

Dairy groups anticipate year-round guestworker bill

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

Dairy farmers are eagerly anticipating a House proposal to replace the H-2A visa program for temporary foreign agricultural workers with one that would include permanent workers.

The proposal by House Judiciary Chairman Bob Goodlatte, R-Va., would create a new visa category, H-2C, and was expected to be introduced after Labor Day.

In remarks at a hearing on agricultural guestworkers in July, Goodlatte said the H-2A program is costly, time-consuming and flawed and he's long supported replacing it with a more workable program.

Enumerating the flaws, he noted the lengthy, bureaucratic certification process for employers, forced arti-



Rep. Bob Goodlatte

cially inflated wage rates, the requirement to provide free housing and transportation and exposure to abusive litigation — all of which his proposal addresses.

"Agricultural employers who participate in the H-2A program do so as a matter of last resort ...," he said.

For dairy farmers who need year-round labor, however, the

current program just doesn't apply.

"There are several challenges, the biggest of which is that it is designed to fill the workforce needs of farm employers who require temporary or seasonal work — and dairy farming is not seasonal," said Chris Galen, senior vice president of communications for the National Milk Producers Federation.

"So it's been difficult to try to retrofit the program to the employment environment on dairy farms. Hence the need to develop a new type of guestworker program, which is what we have been doing with Rep. Goodlatte," he said.

NMPF has been working with Goodlatte during the past year to develop an immigration reform bill it can support, he said.

"Our focus has been on ensuring that the needs and concerns of dairy farmers are

adequately addressed in the legislation he intends to offer," he said.

The bill is not yet final, so NMPF won't comment on it until it has the opportunity to examine it closely, he said.

"That said, we look forward to supporting this legislation because it represents a major improvement over the status quo and it will help move the process forward," he said.

The American Dairy Coalition has also been working with Goodlatte and is calling for united support for the proposal, circulating a letter of support and seeking signatures.

"We have waited 20 years for a realistic solution to our industry's labor shortages ... we must make this bill work," said Laurie Fischer, the coalition's CEO.

With important jobs on dairy operations left vacant, farmers are contemplating how

they will sustain and grow their businesses.

Some are considering downsizing, and others are wondering how long they can hang on, she said.

"The consequence of this will be reduced milk production, and the economies of the entire dairy infrastructure will be negatively impacted," she said.

The dairy industry is currently excluded from applying for the H-2A visa due to its 365-day-a-year need for labor.

The H-2C visa is the solution. Goodlatte's bill provides the dairy industry with a visa program that will ensure a viable workforce, she said.

In an email response to Capital Press, a Republican House Judiciary Committee aide verified that Goodlatte plans to introduce legislation soon to replace the H-2A program.

U.S. Wheat on Trump threat: Leaving NAFTA would be 'disastrous'

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

The U.S. resumed efforts to renegotiate a trade deal with Canada and Mexico on Sept. 1, as President Donald Trump has again hinted that he may pull out of the deal.

Trump on Aug. 27 said on his Twitter account that both countries were being "very difficult" while renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement and he "may have to terminate?" In the same tweet, he called NAFTA the "worst trade deal" ever made.

Terminating the deal would be "disastrous" for agriculture and the wheat industry, said Ben Conner, director of policy for U.S. Wheat Associates.

"If the president were to withdraw from NAFTA, I think that would cause a lot of problems in farm country," Conner said. "The president has a lot more negotiating experience than I do, but if they're trying to make counterparts in Canada and Mexico concerned, it also has us alarmed."

In April, it also looked like Trump might pull out of the deal, Conner said. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue and others helped "reverse course" at the time, he said.

"The dynamics that kept that in place, I think, are still the same," he said. "We're still negotiating and the agreement's still extremely important to a lot of U.S. industry, including farm states and a lot of the president's base."

The three countries' negotiators first met in Washington, D.C., early in August. They "were not totally on the same page yet," Conner said.

Conner said the U.S. has not attempted to restart an entire trade agreement before.

"That's effectively what we're talking about with NAFTA," he said. "I guess (it) will be an experiment to see how that changes the negotiating dynamic and the outcome of the agreement."

