Agriculture and Coronavirus in 2021

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New Administration, New Approach

• Executive Order on Protecting Worker Health and Safety.
  • Launch national program for targeted OSHA enforcement related to COVID-19 violations.
  • Direct OSHA to examine if emergency temporary standard is needed for COVID-19 mitigation.
OSHA Findings

- DOL Inspector General Report
  - Claims requirements better protect Americans from exposure to the coronavirus.
- All signs point to OSHA issuing ETS by March 15th deadline.
Travel Limitations

• Proclamation limiting travel from several countries, including South Africa.
  • Approximately 5,000 H-2A employees come from South Africa.
  • Specialized skills.
• Worked with Biden Administration to ensure National Interest Exception applied to H-2A workers from South Africa.
Consulates

• Hearing reports South African consulates are experiencing delays, which means delayed worker arrivals.
• Small percentage of H-2A worker population.
Pandemic Affect on H-2A Arrivals

**Figure 2. H-2A Position Data by Quarter, CY 2019 vs CY 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>CY 2019</th>
<th>CY 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan-Mar</td>
<td>Up 10.2%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr-Jun</td>
<td>Up 2.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jul-Sept</td>
<td>Down 0.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct-Dec</td>
<td>Up 19.8%</td>
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Source: DOL
Takeaways

• Despite the challenges the pandemic has brought to farmers who rely on skilled workers from other countries, H-2A program demand continues to grow.

• South Africa travel limitations are minor compared to the 2020 concerns with the Mexican consulates.
Unemployment Assistance

• DOL issued new guidance that clarifies workers' rights to "refuse employment that will jeopardize their health" and still qualify for jobless aid.
Vaccines

- Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices Prioritization
  - Frontline essential workers in Phase 1b.
  - Large number of frontline workers.
  - State and local authorities can sub-prioritize.
  - Vaccine demand exceeds supply.
Agricultural Worker Vaccine Considerations

- Travel from other countries or other states.
- Second dose complications.
  - Ensuring same brand.
  - Side effects.
Pandemic Shutdowns

• Farmers know about COVID while making planting decisions for 2021.
• Country is trending more open.
• Expect a more stable supply chain.
Questions