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WRITTEN TESTIMONY HOUSE JUDICIARY SUB-COMMITTEE ON  
IMMIGRATION AND BORDER SECURITY

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RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING ROOM 2141

Chairman Labrador, Ranking Member Lofgren, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding the H-2A program. I am testifying today about the experiences of my employer, Gebbers Farms, with the H-2A program. Gebbers Farms is a century old family run agricultural business headquartered in Brewster, Washington. We farm thousands of acres along the Columbia River and are one of the largest producers of apples and cherries in the U.S. We also raise livestock and manage thousands of acres of timber. At the height of harvest, we employ more than 2,500 people, including more than 2,000 H-2A employees in our orchards and packing houses.

My childhood upbringing and my employment background give me a unique perspective when looking at the issues relating to the costs of the H2A program, it's complexities, needs, pitfalls and the impacts of not having a better option.

I was born and raised on a small family farm in Wyoming, just east of Yellowstone National Park. Growing up on the farm allowed me to see seasonal workers, mostly Hispanic, who came to care and maintain the sugar beet fields. As a child, I often wondered why immigrant labor was here doing American Jobs that an American could do. This was a belief I would hold for over 20 years until 2002, the year I met my now wife Melanie.

The dating relationship with Melanie nearly unraveled over our differing views on immigration. To her it was personal because, while I grew up on a farm that allowed for harvesting of alfalfa by machine, she grew up on a family farm that consists of approximately 6,000 acres of apples and cherries that have to be harvested by hand. Each of these commodities is

very labor intensive and needs a significant number of seasonal workers, but tree fruit is among the most labor-intensive crops.

To help me understand just how critical labor is in an orchard, early in our relationship Melanie took me out to the farm. The drive ended at a cherry orchard where we were met by one of the farm's seasonal workers. He handed me a bucket and a ladder and said he would start picking at one end of the row and I would start at the other, and we would see if we met in the middle. It was not even close. The seasonal orchard worker worked circles around me. I was trying to prove that Americans can and will do this work. I was able to say yes, I could do it, but I realized very quickly that it was more difficult than it looked and I did not get very far down the row. It is clear that these workers are good at their jobs and are critical to ensuring our farms provide a steady supply of agricultural commodities to the consumer. I ended up marrying Melanie and began working in the family business. I quickly found myself immersed in H-2A issues and efforts to improve the program. This hearing marks nearly 15 years since I began working towards a solution for our broken agricultural immigration system. I know many of you have been working on this issue even longer.

While I may have been working on the issue for the last 15 years, Gebbers Farms has been involved with this issue for more than 75 years since Martha Gebbers built a new apple warehouse in Brewster Washington in 1941. Martha recruited the first Hispanic work force through the Bracero program to operate the new warehouse, work in the orchards, help run the cattle ranch and saw mill during the war years.

After the Immigration Reform and Control Act passed, Gebbers Farms briefly tried the H-2A program to augment the local workforce, but found the program too cumbersome and prone to delays. Over the years, as the company grew so did the need for seasonal agriculture workers. As we have grown, the domestic workforce has not grown at the same pace and we have seen less and less of a domestic labor supply.

Today, Gebbers Farms employs 850 FTE's that accounts for about half of the people in our community. On top of that we need more than 2000 seasonal workers who plant, harvest, and pack apples and cherries in and

around Okanogan County, Washington. Today, we hire the overwhelming majority of our seasonal workforce through the H-2A program. But it was not always this way.

The harsh reality of the limited domestic labor available to work in agriculture became apparent in 2009 when we were subject to an I-9 audit. Within a few years after our audit, at least six other agricultural employers within an 80-mile radius of our farm have been audited. Because of those enforcement efforts, much of the domestic agricultural workforce around Okanogan County, Washington has evaporated.

We received the results of our I-9 audit in December of 2009 that revealed scores of our employees had improperly obtained employment. We had to terminate a large part of our workforce even though we had followed all the procedures put in place by the government to verify the work eligibility of our employees when they were hired.

With the results of the audit, we began the very painful process of hand delivering termination notices to employees on a timeline dictated by the government, with some of the last termination notices being delivered on Christmas Eve. Delivering those termination notices, often to long-term employees, was a painful process that I and rest of the Gebbers family will never forget. And as a result of the audit, we are required to maintain an extensive “do not hire” list in the event any of our terminated former workers reapplies for work.

