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ASCL Members,

There are certainly many challenges to Louisiana's sugarcane industry brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Most pressing and of immediate concern are problems related to H2a and H2b guest workers and the difficulties of getting these crucial workers into the country.

Be assured that this issue has been raised to the highest levels of the U.S. Government. Earlier this afternoon, I participated in a conference call with USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue. He expressed that the administration in Washington is fully aware of the critical need to source workers so as to maintain stable food supplies for our country. This problem affects most every commodity.

As of this moment, consulates in Mexico are working to prioritize returning workers with the possibility of waiving the appointment requirement. We have heard that Guatemala is not allowing travel in or out of the country which certainly creates problems for some in our industry. This is a very fluid situation with new announcements continuing to unfold.

The Secretary suggested that individual concerns be addressed to aglabor@usda.gov.

We are certainly a resilient group and have overcome so many challenges in our 223-year history. I have every confidence that we will manage through this one as well. We will keep you posted as new developments unfold.

Be safe and diligent in protecting your family and your workers.

Regards,

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