



# National Milk Producers Federation

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August 25, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

On behalf of America's dairy farmers and their cooperatives, we thank you for your efforts to protect America's borders and support legal immigration.

NMPF, established in 1916 and based in Arlington, VA, develops and carries out policies that advance the well-being of dairy producers and the cooperatives they own. The members of NMPF's cooperatives produce most of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies. NMPF provides a forum through which dairy farmers and their cooperatives formulate policy on national issues that affect milk production and marketing.

As you may know, dairy farmers -- unlike most other agricultural employers -- cannot use the H-2A agricultural guestworker visa program because of the longtime Department of Labor interpretation of the program's seasonality requirement. This has left dairy farmers, who milk cows 365 days a year, without access to an agricultural guestworker program to supplement their workforce after all domestic worker options are fully exhausted.

The lack of access to a guestworker program makes dairy especially vulnerable in the agricultural labor crisis all of American agriculture has been facing for decades. This crisis has intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery, adding significant difficulty to maintaining a consistent workforce. Yet throughout the pandemic, agricultural workers have proved themselves to be truly "essential," keeping our nation's food supply flowing and people fed.

Our industry is in a fragile state, and immigration raids and audits only serve to increase that fragility, while enhancing a significant problem of family separations. We at NMPF appreciate that the White House and Congress are working on several

Agri-Mark, Inc.  
Associated Milk  
Producers Inc.  
Bongards' Creameries  
California Dairies, Inc.  
Cayuga Marketing  
Cooperative Milk  
Producers Association  
Dairy Farmers of  
America, Inc.  
Ellsworth  
Cooperative Creamery  
FarmFirst Dairy  
Cooperative  
First District Association  
Foremost Farms USA  
Land O'Lakes, Inc.  
Lone Star Milk Producers  
Maryland & Virginia  
Milk Producers  
Cooperative Association  
Michigan Milk  
Producers Association  
Mount Joy Farmers  
Cooperative Association  
Northwest Dairy  
Association  
Oneida-Madison Milk  
Producers Cooperative  
Association  
Prairie Farms Dairy, Inc.  
Scioto Cooperative  
Milk Producers'  
Association  
Select Milk  
Producers, Inc.  
Southeast Milk, Inc.  
Tillamook County  
Creamery Association  
United Dairymen  
of Arizona  
Upstate Niagara  
Cooperative, Inc.

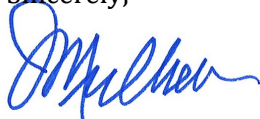
The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Page 2  
August 25, 2021

legislative and regulatory initiatives to provide our workforce permanent legal status and provide a steady flow of future agricultural workers. In the meantime, while our industry recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic and Congress and the White House conclude work on immigration relief, we respectfully request that the Department of Homeland Security -- in particular ICE -- immediately halts the additional audits and raids that may prevent our farmers and farmworkers from taking care of animals and producing the nutritious food essential for pandemic recovery. Importantly, such audits and raids may very well be adding to the harmful family disruptions and separations of hard-working immigrants in our industry. In the current environment, surprise ICE raids and audits not only hurt businesses and rural communities while potentially separating families, they also threaten our ability to continue to feed the nation and the world.

Thank you, again, for your dedication to protecting U.S. borders and promote legal immigration. NMPF remains committed to working with you, other Administration officials, and Congress to resolve one of the most vexing problems facing our industry: how to create a viable, legal framework to address the year-round labor needs of the dairy industry and American agriculture.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this urgent request and I look forward to having an opportunity to meet with you and/or your staff.

Sincerely,



Jim Mulhern  
President & CEO

cc: Secretary Tom Vilsack, USDA  
Secretary Martin Walsh, DOL