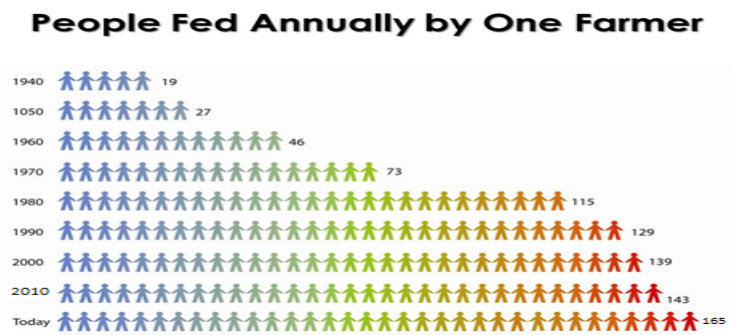
Facing significant labor shortages after all those terminations, Gebbers Farms began recruiting domestic workers from every location possible and worked with the State Workforce Agencies and Department of Labor to try and find all available labor. Gebbers Farms is located in Okanogan County, which is more than 5,300 square miles, but has a population of just about 41,000 people. Thus, we don't have a large pool of workers to recruit domestically.

We thought however we would be fortunate to pick up over 200 workers from the nearby lumber mill that closed right around the time of our audit. We recruited each of those workers because we needed all of them plus

more. Out of the 200 U.S. workers offered employment, 10 took a job, but only 2 remained with the company after more than a few days.

Without an available domestic labor supply, we entered the H-2A program in 2010. We quickly discovered that it is not easy to use a guest worker program that was essentially designed in the 1950's and slightly updated in 1986 considering agricultural production today is nothing like 1950 or even 1986. Yet in 2017, with the current H-2A program we are essentially being asked to farm like the days when Dwight Eisenhower was President.

To better illustrate this point, I have included below a chart from Farmers Feed Us website. It shows that in 1950 one farmer fed 27 people, in the 1980's one farmer fed 115 people, today one farmer feeds 160 people. Agriculture has undergone tremendous changes in the past 60 years. The H2A program has not. Thus, we are struggling to try and make this outdated program fit with modern agriculture. Unfortunately, in the last decade, the government has done precious little to improve the situation.



It is time to update the program.

Following our I-9 audit we discovered that to fulfill our urgent immediate need for workers, the H-2A program was far from ideal. To begin, in the H-2A program you have to start filing paperwork with the State and then DOL 75 days in advance of the date you need workers. And that was just for the first part of the process. Assuming DOL processed all the paperwork on time (a huge assumption), we would also have to get through Homeland Security, and the Department of State. The mountains of paperwork and different forms at each agency, often covering the same information you



put on the last form is inefficient, to say the least. And of some of the requirements imposed by DOL make no sense in 2017. For example, running multiple expensive want ads in newspapers containing inch after inch of fine print mandated by DOL. This expensive, yet worthless, exercise is emblematic of a bureaucracy trapped in a 50-year old perspective of the economy. When was the last time anyone, particularly a farmworker, searched a newspaper looking for a job?

Thus, the workers we needed would not be on the farm for nearly 100 days, assuming there were no delays with any of the four agencies involved in the process. Had our I-9 audit occurred during harvest, our fruit would have gone unpicked, financially devastated the family, our company, and our county where we are by far the largest private employer and tax payer.

Our first year, we hired 300 workers from Jamaica and 750 workers from Mexico for a total 1,150 H-2A workers, not knowing how much domestic labor would be available to complete our workforce needs. With all of the work we had available, and all of our additional outreach for domestic workers, we ended up with only dozens of domestic workers to fill hundreds of available jobs. The second year we increased our application numbers to 1,250. We have had to increase this number each year in the program as fewer and fewer domestic workers are applying for agriculture jobs. This is true even though the wages continue to climb each year. This year we have 750 orchard field workers from Jamaica, 1400 orchard field workers from Mexico and we have added several dozen more workers for our packing house where we were continually short staffed last year.

Fortunately, because we pack our own fruit, we are able to use H-2A workers to supplement our domestic packing house workers. Other growers and packers often do not have this ability due to the rigid requirements about what jobs are eligible for the H-2A program. Congress and DOL need to allow more flexibility for other employers to access the program. In addition to all packing house operations, work in dairies, in sugar cane processing and in forestry should be eligible for H-2A.

The cost of entry into the H-2A program is too high and it keeps going up every year. This keeps many farms, especially smaller growers, out of the

program and trapped in a difficult cycle of trying to locate and hire scarce labor. Unlike virtually everyone else in the economy, farmers do not set the price of their products. Many factors go into the price of agricultural commodities, but a farmer's costs to produce the crop is not one of them.

Gebbers Farms found out very quickly the extremely steep costs to joining the program. H-2A requires employers to house the workers, so we had to build additional housing on the farm. That meant finding land that could be built on that did not violate local zoning laws and could be permitted and then constructed to the government specifications for H-2A housing. This is a significant problem for many growers, particularly in the West where there are extensive land use and housing restrictions.

Once constructed, the housing has to be furnished and inspected in advance by the state. And it has to be approved for each H-2A application every year. This is a time-consuming process with numerous delays. Frequently applications are held up with disagreements between the state and federal DOL over housing inspection issues.

