



New York Farm Bureau • 159 Wolf Road P.O. Box 5330 • Albany, New York 12205 • (518) 436-8495 Fax: (518) 431-5656

August 19, 2010

Honorable Janet Napolitano
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Napolitano:

On behalf of our apple producer- members, I respectfully ask that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) immediately allow Jamaican H-2a workers destined for New York apple farms to be processed and travel to their New York farm employers.

DHS and the State Department are refusing to certify any employer under the H-2a program requesting Jamaican workers and, thereby, disallowing their availability for New York's apple harvest which is underway now. With the harvest season upon us, there is no time for resubmission of H-2a applications and no local labor available to replace worker vacancies.

To deprive our growers of their labor during the harvest is guaranteed to irreparably injure the apple industry, drive apple growers out of business and threaten the viability of our local food system. As the second largest grower in the nation, New York apple production brings over \$260 million to the New York economy with a 27 million bushel crop expected this year. This year's unusually early warm weather has brought an early harvest throughout the state with harvesting activities already underway. Apples are already falling to the ground, with revenue and investment being lost every day that fruit is not picked.

I respectfully ask that DHS allow Jamaican H-2a workers to travel to their New York farm employers whose business survival depends on their timely arrival.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dean E. Norton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dean E. Norton
President
New York Farm Bureau