**2016-2017 USDA Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee
Meeting Date: May 9-10, 2017**
Detailed Recommendations and Statement

**AGRICULTURE LABOR**

1. Overview:
In the absence of comprehensive immigration reform, which continues to be our top priority, we ask that all efforts be made to make H2A as viable as possible for Agriculture. In the current climate of budget reforms we are concerned about any cuts to the Departments that support the H2A Program, which has become essential to our industry. The use of this program has grown exponentially and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. For example, we are concerned that two US consulates in Mexico no longer process H2A visa’s (Guadalajara and Mexico City), which is causing a bottleneck. Delays are already impacting the arrival of workers needed for production and harvest activities.

**Recommendations:**

1. We recommend that the H2A program be fully funded and that staffing be adequate to accommodate the growth of this essential program to meet the workforce needs of our industry.
2. We would further recommend that personnel assigned to H2A processing be deemed essential in the case of a government shutdown.
3. Due to the vital nature of the H2A program to Agriculture, we strongly recommend that no cap on the number of workers authorized under the H2A program be imposed.
4. Overview:

The lack of movement on comprehensive immigration reform has once again highlighted that the only option for skilled agricultural employees living in the United States is H2A. Those that choose to pursue legalizing their status are being denied reentry due to the 3/10 bar.

**Recommendations**:

We recommend that the 3/10 bar be waived for those employees that would like to voluntarily sign up for the H2A program.