Current DOL regulations require employers to pay all travel costs for H-2A workers. This cost will vary depending how far an H-2A worker has to travel. We are about 60 miles from the Canadian border, which means our workers travel a long distance. Because of the number of workers we employ, we are able to reduce this cost somewhat based on the volume of tickets we purchase, but it is still significant. In addition, employers pay all the costs and government fees associated with the worker obtaining a visa. Altogether, these costs and fees can easily add up to \$1,000 to \$1,500 per worker. These are costs incurred up front before a worker even arrives at the farm. In addition, the applications associated with the program are so extensive and complex, with different forms and filing requirements with four different agencies, that many employers have to hire experts to help them just fill out the paperwork. This adds more costs.

Once work begins, workers are paid a government-mandated wage rate referred to as the Adverse Effective Wage Rate (AEWR). Currently, the Washington State AEWR is \$13.38 per hour (one of the highest in the country) while the state minimum wage is \$11.00 per hour. Although DOL

mandates that we offer that wage rate, DOL can change it in the middle of our contract and we are required to immediately start paying a new rate. The prior Administration routinely changed wage rates with little or no advance notice causing chaos with employers' payroll. These changes also cause us to have to print all new contracts in English and Spanish, change all payroll and wage calculation retroactive to when the change was posted to the DOL website.

It is obviously very expensive to join the H-2A program and we would much rather use a domestic seasonal labor force than incur all of the costs and hassles from the program, but year after year there are fewer domestic seasonal workers who want an agricultural job. Of course, some say we should just pay higher wages. But, I would point out that we are already paying at least \$13.38 per hour (and for much of harvest we pay even more based on piece rates), providing free housing and free transportation. Basically, the only thing the seasonal worker has to pay for is food. Just look around the economy at local retailers and others who need seasonal workers. They do not provide free housing or free transportation and they generally pay about minimum wage. So, if it were about the wages why are people taking other local seasonal jobs at less money vs. the seasonal agricultural opportunity at with higher wages and benefits?

In addition to all the wages and benefits required by the H-2A program, we have also built soccer fields, basketball courts, sand volleyball courts, and recreation rooms with pool tables and other games for workers that stay in our housing. We want our workers to feel at home and have recreational opportunities while working for the farm. And while our workers enjoy these additional benefits, it does not seem to have attracted any more domestic workers.

Due to the nature of our crops, we need seasonal workers at various times throughout the year to perform specific seasonal work. As a result, in order to meet the rigid requirements of the H-2A program, we have to file at least four different applications throughout the year.

Each of the four applications follows the same process and takes not only a considerable amount of the employer's time, but also a considerable

amount of time for each of the state and federal agencies to process the applications. Each application faces potential delays and potential denial. This is another example of the excessive bureaucracy and inflexibility of the program designed for a different era.

When we joined the H-2A program in 2010 we submitted our first completed application and it was approved after correcting a few minor deficiencies. The next year when we applied for the second time, we submitted the same approved text from the prior year and only changed the dates of need, the number of workers, and adjusted the contract to the new wage rates. We had thought because we submitted the exact same contract with no language changes it would quickly be approved. That was not the case; we received deficiency notifications that we had not received in the prior year. This is typical of the way the program currently operates at DOL. Every year you roll the dice when you file an application. Just because you worded it this way and it was approved last year does not mean DOL will approve it the next year.

In fact, it seemed as if the prior Administration relished adopting new interpretations and requirements on different issues every year. This is incredibly costly and inefficient; both for employers and for the government. For employers that have a predictable, recurring need, they should not have to start the process over from scratch every few months. The amount of time and effort and money wasted, not to mention trees killed, in the process of preparing hundreds of pages of application materials – 98% of which is exactly the same as the prior application – is absurd.

Complexities with the H-2A program due to the limitations placed on the program from the definition of agriculture:

In 2014 and 2015, the county where we are based suffered two catastrophic wildfires. The fires destroyed 300 homes consumed more than 750,000 acres; mostly timber lands, including over 10,000 acres of our own timber.

There were two critical impacts on labor resulting from the fires. First, the fires substantially increased the need for seasonal labor for reforestation of the timber lands both public and private. These reforestation workers were both domestic and foreign provided through the H-2B program. The forest service typically hires private contractors who use H-2B workers for reforestation. We too are in need of these H-2B forestry workers, but are in competition with the Forest Service, other employers and even other industries for a limited number of H-2B workers. With the relatively low cap on the number of available H-2B visas, many employers are not able to get the workers needed to replant the trees and perform other critical jobs.

We believe it makes much more sense for forestry work be included within the agricultural visa program. Forestry is regulated by state Department's of agriculture and USDA. It makes no sense that DOL arbitrarily assigns forestry jobs to the H-2B program. Based on the scarcity of H-2B visas and the resulting scarcity of reforestation workers, it will take several seasons to replant all the trees that were burned just in Okanogan County.

Second, the fires took additional local agriculture workers away from the farms and into the construction industry to rebuild homes, further increasing the need for additional H-2A workers in our local communities. In 2013, 11 H-2A applications were filed seeking 2,316 workers in Okanogan County. In 2014, we saw 21 applications seeking 3,141 workers. In 2015, this number rose to 29 applications seeking 3,518 workers.