A lot is at stake for U.S. wheat farmers. Mexico is the crop's largest market, Conner said. NAFTA eliminated market inconsistency and trade barriers, and increased exports into Mexico by 400 percent.

"Without NAFTA, under (World Trade Organization) rules, Mexico can impose tariffs up to 67 percent on wheat, and right now it's duty-free," Conner said. "We're exposed if there's a change in policy in Mexico that we don't have locked in like we do with NAFTA now."

NAFTA has room for improvement, including a commitment from Canada to treat U.S. wheat farmers equally when delivering across the border to a Canadian elevator, according to U.S. Wheat.

"It's 23 years old, there's a lot that can be modernized," Conner said. "The digital economy and all sorts of things that were not in trade agreements back then are part of negotiations now."

The agriculture industry has emphasized a need to "do no harm," in renegotiating the deal.

Other than the localized problem in Canada, "there's not a lot of improvements that can really be made in the North American market," Conner said. "So for us, it's mostly downside risk. We're hoping for that little bit of upside."

Conner would prefer more focus be put on negotiating trade deals with countries in the growing Asia-Pacific region. Trump withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal with 11 other countries in January.

The European Union has reached a tentative agreement with Japan, and other countries are busy negotiating their own trade deals, Conner said.

Small city of firefighters sprouts up overnight on ranch

By CRAIG REED
For the Capital Press

GLIDE, Ore. — The front acreage of the French Creek Ranch made a transition almost overnight on Aug. 9 and 10.

When lightning strikes started multiple fires in the Umpqua National Forest about 30 miles east of this small community, officials were quick to call ranch owner Phil Strader about turning his livestock pasture and hay ground into the Umpqua North Fire Complex Fire Camp.

Strader gave his permission. The cattle that had been grazing in the field were quickly moved to another pasture on the ranch and the next day personnel began to arrive to set up a camp that would provide for a management team, hundreds of front-line firefighters, a helicopter base and its pilots, support staff and supplies, vehicles and equipment for all.

The mission of the fire camp is to contain the complex of fires that had reached almost 32,000 acres as of Tuesday, Sept. 5.

There's close to 100 acres in the two-level pasture camp that is the temporary home of about 1,000 people, most of them firefighters with the rest being management and support staff.

Setting up a fire camp on the ranch is nothing new. Strader said in the last 15 years, this is the eighth or ninth time a fire camp has been set up on the ranch that has been in his family for 95 years.

The ground is leased to the U.S. Forest Service so there is reimbursement for the ranch, but Strader said he also gives permission for the fire camp because it benefits many of his neighbors and their businesses in nearby Glide.



Craig Reed/For the Capital Press

Phil Strader, owner of the French Creek Ranch on the east side of Glide, Ore., stands on the upper level of a pasture that overlooks a fire camp that was established on the ranch to manage the Umpqua North Fire Complex that was started by lightning almost a month ago. Strader said the ranch has been used as a fire camp on several other occasions in the past 15 years.



Craig Reed/For the Capital Press

Colorful pop-up tents that belong to firefighters and fire management staff dot the pastures of the French Creek Ranch on the east side of Glide, Ore.

"If they were to set up the camp farther up into the forest, there would be no economic benefit for this small community," Strader said.

"They're spending a good deal of money fighting these fires so I'd like to see a benefit for the community. It's just a guess, but the local restaurants, stores, gas stations may

do more like a month's worth of business in just a week with the influx of personnel."

On the camp's lower level, there are large tents for sleeping and smaller tents, each with a different purpose, including operations, planning, logistics, human resources, air operations, finance, and medical and safety. There is

also a kitchen that runs the inside length of a semi trailer, a large portable barbecue, a dining area, three or four trailers that offer wash basins and soap to clean up, a couple trailers that offer showers, a laundry service, porta-potties and stacks of supplies such as bottled water, energy drinks, fire retardant pants and shirts, and numerous other items.

The upper level is a helicopter base.

Spread out under the oak trees on both levels are a couple hundred colorful pop-up tents that provide individual private resting places.

