

10/02/2017

The Honorable Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-VA)
2309 Rayburn HOB
Washington D.C. 20515

To Chairman Bob Goodlatte and the Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

We, the undersigned members of the dairy, agriculture, livestock and allied industries, stand together in support of the “Agricultural Guestworker Act of 2017” (AG Act). We applaud the leadership of House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) in working to provide a viable solution for the United States of America’s nourishment-production industry. The AG Act is desperately needed by the agriculture industry that requires a reliable workforce to remain in business and provide the safe, affordable and abundant food supply that American consumers demand.

The dairy, livestock and agriculture industries contribute billions of dollars to the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and provide safe and affordable nutrition, not only to our nation, but across the globe. We work in inclement conditions; wind, rain, heat or snow, because our animals and crops depend on us to deliver our products.

Adequate labor is necessary in order to care for our animals and ensure our crops are harvested in a timely manner heightening the highest quality food products produced in the world. Year after year, the domestic workforce passes on these labor-intensive jobs in favor of more leisurely work, despite increased wages and employee benefit packages.

With the global population projected to reach 10 billion by the year 2050, the agriculture industry is tasked with providing affordable, safe, and abundant nutrition to more individuals than ever before in human history. ***Soon, we will have to make the choice to either import labor or import food if farm employers cannot find anyone to milk the cows, till the fields or harvest the fruit and vegetables.*** Immigrant labor has become crucial in operating our businesses. The agriculture industry drives economic generation by supporting thousands and thousands of jobs that American workers depend upon, after the initial harvest of milk, meat and produce. According to a recent study, 51% of the labor on dairy farms, which produce 79% of our nation’s milk supply, is composed of immigrant labor. If immigrant labor were eliminated, the results would include the following catastrophic results^[1]:

- reduce the U.S. dairy herd by 2.1 million cows
- reduce milk production by 48.4 billion pounds
- increase the retail milk prices by 90.4 percent
- reduce the U.S. economic output by \$32.1 billion
- eliminate an estimated 208,208 jobs

[1] Adcock, Flynn, David Anderson, and Parr Rosson. *The Economic Impacts of Immigrant Labor on U.S.*

Dairy Farms. N.p.: Texas A&M AgriLife Research, 2015.

Our nation cannot afford to eliminate this labor pool, therefore a solution to provide vetted, legal and reliable labor must be established. And we must face the following facts surrounding immigration reform:

1. Immigrant workers want to be legal and have driver's licenses, not citizenship.
2. Immigrants are not stealing domestic workers' jobs in the agriculture industry.
3. The agriculture industry is short of workers and domestic workers chose daily not to apply.
4. The agriculture industry offers many jobs paying above minimum wage. Dairy employers surveyed in Wisconsin are paying, on average \$13 to \$15 an hour starting pay to milk cows.

Our country, and especially our agriculture industry, has been waiting for more than 20 years for positive immigration reform. We commend Chairman Bob Goodlatte's dedication, understanding and ambition to provide a legal guest-worker program that will assist with the current agriculture labor shortages, add many new jobs for domestic workers and spur economic growth.

Our unified Associations and Businesses are asking our elected Representatives and Senators to move the "Agricultural Guestworker Act of 2017" (AG Act) forward in congress immediately. Our future and future generations of farmers depend on our ability to efficiently access the workers needed to provide timely, affordable and safe agricultural products to our growing national and global population.
Sincerely,

American Dairy Coalition
(Representing over 30,000 farmers from across the U.S.)
Agribusiness Council of Indiana, Mark Shublak, IN
California Specialty Crops Council, Gary Van Sickle, CA
Earthmoving Contractors Association of TX, Charles Frerich, TX
Indiana Dairy Producers, Doug Leman, IN
Iowa Institute for Cooperatives, David Holm, IA
Kentucky Dairy Development Council, Maury Cox, KY
Midwest Food Products Association, Nick George, WI
National Aquaculture Association, Paul Zajicek, FL
New York State Veterinary Medical Society, Tim Atkinson, NY
Texas Broiler Council, James Grimm, TX
Texas Egg Council, James Grimm, TX
Texas Forestry Association, Ron Hufford, TX
Texas Grain and Feed Association, Tara Artho, TX
Texas Poultry Federation, James Grimm, TX
Texas Turkey Federation, James Grimm, TX
Western Iowa Dairy Alliance, Evan Metzger, IA
American Foods Group, Steve Van Lannen, WI
DairyBusiness Holstein World, Joel Hastings, W
DPI Global, Mike Cody, CA
Landmark Services Cooperative, Bob Carlson, WI
Luckwaldt AG Inc, Daniel Luckwaldt, WI
MainJoy Unlimited, Michael Melhorn, PA
Nutriad, Inc, Keith Klanderma, IL
Rabo Agrifinance, Arthur Rammell, ID
Reliable Feeders, Frank Brand, TX
Standard Dairy Consultants, Vern Foster, WI
Ah-Zet Dairy, John Van Vliet, ID
Brand West Dairy, Frank Brand, NM
Bristol Dairy Ltd, John & Lois Douglass, OH
Catalpadale Dairy Ltd, John & Lois Douglass, OH
Cedar Springs Dairy Farm, Tom Rahmlow, WI

Coral Hill Dairy, LLC, John & Lois Douglass, KY
Drake Dairy, Amy Drake, WI
Dykstra Dairy, Darin Dykstra, IA
FB Indian Ridge Dairy, Frank Brand, TX
Fertile Ridge Dairy, Gary Sutter, WI
Four Milke Creek Dairy, Jim Kusilek, WI
Frank Brand Dairy, Frank Brand, TX
Holsum Dairies, Bob Nagel, WI
Homestead Dairy, Brian Houin, IN
Jer-Osa Organic Dairy, Jerome Rosa, WI
Lariat Dairy, Frank Brand, TX
Milk Source, Bill Harke, WI
Miltrim Farms, David Trimmer, WI
Milti-Rose Jerseys, Inc, Evan Metzger, IA
Nederend Dairy, Hans Nederend IV, ID
Owens Farms, Wilfred Owens, WI
Royal Flush Dairy, Stephen Pederson, WI
T&T Cattle, Greg Troost, ID
True Farms, Inc, Jeff True, NY
Val-O-Mo Dairy, Steve Weinzirl, WI
VanEss Dairy LLC, Jeremy VanEss, IA
Walmoore Holsteins, Walt Moore, PA
Wayside Dairy LLC, Jeremy Natzke, WI
Weiland Dairy, Roger Weiland, WI
Willcome Farms LLC, Damien willcome, WI
Worthless Dairy, Mike Gough, WI
North Fork Feedyard, Frank Brand, TX
L R Foraging, Frank Brand, TX
Julie Larson, WI
Paul Kueger, WI