I have included in Exhibit 1, the seven major counties within Washington State who utilize the H-2A program and you can see the rapid growth of the H-2A program from 2007 – 2015. The Washington State Work Source Agency and the Washington State Housing Authority provided the data for the exhibit. In 2007, 192 seasonal agriculture jobs were approved by DOL for H2A and in 2015 that number rose to 12,032. We are projected to have over 19,000 workers at the end of 2017.

The H-2A program does provide a legal and stable program for workers to enter the country, but the program has not been reliable and has been plagued with delays within DOL. But there are delays at other agencies too. The entire visa system was down at the State Department two years ago

that caused a backup of thousands of workers who could not get visas and their employers were left for, in some cases, weeks without needed labor. Recently, we have seen larger and larger delay times at the border in processing workers when they arrive with their visa in hand. These delays are troubling and indicate it is well past time to reform the program.

The H-2A program is administered by the Department of Labor but if you have an audit on your H-2A contract the very same agency who approved your contract is who performs the audit to determine if you are in compliance or not. This does not seem right.

Today over 94% of our seasonal labor force in Okanogan County is provided by H-2A; this is up from 35% in 2007. As the H-2A numbers have increased, according to our local sheriff, the crime rate at the labor camps across the county has actually decreased. The sheriff's office used to receive two or three calls per week to address issues at the camps throughout the county, and now they receive 1 – 2 calls a month. Sheriff Rodgers told me "we used to go to the camps with our officers for investigations, but now off duty officers are going to the camps to pick up workers to attend church services."

Western Washington University and the Center for Economic and Business Research completed a survey of seasonal workers with in the H-2A program in February of 2016 (Exhibit 2) to determine their spending habits in the local community. The survey showed that all workers share common characteristics and spending habits. Of the 40% of the workers who returned the survey, 34% were from Jamaican and 66% were Hispanic.

The survey details that these workers spent between 21 to 40% of their wages on retail purchases within Okanogan County. These purchases sustain and support our local economy. A manager at one of the local businesses sent me a message late last week that says he has on average 80 H-2A workers come to his store and spend \$85-\$125 a week buying groceries and eating at the restaurant at his store. This would be an average of \$8,400 per week in sales attributable just to H-2A workers at just one business. This is a huge benefit to our local economy, tax base, and provides additional employment in the community.

As stated earlier, Gebbers Farms goes the extra mile and provides soccer fields and other recreation opportunities at the labor camps. At the camps, the H-2A workers have formed soccer leagues and local businesses sponsor the teams for advertisements. They even have a tournament at the end of the year and the trophy stays with the team.

One other item to note is that not only has our community rallied around these H-2A workers, the workers have become part of the community. Each August, the Jamaican H-2A workers host Jamaica Day or Jamaica Independence Day at one of the labor camps at Gebbers Farms (Exhibit 3). The event is open to the public and serves as an annual fundraiser to support charities in Jamaica (Exhibit 4). The workers prepare authentic Jamaican food and play music. The event lasts all day and into the evening. The Jamaican Minister of Labor has been to the event a number of times to celebrate with our community.

The event has grown so large those companies in the area like Western Union, Weinstein Beverage (Pepsi), Harvest Foods, and JWAG (Jamaican Workers of Gebbers Farms) sponsor the event. All money raised goes to provide scholarships to school children back in Jamaica, the elderly or other community projects.

The Jamaican Workers have also created the JWAG Facebook page to communicate with loved ones back home and share experiences of working at Gebbers Farms through photos and stories. The page is also used in the off-season so we as Gebbers Farms can follow what is happening with our workers while they are back home.

As you can see, the H-2A program is necessary and needed not only by employers and our community, but also by the workers and their communities back home. It is important to streamline and improve this program so it works for 21<sup>st</sup> century agriculture and does not remain mired in 1950's assumptions about how people find jobs and how agricultural work is performed.

Washington State Agriculture is the corner stone to the economy (Exhibit 5). Agriculture accounts for 12 percent of the Washington economy with 37,249 farms producing over 300 commodities worth \$51 Billion in over all value with over 160,000 employees. When you add food processing to the equation you add 40,000 more jobs and \$17.05 Billion in value. Washington Agriculture and Processing combined is \$68.05 billion in value producing 200,000 jobs.

Of the 300 commodities Washington ranks number 1 in 11 of those commodities with apples being number 1. \$15.1 Billion in value of these commodities are exported making Washington State the refrigerator to the world. Without access to a legal and stable supply of labor these commodities are at risk, as is our economy at the state and local level.

I look forward to working with the Committee, Congress and the Administration to moving forward with a permanent solution on this issue and please use us as a resource in the future to answer any questions.



