs of agricultural employers across the country. AWC serves as the unified voice of agriculture in the effort to ensure that America's farmers, ranchers and growers have access to a stable and secure workforce. More information is available at www.agworkforcecoalition.org.

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Editorial Board visit talking points

Current State of Immigration Reform Action in Congress

- The Senate's action June 27 in approving comprehensive immigration reform is a landmark achievement in agriculture's effort to ensure that America's farmers and ranchers have access to a legal, skilled and stable workforce.
- As the House of Representatives takes of immigration reform after the August recess, we hope they will keep the needs of agriculture in mind. Our elected representatives have a unique chance to have a positive impact on our country for generations to come.
- The immigration crisis must be addressed through legislative reform that reflects the market-based flexible agreement reached between the Agriculture Workforce Coalition (AWC) and the United Farm Workers (UFW), which includes both a program to provide access to a legal workforce into the future and an adjustment for current experienced unauthorized agricultural workers.

Overview of the Problem

- U.S. agriculture faces a critical shortage of workers every year, as citizens are largely unwilling to engage in these rigorous activities, and guest worker programs are unable to respond to the marketplace.
- Farmers must rely on foreign-born workers for jobs that U.S. citizens will not take. Between 60 and 70 percent of the existing workforce is unauthorized to work in the U.S. under current immigration law.
- A 2012 survey by the California Farm Bureau found that 71 percent of tree fruit growers, and nearly 80 percent of raisin and berry growers, were unable to find an adequate number of employees to prune trees or vines or pick the crop.
- This has been an ongoing problem. In 2008, Texas A&M University reported that 77 percent of vegetable farmers reported scaling back operations. More than 80,000 acres of fresh produce that used to be grown in California have been moved to other countries. Estimates are that thousands of farms could fail and farm income could drop by \$5 - \$9 billion.
- The problem exists for all facets of agriculture, beyond just fruits, vegetables and nuts. A separate Texas A&M study in 2012 focused on dairy, and found that farms using immigrant labor supply more than 3/5 of the milk in the country. Without these employees, economic output would decline by \$22 billion and 133,000 workers would lose their jobs.
- This is a challenge faced by lettuce farmers in California, dairy farmers in upstate New York, tomato growers in northwest Ohio or citrus farmers in Florida.

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- This issue impacts communities far beyond the farm gate. Each of the approximately 2 million hired farm workers in the U.S. supports two or three other jobs downstream in the sales, marketing and transportation sectors.
- If we do not fix this broken immigration system, the U.S. will be exporting more American ag-related jobs and industries and importing more food products from other nations.

AWC Recommended Solution

- The Agricultural Workforce Coalition and United Farm Workers have developed a landmark agreement to fix the immigration system to the benefit of employers and employees. Now we hope Congress can come to an agreement too.
- The reform American agriculture is recommending to Congress is straightforward -- change the immigration status of current unauthorized farm workers, and create a new visa program for future workers.
- This is a simple two-step process:
 1. Make it possible for experienced farm workers now living and working in the U.S. without legal status to earn an adjustment of immigration status, and
 2. Create a new market-based visa program that would ensure farmers a sustainable source of employees as current workers move on to other employment opportunities.
- Reforms to the immigration system can assure that American agriculture has a legal, stable supply of workers, both in the short- and long-term for all types of agriculture.

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Customizable news release – General immigration campaign

Diverse Perspectives, Interests and Agendas Align on Landmark Agreement for Immigration Reform

Ag Workforce Coalition and United Farm Workers Bring a ‘Win-Win’ Solution for Workers and Employers to Congress

LOCATION (Date) – Farmers, ranchers and others are delivering a simple message to members of Congress over the August recess—American agriculture needs immigration reform to address critical labor shortages across the country.

“The reforms we recommend will assure that all types of farmers—both those with seasonal labor needs and those with year-round needs—have a predictable supply of legal workers to harvest the crops and care for the livestock,” **(NAME)** said. **(ORGANIZATION)** is a member of the Agriculture Workforce Coalition **(AWC)**, a national group of organizations representing the diverse needs of agricultural employers working to ensure that America’s farmers, ranchers and growers have access to a stable and secure workforce.

