

HORT FLASH!!

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Immigration Reform

Harvest is by the time each of you find energy to read this will either be over or well into the wrap up stages. The pressure of harvest is both exciting and exhausting. As one grower I talked to this week said the market has made this season actually “fun”. While you have all made progress completing your harvest under extreme factors of labor uncertainty I must report the lack of progress that has been made in Washington, D.C.

As of October first the congress has in short completely dropped the ball as far as coming to a definitive direction as to both a guest worker program or for that matter a redesigned immigration program for our people. In the past year both the House and the Senate have drafted proposed pieces of legislation to address the immigration concerns. The opinions that each reported out could not be more diverse. The reality of all of these efforts is that no cooperative piece of legislation was ever drafted to send onto the White House to meet the final test of credibility. Congress has now gone home to address the November elections. The next opportunity for possible immigration reform will not come until after they return in later November. A small window of opportunity will remain to pass some positive legislation for our needs in agriculture. It is almost a certainty that they will not come to any total immigration reform until the new Congress is seated in early 2007.

The pressure is on the Congress to bring this topic to a conclusion. The awareness of this failure to act by the American public will most likely be the catalyst to bring this to a vote. Currently the New York Times ran a full color picture of a farmer standing along side a pile of wasted pears in California. This picture was symbolic of the plight of each farm operation in our nation. As a people we can be quite insensitive but we do not like to be reminded that our food supply is in danger. We each enjoy our ability to enjoy the wide variety and freshness of our foods. The message of how this is impacting our routines is wearing thin on the population. If we do not receive some lame duck legislation before the first of the year all Senate and House drafts will be wiped clean.

You need to prepare for the next step. The reality is you must conduct your business within this current environment. I will be encouraging each of you to take great care to make certain you have excellent records on how to contact your employees for next season. Review the contact information and refine your database to have complete mailing and phone information. I would suggest you encourage those that you wish to return next year to call each of your offices at a predetermined date to ensure that they know of your desire to keep them in your plans. Most of you do not have 800

numbers, so I would suggest you offer that they call you collect. This will be a small investment to keep a valuable employee in touch with you.

Next you will need to determine if you will remain in the same recruiting venue or research such avenues as the H2A program. Talk to other growers and various labor organizations early to plan your program for next year. If you are currently in the H2A program be certain to submit your list of preferred employees to protect their return to your operation. I would encourage all employers to talk to your trusted employees and ask for referrals that they feel would be positive additions to your farm. You might even consider a finders fee to encourage them to be positive recruiters for you while they are home.

In short I am telling you what you all know. The responsibility will be yours to protect your employee recruitment. Take creative and progressive steps now before your help exits to expedite ways you can retain these key people next year. Double-check your records. Have open and frank discussions with each employee as to your desire to have them return next season. Be specific as to how you will assist in making their return to your farm a reality. In short make each exiting employee feel important and express your appreciation for his or her time.

The Congress has not determined how next season will be played out as of yet. Many indicators suggest that they will move to increase border security. The fact that they have not made positive steps is not grounds for you to do the same. You all need to be clear and creative as to how you will retain and improve your labor force. Take action before these key employees leave to increase the probability that you will be able to reconnect next season. No one ever said you could run your business like they do in Washington, DC.

Azinphos Methyl (Guthion) Update

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is nearing its deadline to make a final decision on the future of azinphos methyl. US Apple continues to explore avenues to extend the usage beyond 2010. While EPA has indicated it would make a decision by October 2 that deadline is now in question and it could be postponed until sometime in later October.

Crop Insurance Needs

It is worth mentioning that you should be keeping records that will accurately reflect your production by block and variety. This will be especially important should you be facing some crop insurance claim for this year. Even if you are not you should maintain very complete records so that you will have sound data for yield and block reporting in the future.

You will need to be having a conversation in early November with your crop insurance agent to discuss the level and type of coverage you wish to be covered under for next season. You will need to make this determination before Thanksgiving.

Save the Date for the Becker Forum and the Fruit Expo

This year the Becker Forum (February 12) will be addressing the topic of farm labor. You will want to register for this to be present to learn about the current opportunities for your operation in 2007. The following two days on February 13-14 will have the fruit and vegetable meetings in Syracuse, NY. Greater details will be coming soon.

2005-2006 APPLE PRICE COMPARISON CHART

*Provided by Premier Apple Cooperative, Inc.

Fresh Apple Prices - Comparison of 2006 with 2005														
Market News Service - September 25, 2006 & September 26, 2005														
			Appalachia			Michigan			New York			Washington		
Variety	Pack	Grade	2006	2005	Change	2006	2005	Change	2006	2005	Change	2006	2005	Change
Gala	88 ct	Ex Fan	\$26-27	na		na			na			\$20-22	\$18-20	+\$2.00
	Bag 2 1/2	Ex Fan	\$18-20	\$13-15	+\$5.00	\$15-16	\$13-14	+\$2.00	\$17-18	\$14-15	+\$3.00			
Golden Del	88 ct	Ex Fan	\$26-27	na		na			na			\$22-24	\$16.50	+\$6.50
	Bag 2 1/2	Ex Fan	\$16-18	\$13-14	+\$3.50	\$16-17	\$14	+\$2.50	na	\$14		na		
HoneyCrisp	88 ct	Ex Fan	na	na		\$58-60	\$48-50	+10.00	na	na		na	na	
McIntosh	100 ct	ExFan	na	na		\$24	19-20	+\$4.50	\$23-24	\$20-21	+\$3.00			
	Bag 2 1/2	ExFan	na	na		\$15-16	13-14	+\$2.00	\$15-17	\$13	+\$3.00			
Red Delicious	80 ct	Ex Fan	na	na		na	na		na			\$18-22	\$13-14	\$6.50
	Bag 2 1/2	Ex Fan	\$16-18	\$13-14	+\$3.50	\$16-17	\$13	+\$3.50	na			na	na	
Average change					+\$4.00			+\$2.90			+\$3.00	* = WA Ex Fan		+\$5.00
								(Ex. HoneyCrisp)						

Wow!!! How do you like them apples??

Cornell Apple Breeding Meeting and Fruit Showcase

Tuesday December 5th, 2006

**Jordan Hall Auditorium, NYSAES
Geneva, New York 14532**

Save the date – details to follow

NYSHS

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