

American Dairy Coalition: House Judiciary Committee takes monumental step forward

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The American Dairy Coalition (ADC) and our 30,000 producer members appreciate the perseverance and hard work Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) displayed in the passing of the Agricultural Guestworker Act (AG Act) out of the House Judiciary Committee at today's Committee Markup. Next, the bill will move to a vote in the House of Representatives.

"Adequate labor is essential for our industry to care for our animals and ensure our crops are harvested in a timely manner to yield the highest-quality food products for consumption around the world. Year after year, the domestic workforce continues to forego these labor intensive jobs in favor of more leisurely work, despite increased wages and employee benefit packages," said Laurie Fischer, Founder and CEO of the American Dairy Coalition. The passing of the AG Act out of the Judiciary Committee represents a huge step forward to resolve the desperate labor shortages in the dairy and allied industries. The AG Act provides an avenue for a reliable labor force that the dairy industry requires to provide affordable, nutritious, safe and abundant food to American consumers and throughout the world. The AG Act will create a new visa category, known as the H-2C, and effectively replace the previously impractical H-2A program. This act will provide an option to both seasonal and year-round labor needs, recognizing that not all agriculture jobs are the same or require the same level of skill or experience. The H-2C visa program will be administered by the USDA, which better understands the unique needs of America's farm and ranch operations, and the challenges of

processing raw, perishable commodities. The AG Act will offer workers and employers more choices in their employment arrangements, with more flexibility and less bureaucratic red tape. Furthermore, employers will have to attest that their attempts to hire domestic workers did not yield the results necessary to keep their businesses viable. By ensuring American farmers have the labor they need to operate to their full potential, they will, in turn, create hundreds of thousands of jobs appealing to domestic workers.

The AG Act moved forward additional amendments. ADC is reviewing these amendments now and will continue to work with the Chairman.