“As the House of Representatives takes up immigration reform this fall, it is crucial that the legislation fixes an already broken system for farmers and their employees,” **(NAME)** said. “The AWC and the United Farm Workers union reached a landmark agreement earlier this year that meets the needs of employers and workers, and now we call on the House to take action that reflects these principles.”

The AWC recommends two immigration reforms critical for agriculture:

- An earned adjustment of immigration status for experienced farm workers now living and working in the U.S. without legal status; and
- A new market-based visa program that would ensure farmers a sustainable source of employees as current workers move on to other employment opportunities.

These recommended reforms are based on the fact that, despite offering to pay significantly higher than minimum wage, U.S. agriculture faces a shortage of workers every year. Citizens are largely unwilling to work in the more than two million rigorous seasonal farm jobs, and current guest worker programs do not meet the needs of the marketplace. So, farmers have come to rely on foreign-born workers. Between 60 and 70 percent of the existing workforce are unauthorized to work in the U.S. under current immigration law.

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“The AWC looks forward to working with members of the House of Representatives as that chamber begins to develop its immigration reform proposals. During the recess, we encourage farmers and agricultural organizations to contact their individual Members of Congress and explain why new immigration legislation must meet agriculture’s current and future labor needs. Without these improvements, many U.S. growers will not be able to harvest their crops and meet the world’s growing appetite for our farm products.” (NAME) said.

About the Agriculture Workforce Coalition

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Recommendations for media follow up

It is a good idea to follow-up with the media after any interviews or editorial board meetings you may participate in. Suggested follow up activities include:

- Thank the reporter/editor for their interest in this topic.
- Offer to answer any questions they may have as they begin work on their piece
- Provide contact information for one or two producers from the area for them to contact. (Be sure to alert these producers ahead of time and provide them with information on the AWC's position)
- Send additional information, such as the July 2013 White House report on the benefits of immigration reform for agriculture.

http://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/USEOPWHPO/2013/07/29/file_attachments/228137/Ag-Rural%2BReport%2B-%2B07292013%2B-%2BEMBARGOED.PDF

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Customizable Op-ed

Our country's immigration system needs work; this is a statement that most Americans, but especially most farmers and ranchers, can heartily agree with. Inaction in Washington has brought us to this point, and it will take action from our elected leaders to start us on a path to a solution. This is especially important as the House of Representatives begins the process of considering immigration legislation over the coming months.

Finding the hired workers they need to run their farms and ranches is a major challenge for many agricultural producers. After all, it does not matter what Mother Nature throws at you if you do not have the help to pick crops or care for animals through good years and bad. This is a challenge faced by lettuce farmers in California, dairy farmers in upstate New York, tomato growers in northwest Ohio or citrus farmers in Florida.

This issue impacts communities far beyond the farm gate. Each of the approximately 2 million hired farm workers in the U.S. supports two or three other jobs downstream in the sales, marketing and transportation sectors.

[Insert any information on the impact that immigration will have in your state or local area.]

This shortage of workers also bumps up against what is an open secret in agriculture today—that of those 2 million hired employees, between 60 and 70 percent are unauthorized to work in the U.S., though these workers typically show employers documents that appear genuine.

Farmers and ranchers want a skilled, stable workforce that they can depend on and that is here in the U.S. legally. Unfortunately, they cannot find it.

Even with the recent recession, farmers still have extreme difficulty finding workers, even when offering to pay significantly more than minimum wage. In many cases, it is not the money that makes these jobs unappealing to many Americans. Rather, the main factor is the seasonal and often transitory nature of the work. Most people do not want a job that last only six weeks; far fewer want to travel across the country from south to north each year following the harvest seasons.

Existing guest worker programs, like the H-2A program, could, in theory, offer an avenue to find workers. Unfortunately, the program has become a bureaucratic nightmare that supplies less than four percent of the workers needed on-farm.