# EXHIBIT 1

# H-2A ORDER OPENINGS DATA

## Okanogan County

1	County	Year	Contract Job Orders Filed Under Master Contracts / Individual	Number of Employers Represented	Total Job Openings Filed With Worksource	Un Official Job Openings Certified By DOL For H2A	Licensed Housing Units Per Dept Health	Licensed Housing Beds Per Dept Health	Total Seasonal Workforce Migrant and Local PER WSDA Report	Estimated Migrant Seasonal Workforce Who Cant Return Home Daily Needed Per WSDA Report	Percentage of Migrant Seasonal Workforce Who Can't Return Home Daily Filled By H2A
3	Okanogan	2007	5	2	352	35	32	1583	11800	4000	8.80%
11	Okanogan	2008	5	3	448	45	34	1787	11800	4000	11.20%
19	Okanogan	2009	1	1	80	8	37	2493	11800	4000	2.00%
27	Okanogan	2010	2	1	1200	1164	41	2644	11800	4000	30.00%
35	Okanogan	2011	4	3	1365	1374	43	3187	11800	4000	34.13%
43	Okanogan	2012	9	11	2365	2294	44	3226	11800	4000	59.13%
51	Okanogan	2013	11	12	2316	2247	50	3721	11800	4000	57.90%
59	Okanogan	2014	21	34	3141	3047	57	3633	11800	4000	78.53%
67	Okanogan	2015	29	12	3518	3518	666	3530	11800	4000	87.95%

## Benton/Franklin County

1	County	Year	Contract Job Orders Filed Under Master Contracts / Individual	Number of Employers Represented	Total Job Openings Filed With Worksource	Un Official Job Openings Certified By DOL For H2A	Licensed Housing Units Per Dept Health	Licensed Housing Beds Per Dept Health	Total Seasonal Workforce Migrant and Local PER WSDA Report	Estimated Migrant Seasonal Workforce Who Cant Return Home Daily Needed Per WSDA Report	Percentage of Migrant Seasonal Workforce Who Can't Return Home Daily Filled By H2A
8	Benton/Franklin	2007	0	0	0	0	12	597	17700	5310	0.00%
16	Benton/Franklin	2008	3	3	260	26	13	610	17700	5310	4.90%
24	Benton/Franklin	2009	4	3	150	15	12	622	17700	5310	2.82%
32	Benton/Franklin	2010	0	0	0	0	14	680	17700	5310	0.00%
40	Benton/Franklin	2011	0	0	0	0	15	854	17700	5310	0.00%
48	Benton/Franklin	2012	4	3	290	281	15	864	17700	5310	5.46%
56	Benton/Franklin	2013	4	4	137	133	15	900	17700	5310	2.58%
64	Benton/Franklin	2014	10	9	1416	1060	17	1060	17700	5310	19.96%
72	Benton/Franklin	2015	7	1	427	424	207	2294	17700	5310	8.04%

# Chelan/Douglas County

1	County	Year	Contract Job Orders Filed Under Master Contracts / Individual	Number of Employers Represented	Total Job Openings Filed With Worksource	Un Official Job Openings Certified By DOL For H2A	Licensed Housing Units Per Dept Health	Licensed Housing Beds Per Dept Health	Total Seasonal Workforce Migrant and Local PER WSDA Report	Estimated Migrant Seasonal Workforce Who Cant Return Home Daily Needed Per WSDA Report	Percentage of Migrant Seasonal Workforce Who Can't Return Home Daily Filled By H2A
2	Chelan/Douglas	2007	5	3	721	72	47	3156	23700	7110	10.14%
10	Chelan/Douglas	2008	5	4	958	96	50	3444	23700	7110	13.47%
18	Chelan/Douglas	2009	4	4	285	29	52	3932	23700	7110	4.01%
26	Chelan/Douglas	2010	2	1	271	263	50	3670	23700	7110	3.81%
34	Chelan/Douglas	2011	1	1	280	272	46	3466	23700	7110	3.94%
42	Chelan/Douglas	2012	4	2	455	441	47	3597	23700	7110	6.40%
50	Chelan/Douglas	2013	5	2	631	612	46	3608	23700	7110	8.87%
58	Chelan/Douglas	2014	8	9	846	821	47	3656	23700	7110	11.90%
66	Chelan/Douglas	2015	15	4	1092	1092	748	3668	23700	7110	15.36%

# Grant County

1	County	Year	Contract Job Orders Filed Under Master Contracts / Individual	Number of Employers Represented	Total Job Openings Filed With Worksource	Un Official Job Openings Certified By DOL For H2A	Licensed Housing Units Per Dept Health	Licensed Housing Beds Per Dept Health	Total Seasonal Workforce Migrant and Local PER WSDA Report	Estimated Migrant Seasonal Workforce Who Cant Return Home Daily Needed Per WSDA Report	Percentage of Migrant Seasonal Workforce Who Can't Return Home Daily Filled By H2A
4	Grant	2007	5	4	367	37	24	1176	12800	3840	9.56%
12	Grant	2008	5	6	363	36	25	1310	12800	3840	9.45%
20	Grant	2009	4	3	392	39	27	1558	12800	3840	10.21%
28	Grant	2010	3	0	1147	1113	28	1566	12800	3840	29.87%
36	Grant	2011	0	3	0	0	25	1641	12800	3840	0.00%
44	Grant	2012	9	18	494	479	30	2042	12800	3840	12.86%
52	Grant	2013	18	21	1373	1332	43	2962	12800	3840	35.76%
60	Grant	2014	26	21	3104	2936	47	2936	12800	3840	76.46%
68	Grant	2015	29	7	5153	5150	260	3553	12800	6200	57.31%

