



# FARM BUREAU SAN DIEGO COUNTY

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October 12, 2010

The Honorable Duncan D. Hunter  
United States House of Representatives  
Longworth Building No. 1429  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representative Hunter,

We are certain you know that San Diego County farms, like those across the nation, rely on immigrant labor, because few Americans seek farm jobs even in times of high unemployment, like now. Farmers across the country have worked with government agencies to find and hire American workers. These efforts have failed miserably. Now we have seen the United Farm Workers "Take Our Jobs" campaign result in only a handful of unemployed Americans responding.

Labor uncertainty impacts small and large farms alike, who struggle to hire properly documented employees to help grow and harvest their crops or tend livestock. With the problem continuing to be ignored by Congress, farmers are faced with painful decisions. Without a dependable and legal workforce, U.S. production of fruits, vegetables, plants, flowers, meat, and milk will move elsewhere. The results will be very simple: America will export more and more jobs and import more and more farm products.

Congress must begin to tackle the immigration challenge, and the best place to start would be in agriculture because farmers need help now. We urge you to put politics aside and pass AgJOBS (S. 1038, H.R. 2414), a bill that has broad support in Congress, and of industry and labor leaders.

The past 15 years have brought nearly complete destabilization of the farm labor market through unbalanced policies emphasizing only border and worksite enforcement, and an H-2A program that has gone from dysfunctional to unworkable. A legal seasonal workforce is currently inaccessible. This is the definition of a crisis.

It is time to fix a broken system that does not provide workable legal channels for temporary and seasonal foreign workers. Please take action now to ensure that San Diego County's farmers have access to a stable and legal workforce.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Mellano', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael A. Mellano  
President