To respond to this need, a group of about 70 organizations representing agricultural employers came together, forming the Agricultural Workforce Coalition (AWC), to speak with one voice and to find a path forward on immigration reform. The AWC also came together with the

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United Farm Workers (UFW) union this past spring to unite both employers and employees behind a proposal to help ensure America's farmers have access to a stable and secure workforce.

We hope that the general principles of this agreement would be carried through in any legislation dealing with agricultural workers in the House. Any program should both deal with current experienced agricultural workers as well as provide for agriculture's future workforce needs.

We urge the House of Representatives to act without delay to enact immigration legislation that will provide a boost to American farmers, consumers and workers.

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Customizable letter to the editor

America's farmers, ranchers and growers need immigration reform that can help ensure that we have the workers to pick crops and care for animals both now and in the future. Time and time again, agricultural producers have learned a hard, simple fact—there are simply not enough Americans willing to work on our farms and ranches. Inaction by Congress is only a recipe for more of the same across the country—more fruit and vegetables left to rot in the fields, more farmers going out of business and more production of our food moving overseas. It's also something that hits across America, since each on-farm job supports three to four more jobs further down the value chain.

I hope that the House of Representatives keeps these facts in mind as they return from recess this fall and begin the process of debating immigration legislation. Getting this issue right is vitally important to the future of agriculture and our elected representatives have a unique chance to have a positive impact on our country for generations to come.

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Customizable news release – Advertising campaign

(ORGANIZATION) Supports Immigration Reform Through Hard-Hitting Ad Series In Washington, D.C.

LOCATION (Date) – America’s farms and ranches are among the most productive in the world, but they have struggled in recent years to find enough workers to pick the crops or take care of the animals. Current programs simply do not work—by most estimates, these programs supply only two to three percent of the workers needed in agriculture. Recognizing the need for a new direction, a group of organizations—representing a broad cross-section of American agriculture—has come together to form the Agriculture Workforce Coalition (AWC). **(ORGANIZATION)** is proudly a member of this important coalition.

As the unified voice of agriculture, AWC is developing proposals to help ensure that farmers and ranchers can find the hired hands they need to work on their operations both now and in the future.

When Congress returns from its August recess, the AWC is advocating that they place immigration reform high among their priorities. As the Senate was debating its version of immigration reform, the coalition ran effective key messages directed to members of the Senate in support of agriculture’s position on immigration.

AWC has purchased advertising in key political publications in Washington, D.C. stating that “Agriculture is the new bright spot in America’s economy. But broken immigration policies are threatening our continued success. Without immigration reform, America will be exporting jobs and industries, not products.” The ads use eye-stopping visuals and headlines pointing out the pitfalls of America losing its agricultural production edge.

For complete information on the Ag Workforce Coalition you can visit www.agworkforcecoalition.org. Copies of the ads are below. For high-resolution copies, please contact the Ag Workforce Coalition at media@agworkforcecoalition.org.

(INSERT STANDARD ORGANIZATION INFORMATION)

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Outsource this?



The
**JOHNSON
DAIRY FARM**
Established 1898

Without House support of immigration reform, the vital jobs and industries that American agriculture supports will disappear forever. The labor situation in agriculture is moving towards a breaking point. We need the House to support legislation to secure a reliable and competent workforce for our nation's farms and ranches. U.S. agriculture faces a critical shortage of workers every year, as U.S. citizens are largely unwilling to take farm work and current visa programs are hopelessly dysfunctional and needlessly bureaucratic. Without workers, our farms and ranches are less competitive globally and less reliable for the American consumer. Two million people are hired each year to work on American farms. And each of these workers supports two to three other employees downstream in jobs like sales, marketing and transportation. Without immigration reform, many of these valuable jobs will leave the country and never return.

Sponsored by the Agriculture Workforce Coalition, ensuring America's farmers, ranchers and growers have access to a stable and secure workforce. The founding members: American Farm Bureau Federation, American Nursery & Landscape Association, Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association, National Council of Agricultural Employers, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, National Milk Producers Federation, USA Farmers, U.S. Apple Association, United Fresh Produce Association, Western Growers Association, Western United Dairywomen. For more information, go to www.agworkforcecoalition.org.