# Klickitat County

1	County	Year	Contract Job Orders Filed Under Master Contracts / Individual	Number of Employers Represented	Total Job Openings Filed With Worksource	Un Official Job Openings Certified By DOL For H2A	Licensed Housing Units Per Dept Health	Licensed Housing Beds Per Dept Health	Total Seasonal Workforce Migrant and Local PER WSDA Report	Estimated Migrant Seasonal Workforce Who Cant Return Home Daily Needed Per WSDA Report	Percentage of Migrant Seasonal Workforce Who Can't Return Home Daily Filled By H2A
6	Klickitat	2007	1	1	75	8	3	255	2460	738	10.16%
14	Klickitat	2008	3	3	156	16	6	339	2460	738	21.14%
22	Klickitat	2009	2	2	59	6	6	256	2460	738	7.99%
30	Klickitat	2010	2	2	50	49	6	266	2460	738	6.78%
38	Klickitat	2011	3	2	72	70	5	246	2460	738	9.76%
46	Klickitat	2012	6	3	139	135	5	246	2460	738	18.83%
54	Klickitat	2013	6	4	157	152	5	279	2460	738	21.27%
62	Klickitat	2014	6	3	162	157	6	312	2460	738	21.95%
70	Klickitat	2015	4	3	157	154	86	112	2460	738	15.18%

# Skagit County

1	County	Year	Contract Job Orders Filed Under Master Contracts / Individual	Number of Employers Represented	Total Job Openings Filed With Worksource	Un Official Job Openings Certified By DOL For H2A	Licensed Housing Units Per Dept Health	Licensed Housing Beds Per Dept Health	Total Seasonal Workforce Migrant and Local PER WSDA Report	Estimated Migrant Seasonal Workforce Who Cant Return Home Daily Needed Per WSDA Report	Percentage of Migrant Seasonal Workforce Who Can't Return Home Daily Filled By H2A
9	Skagit	2007	4	4	35	4	17	985	4500	1350	2.59%
17	Skagit	2008	5	5	39	4	17	855	4500	1350	2.89%
25	Skagit	2009	2	2	35	4	16	780	4500	1350	2.59%
33	Skagit	2010	2	1	35	34	15	648	4500	1350	2.59%
41	Skagit	2011	2	2	35	34	12	554	4500	1350	2.59%
49	Skagit	2012	2	1	26	25	12	896	4500	1350	1.93%
57	Skagit	2013	2	3	26	25	12	836	4500	1350	1.93%
65	Skagit	2014	2	1	26	25	13	836	4500	1350	1.93%
73	Skagit	2015	3	0	276	274	142	494	4500	1350	20.44%

# Yakima County

			Contract Job Orders Filed Under Master Contracts / Individual	Number of Employers Represented	Total Job Openings Filed With Worksource	Un Official Job Openings Certified By DOL For H2A	Licensed Housing Units Per Dept Health	Licensed Housing Beds Per Dept Health	Total Seasonal Workforce Migrant and Local PER WSDA	Estimated Migrant Seasonal Workforce Who Cant Return Home Daily Needed Per WSDA Report	Percentage of Migrant Seasonal Workforce Who Can't Return Home Daily Filled By H2A
1	County	Year	Individual	Represented	Worksource	For H2A	Health	Health	Report	Report	H2A
5	Yakima	2007	12	9	363	36	24	1223	33300	9990	3.63%
13	Yakima	2008	14	9	821	82	25	1140	33300	9990	8.22%
21	Yakima	2009	12	9	1093	913	22	913	33300	9990	9.14%
29	Yakima	2010	5	4	231	224	19	719	33300	9990	2.31%
37	Yakima	2011	7	7	1397	1355	16	1653	33300	9990	13.98%
45	Yakima	2012	6	5	1245	1708	14	1208	33300	9990	12.09%
53	Yakima	2013	11	9	1691	1132	18	1132	33300	9990	11.33%
61	Yakima	2014	13	9	704	683	20	1078	33300	9990	7.05%
69	Yakima	2015	22	6	1430	1420	157	1455	33300	9990	14.31%

## EXHIBIT 2

Center for Economic and Business Research

## Economic Impacts of Seasonal Employment

February 9, 2016



Student Author(s)  
Vivian Dang

Produced For:

The Economic Alliance

## Executive Summary

The 2015 Economic Impacts of Seasonal Employment Report is an effort made possible by the Economic Alliance to collect and analyze information related to the economic impact of seasonal workers, especially that of the agricultural workforce and those working in industry sectors related to tourism in Okanogan County. The Center for Economic and Business Research (The Center) located within the College of Business and Economics at Western Washington University is conducting the research and analysis services.

