

# The American Agriculture Labor Force

The American population and workforce is becoming more diverse and has a growing population of BIPOC population. However, there is still a large discrepancy in the race of farm laborers compared to owners/managers. Additionally, much of our workforce still relies on immigration and a foreign born individuals.



## 1 21.6 MILLION

There are 21.6 million full and part time jobs related to the agricultural and food sector in the United States as of 2017.

## 2 \$14.47 PER HOUR

The average hired agricultural worker earned \$14.47/hour in 2018. This excludes owners/operators of production farms.



## 3 73 PERCENT

Currently, immigrants make up 73% of the agricultural workforce, compared to 17% of the entire American workforce.

## 4 59.4 YEARS

The average age of the principal operator on agricultural operations across America is 59.4 years old (near or past the age of retirement).



## 5 30 PERCENT

Of the foreign born agricultural workforce, 30% have at least a bachelor's degree, offering higher earning jobs and skilled labor.

# The American Agriculture Labor Crisis

The entirety of the United States and much of the world's labor markets are facing shortages following the Covid-19 Pandemic. While the agriculture, food, and natural resources industry is not alone in this challenge, the impact it has on this industry is daunting as it provides the world with the food, fuel, and fiber needed to sustain life.



1

## 56% OF FARMERS

In California, the largest agricultural state, 56% of farmers reported not being able to find enough workers to fulfill operation.

2

## H2A

The H2A program is the main immigration policy for foreign born agricultural workers. However, this program is for temporary work-limiting use for year round agriculture production.



3

## 22 DAYS

One additional challenge with the H2A program is delays. Over 75% of farmers said employees were required to wait for Visas and arrived 22 days after needed.



4

## 7 PERCENT DECLINE

The US Agricultural Labor workforce saw a 7 percent decline in hired workers from 2016 to 2017.



5

## 59,400

According to USDA, between 2020 and 2025 there will be 59,400 jobs available in agriculture that need a college degree with less than half being filled by qualified employees.



Source: "Farm Labor Shortage" AgAmerica Lending. [https://agamerica.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/farm\\_labor\\_shortage\\_digest.pdf](https://agamerica.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/farm_labor_shortage_digest.pdf)

"Employment Opportunities for College Graduates" United State Department of Agriculture. <https://www.purdue.edu/usda/employment/>

# The American Agriculture Labor Solutions

After understanding the labor market and shortages, it is clear we need additional methods to increasing the quantity and quality of our workforce. Below are some options to increase the labor supply, while still focusing on quality of life. However, each has downsides, what do you think might be some of the drawbacks of these solutions?



1

## INCREASE FOREIGN LABOR

Whether through modifications to the H2A or overall immigration reform, additional hands are needed to continue producing food.

2

## INCREASE TECHNOLOGY

Technology allows farmers to be more efficient with their labor and time. Harvesting and management technology are tools for the future.



3

## LOWER LABOR CROPS

Fruits and vegetables are the most labor intensive to produce. Without labor, farmers will move to producing lower labor crops.



4

## INCREASING PAY & BENEFITS

The average age of the principal operator on agricultural operations across America is 59.4 years old (near or past the age of retirement).



5

## INCREASING AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

Simply mix oats, milk, yogurt, and any desired toppings the night before and let it sit in the fridge overnight.

