

# Georgia Department of Agriculture

## Report on Agriculture Labor

*January 2012*



# Agriculture Labor Survey

- Thirty-six question survey was designed and sent to over 4,000 agriculture producers, processors and other individuals in professions related to agriculture with 813 respondents.





# Major Findings of Survey

1. Study is a good representation of Georgia agriculture with a broad representation of commodities as well as a diverse farm size.
2. Twentyone percent of respondents indicated that fewer than average were hired in 2011 in comparison to the last five years.
3. All of the respondents reported paying full and part-time workers at or above the federal minimum wage.
4. Most respondents indicated using word of mouth to recruit workers.
5. Twentysix percent of respondents reported a loss of income due to the lack of available workers.



# H2A Issues

- Burdensome and cumbersome regulations
- Adverse Wage Rate for employers using H-2A
- “Fifty Percent Rule” requires growers to hire domestic applicants until fifty percent of the H-2A contract has lapsed
- Limited availability, seasonal and temporary workers (excludes year round operations i.e. Dairy, Cotton Ginning, Urban Agriculture)
- Legal vulnerability
- Transportation and housing costs



# Federal Legislation

- Helping Agriculture Receive Verifiable Employees Securely and Temporarily (HARVEST) Act 2011 authored by Senator Saxby Chambliss (R-GA) and was introduced on July 19, 2011.
- American Specialty Agriculture Act of 2011 authored by Representative Lamar Smith (R-TX) introduced on September 7, 2011.
- Legal Agricultural Workforce Act (LAWA) authored Representative Dan Lungren (R-CA) introduced on September 12, 2011.
- The Agriculture Labor Market Reform Act authored by Representative Howard Berman (D-CA) introduced on September 22, 2011.
- Better Agriculture Resources Now (BARN) Act of 2011 authored by Representative Jack Kingston (R-GA) and Representative Lynn Westmoreland (R-GA) introduced on November 16, 2011.



# Guest Worker Program



- In conversations with the U.S. Department of Justice, Georgia Attorney General Sam Olens determined that federal law does **not** permit state creation of a guest worker program.

# Recommendations

## **Recommendation 1:**

Agricultural Guest Worker Reform Must Start at the Federal Level

## **Recommendation 2:**

Improve and Expand Education and Outreach to the Agricultural Industry About State and Federal Labor Recruitment Programs

## **Recommendation 3:**

Solution Oriented Research Should Continue Through 2013



For The Complete Survey Visit  
[www.Agr.Georgia.Gov](http://www.Agr.Georgia.Gov)

Questions?