Two Surveys were designed in order to gather relevant data from both employers and workers. The employer survey targeted direct spending and efforts made by employers to support short-term employment that otherwise would not exist. The employer survey integrates questions dealing with business classification, degree to which businesses utilize seasonal and non-seasonal workers, wage levels, benefits provided to seasonal workers, and additional investments made towards supporting the seasonal work staff. The worker survey targeted spending behaviors of seasonal workers and included questions dealing with employment status, permanent residency, future employment status, and monthly spending habits on retail, healthcare, professional services, savings, and familial support. Together, the two surveys were designed to provide data that can be used to forecast changes within specific industry sectors and to understand the economic impacts of seasonal employees. This report lists all questions and reports basic descriptive statistics.

The Center utilized an online survey methodology to obtain responses from employers. The survey was fielded by the client to employers and public agencies. Responses from employees were gathered and reported to the Center by the Okanogan County Farm Bureau and the Okanogan County Horticulture Association.

To familiarize readers with the content of this survey, here we make a few observations regarding the survey results:

### Employer Survey Observations

- There is a significant seasonal workforce present in this locale:
  - 74% of respondents classified their business as agriculture, retail, or tourism related.
  - 83% of all businesses reported employing seasonal workers
    - All businesses classified as agriculture related reported employing seasonal workers while over 80% of businesses classified as retail or tourism related reported employing seasonal workers.
  - 80% of businesses reported paying at least the same wages to seasonal workers as non-seasonal workers.
- Employers have made *some* effort to accommodate the seasonal workforce:
  - 70% of businesses do not provide additional benefits to seasonal workers.
    - For those that did report providing additional benefits, 60% reported spending less than \$500 per seasonal worker.
  - 53% of all employers reported making additional capital investments to accommodate seasonal workers, however, 50% of all businesses have invested less than \$2,500.
    - 80% of agriculture related businesses reported making capital investments



- 33% of retail or tourism related businesses reported making capital investments
- 61% of businesses reported spending less than 80 hours of staff time per year to meet the support needs of their seasonal workforce

#### **Worker Survey Observations**

- All workers share common characteristics and spending habits:
  - All 1,450 respondents...
    - Were full-time, seasonal employees.
      - 34% Jamaican
      - 66% Mexican
    - Considered their permanent house as outside the United States.
    - Have either held a similar or plan on holding a similar position in the future.
    - Reported spending a minority share of their income (between 21 to 40%) on retail purchases, however, these purchases were likely made within the county.
      - Made their purchases in either Brewster, Chelan, or Omak.
    - Spent less than 10% of their monthly income on healthcare.
    - Saved 21% to 40% of their income.
    - Spent 41% to 60% of their income on providing support to out of area family/friends.

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## EXHIBIT 3

JWAG

Jamaican Workers at Gebbers

Presents

JAMAICA

SUNDAY  
AUGUST 21, 2016  
Day

@ MONSE RIGGAN JAMAICAN CAMP 3

Food, Refreshments and Craft Items on Sale  
Authentic Jamaican Cuisine and Entertainment  
Proceeds in Aid of Charity



Jamaican Workers of Gebbers Farms



contact:509-733-4430 for more information

# EXHIBIT 4

# Clarendon students get grants from US's Gebbers Farms

**(All dollar amounts are listed in Jamaican Currency. Exchange rate currently is \$1 US Dollar for \$99 Jamaican)**

Tuesday, May 09, 2017

Thirteen students from Clarendon have received grants for their education from Gebbers Farms and employees in Washington, United States. Last Friday, the students were each presented with a grant of \$50,000 at a ceremony held at the Ministry of Labour and Social Security in Kingston.

The students are among the top performers at their schools and are pursuing studies related to agriculture.

Minister of Labour and Social Security, Shahine Robinson, in her remarks expressed gratitude to the Gebbers Farms and workers for their contribution to the students and also to Jamaica.

“I sincerely thank the farm-workers and their employers for the benevolence and philanthropy in assisting vulnerable Jamaicans and giving back to their country,” she said.

Robinson encouraged the recipients, 10 girls and three boys, to work hard to become certified agriculturalists, which she stressed is important to national development.

Gebbers Farms representative, Bob Grandy, urged the students to complete their studies, as they will have a significant role to play in the sustainability of agricultural development.

“This is a big world with a lot of people. There is going to be a lot of challenges to feed all of us over the next 20 to 50 years. It is so important that we have people involved in agriculture that learn the business and are committed to running agriculture in a sustained way. Of all the things you do, get your education. The more educated you are,

the more successful you will be for yourself and for the people of your country," he implored.