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Without immigration reform,



these will go unpicked,



these will go unharvested,



and jobs will go overseas.

Every job lost in agriculture also puts two to three additional jobs at risk. Let your representative know you support immigration reform legislation to keep American agriculture a growing contributor to our nation's economy. Learn more at www.agworkforcecoalition.org.



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Event Outreach Tools

Example events

Identify agricultural events in your community or state at which media are likely to be in attendance. Contact media prior to the event (sample pitch below) and offer to have a representative of your organization meet them on site for an interview on immigration.

Following are examples of such events:

Agricultural Industry Expositions

Examples:

Aug. 27-29: Farm Progress Show Decatur, IL

Sept. 17-19: Farm Science Review London, OH

State and County Fairs

Examples:

Aug. 16-24: Great Darke County Fair, Greenville, OH

Aug. 30-Sept. 2: Michigan State Fair, Novi, MI

Public Attended Events and Festivals

Example:

Aug. 29-Sept. 2: Michigan Peach Festival, Romeo

Agricultural Association Meetings and Events

Example:

Sept. 19: Great Lakes Autumn Expo (MI Nursery and Landscape Association Event)
Taylor, MI

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Sample News Media E-Mail Pitch

Subject Line: (EVENT) Is Opportunity to Consider How Much Farmers and Rural Communities in (STATE) Will Gain From Immigration Reform

(NAME OF EVENT) provides an opportunity for your audience to learn why the immigration reform being debated this fall in Congress is such an important bread-and-butter issue for (STATE) residents. If we do not fix this broken immigration system, the U.S. will be exporting more American ag-related jobs and industries and importing more food products from other nations.

As one of more than 70 organizations that comprise the Agricultural Workforce Coalition, I am requesting an opportunity to share our perspective on immigration reform with you at (EVENT).

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Thank you for your consideration. I will follow up to determine your interest in this timely issue.

Sincerely,

NAME

TITLE

ORGANIZATION

About the Agriculture Workforce Coalition

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Member or Partner Outreach Tools

Full customizable article

Ag Workforce Coalition Urges Congress to Repair Broken Immigration System

(**ORGANIZATION**) has joined the Agricultural Workforce Coalition (AWC)—a national group of organizations representing the diverse needs of agricultural employers working to ensure that America’s farmers, ranchers and growers have access to a stable and secure workforce.

Together with farmers, ranchers and others, members of the AWC are delivering a simple message to members of Congress over the August recess—American agriculture needs immigration reform to address critical labor shortages across the country.

Members of the AWC have united to seek reforms that will assure that all types of farmers—both those with seasonal labor needs and those with year-round needs—have a predictable supply of legal workers to harvest the crops and care for the livestock. The AWC also reached a landmark agreement with the United Farm Workers earlier this year that meets the needs of employers and workers, and together the groups are calling on Congress to take action that reflects these principles.

The AWC recommends two immigration reforms critical for agriculture:

- An earned adjustment of immigration status for experienced farm workers now living and working in the U.S. without legal status; and
- A new market-based visa program that would ensure farmers a sustainable source of employees as current workers move on to other employment opportunities.

The recommended reforms are based on the fact that, despite offering to pay significantly higher than minimum wage, U.S. agriculture faces a shortage of workers every year. Citizens are largely unwilling to work in the more than two million rigorous seasonal farm jobs, and current guest worker programs do not meet the needs of the marketplace. So, farmers have come to rely on foreign-born workers. Between 60 and 70 percent of the existing workforce are unauthorized to work in the U.S. under current immigration law.

During the recess, please contact your member of Congress and explain why new immigration legislation is needed to meet agriculture’s current and future labor needs. Without these improvements, many U.S. growers will not be able to harvest their crops and meet the world’s growing appetite for our farm products. Visit <http://www.agworkforcecoalition.org/take-action-now/> to take action now.

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Brief customizable article

Ag Workforce Coalition Urges Congress to Repair Broken Immigration System

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