

## **FAMILY FARMING AND IMMIGRATION**

### **2018 SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS**

Today, many of our nation's farmers face a daily struggle to identify enough available, qualified, and eligible workers. The precarious environment that employers and workers face is alarming and current administrative actions and policies could decimate our workforce. Congress and the Administration must act to resolve the current labor crisis.

The lack of available labor costs American farmers and ranchers billions of dollars a year that not only threatens farm viability but also consumer access to affordable, domestically-produced food. The only means of addressing domestic labor shortages in agriculture is the H-2A visa program, but it provides only about 10 percent of our labor needs. It is an excessively bureaucratic program with statutory and regulatory restrictions that render it unavailable to many segments of the industry in its current form. While specific regulatory reforms may provide short-term relief to H-2A users, the program cannot serve as the only mechanism to ensure a legal and stable workforce for the entire agricultural industry.

As Congress considers broad components of immigration reform, NFU urges comprehensive and long-term solutions for agriculture and its workforce. Congress must differentiate between guest workers and undocumented residents, find separate solutions for each that are reasonable, compassionate, and resolve the different challenges each face. Congress must also work to positively solve questions related to visa lengths, caps, and at-will flexibility. Focus solely on border security and interior enforcement is unacceptable. Mandatory e-verify without a legislative solution for agriculture will have a devastating impact on agriculture.