Meanwhile, student at Garvey Maceo High School, 15-year-old Rushane Boothe, said that he was elated when told that he was selected for the grant.

"I am glad because it will help me financially and it will help me to do better to get more [awards]," he said.

The donation came from the proceeds of the farm-workers' annual Jamaica Day activities in Brewster, Washington, where the farm is located, and from contributions from the employers.

A total of \$650,000 was donated, \$400,000 from Gebbers Farms and \$250,000 from the workers. Last year, 10 students from St Ann were awarded. The aim is to give back to vulnerable Jamaicans in all parishes from which the farm-workers are drawn.

Gebbers Farms became involved in the Overseas Employment Programme in 2010 and took approximately 300 workers that year.

In previous years, the Gebbers Farms workers made donations to the Vineyard Town Golden Age Home in Kingston, the Garland Hall Memorial Children's Home in St. James and the Hanbury Children's Home in Manchester.

## EXHIBIT 5



# AGRICULTURE - A Cornerstone of Washington's Economy

Market Value of Crops and Livestock and Number of Farms by County from 2012 Census of Agriculture, USDA

## TOP 10 COMMODITIES:

(MILLIONS OF DOLLARS)

- APPLES - \$2,189
- MILK - \$1,299
- WHEAT - \$1,014
- POTATOES - \$792
- CATTLE/ CALVES - \$706
- HAY - \$675
- CHERRIES - \$385
- GRAPES - \$279
- PEARS - \$225
- HOPS - \$202

### KEY ECONOMIC FACTS ON WASHINGTON AGRICULTURE

- 37,249 farms
- 300 commodities grown
- \$51 billion overall value of food and agriculture industry
- \$10.16 billion market value of crops and livestock
- 12% of Washington's economy
- 160,000 employed in agriculture and food industry
- Ranks No. 1 in U.S. production in 11 commodities:

- Red Raspberries
- Cherries
- Apples
- Grapes
- Apples
- Apples
- Apples
- Apples
- Apples
- Apples
- Apples

- \$15.1 billion in food and agriculture products exported through Washington ports in 2013, third largest total in U.S.

**LEGEND**  
 Top 10 counties in market value are GREEN  
 Leading commodities listed for each county  
 Source: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture 2012 Census of Agriculture  
 USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, Olympia  
 www.nass.usda.gov/wr/030109c400

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# AGRICULTURE - A Cornerstone of Washington's Economy

Food Processing Industry Gross Sales and Employment by County

## KEY ECONOMIC FACTS ON THE FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRY IN WASHINGTON

**\$17.05 billion industry**  
 Employs 40,000 people

- The Washington State Department of Agriculture licenses nearly 3,000:
- Food and milk processors
  - Milk producers
  - Food storage warehouses
  - Custom meat facilities
  - Egg dealers

Many food crops grown by Washington farmers are sold to independent food processors or are used by grower cooperatives for processing.

Washington is:

- 1 The U.S. leader in potatoes grown for processed foods such as french fries.
- 2 The leading U.S. producer of apple juice and a leader of grape and berry juices.
- 3 The second-largest premium wine producer in the U.S. with 850 licensed wineries.

Other major commodities processed include:

- Vegetables and Fruit
- Dairy foods
- Beef
- Seafood products

**LEGEND**  
 Top 10 counties in food processing sales are GOLD. Food processing includes foods and beverages.  
 Source: Department of Revenue and Employment Security Department, 2013 data  
 \*Gross sales or jobs data not available

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**WSDA** Washington State Department of Agriculture  
 Serving Washington agriculture and the public since 1913



## 2015 Top Crops

Washington's 36,000 farms power a diverse agricultural economy, led by the state's apple industry with 70 percent of U.S. production.

Top 10 Commodity	2015 Value of Production
1. Apples	\$ 2.4 (billion)
2. Milk	\$ 1.1 (billion)
3. Cattle	\$ 858 (million)
4. Potatoes	\$ 772 (million)
5. Wheat	\$ 600 (million)
6. Hay	\$ 500 (million)
7. Sweet Cherries	\$ 448 (million)
8. Eggs	\$ 332 (million)
9. Grapes	\$ 297 (million)
10. Hops	\$ 280 (million)

In conjunction with Washington's top 10 crops, we are also a leading producer of many other crops nationally. See the chart below to see how Washington crops stack up against the rest of the nation in production in 2015.

WA Ranks 1st	WA Ranks 2nd	WA Ranks 3rd
Apples	Potatoes	Peppermint Oil
Hops	Niagara Grapes	Lentils
Spearmint Oil	Nectarines	Dried Peas
Wrinkled Seed Peas	Apricots	Tart Cherries
Concord Grapes	All grapes	Asparagus
Sweet Cherries	Prunes/Plums	
Pears	Sweet Corn*	
Green Peas*	Onions	
Blueberries	All Raspberries	
Aquaculture		
Raspberries*		

*\*for processing*