

Dairy Business Association  
Immigration Policy Reform

The Wisconsin Dairy Business Association (WIDBA) is a 750 member industry organization comprised of dairy producers, dairy processors, as well as corporate and allied industry supporters.

Wisconsin's dairy economy is dependent in part on a workforce that includes foreign workers. These workers are by and large not displacing American workers.

If the available labor pool decreases due to immigration policies, Wisconsin dairy operations will not be able to maintain current productivity, let alone to modernize and expand.

The current enforcement and deportation of trained dairy workers only aggravates our problems and is not a step toward solution. We need a stable workforce.

If our producer members continue to experience this shortage of available legal immigrant employees, the dairy industry's contributions to the national economy will slow, and proportionally, the cost of food production and cost to consumers will increase.

WIDBA seeks a federal program that allows temporary foreign workers that are employed in dairy agriculture to remain in those jobs on a renewable temporary basis for many years, such as the H2A program currently available for seasonal agriculture.

WIDBA is not seeking a reform policy that leads to citizenship or an amnesty program that itself leads to citizenship. We support the routes to citizenship that are currently in place but believe these programs must be slightly restructured to allow dairy foreign employees to utilize. This type of program will not displace workers because it should require a process for employers to seek out American workers first, but if that position cannot be filled it will allow dairy employers to hire foreign laborers.

The need to address this issue is urgent to prevent a significant upheaval in our industry. Many jobs, not just those at the producer level but also at the processor and distribution levels, rely heavily on the profitability of dairy farms. Today's dairy operations cannot be productive without experienced and reliable laborers.