"It's right alongside a road (Highway 138), it's near a community, it's close to a (Forest Service) district office," Cheryl Caplan, a spokeswoman for the Umpqua National Forest, said of the benefits of the ranch as a fire camp. "The amenities are really great with electricity and the internet available. Having the two fields allows

us to put a type I heli base next to a type I incident management team and the firefighters. It's unusual to find all that packaged together so close to a national forest."

Kyle Reed, a public information officer with the Douglas Forest Protective Association in Roseburg, said it is of great benefit to know in advance that a landowner will be cooperative and give permission to use his land when a fire camp needs to be established.

"Everything you would need is there or close by and it is easily accessible," Reed said of the ranch.

Strader said fire management officials have expressed their appreciation of his cooperation. He said before any changes have been made to the camp that impacts the ground, officials have checked with him first.

He explained that with vehicles, heavy equipment and hundreds of people using the camp, the ground is impacted.

"Generally they are good about reimbursing the cost for rehabbing the fields," Strader said of the disking and reseeding that must be done after the camp is taken down. Typically, it gets done and there is grass there the next spring."

The ranch is home to 400 mother cows. The ranch's latest crop of calves has been shipped.

While smoke from the fires is hanging low over the area, Strader said he hasn't seen any negative effects on the ranch's cows that are in early gestation of their pregnancies.

"This is probably going to continue until some season ending rain storms in late September or early October," said Strader.

Until those rains, part of his ranch is a fire camp that has the look of a mini city.

Interim director of Oregon Aglink has ag family roots

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

Current staff member Mallory Phelan has been

appointed interim executive director of Oregon Aglink, the nonprofit organization that attempts to help urban Oregonians better

understand agriculture.

Phelan, who turns 30 in September, confirmed she has applied to replace Geoff Horning, who left to become CEO of Oregon Hazelnut Industries. Phelan, who has worked for Oregon Aglink four years, is vice president of operations.

The stated mission of Oregon Aglink is to bridge the

gap between urban and rural Oregonians by helping people better understand where their food and fiber come from.

The organization's activities include placing roadside crop identification signs, which it does in partnership with Oregon Women for Agriculture. Phelan said she is especially proud of Oregon Aglink's "Adopt a Farmer" program, in which schools link up with producers for field trips and presentations. The program has grown from 18 schools and farms a few years ago to 50 this fall.

Phelan grew up working on her family's grass seed farm between Albany and Lebanon in the mid-Willamette Valley. She earned a business administration degree at the University of Portland and at first



Mallory Phelan

had "no intention of working in agriculture," as she put it. She taught English in Peru for eight months before returning to the U.S. and taking what initially was intended as a six-month position at Oregon Aglink.

"It was kind of like coming home," she said. "I didn't realize what I was missing."

Phelan said she most enjoys working with producers and helping them tell their stories

LEGAL

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS GRANT COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY ADVISOR

Grant County is seeking a consultant to monitor natural resource issues of importance to the County and to keep the County Court advised of the issues, their context and assist the County in developing appropriate policy positions. The duties of the County's Natural Resources Policy Advisor will include, but not necessarily be limited to:

1. Coordinating with citizens and public and private agencies on natural resource policy matters;
2. Providing technical and policy support on natural resource policy matters;
3. Preparing policy documents and drafting recommended response alternatives for Court analysis;
4. Reviewing and advising the Court on proposed federal and state legislative and administrative actions that may affect County policies on natural resources;
5. Preparing and recommending policy and technical responses;
6. Develop and present briefing papers;
7. Act as a liaison to federal and state agencies regarding policy development opportunities and assist Court members as they serve in the primary role of policy-implementation with federal and state agencies.

All inquiries should be in written form and directed to Grant County Judge Scott W. Myers at myerssw@grantcounty-or.gov. To be considered, proposals must adhere to the Minimum Proposal Requirements described in the RFP packet and be received by the Grant County Court office, 201 S. Humbolt Street, No. 280, Canyon City OR 97820 no later than 5 pm Wednesday, September 20, 2017. No faxes or electronic transmissions will be accepted. A complete RFP packet may be requested at 541-575-0059 or wrighthl@grantcounty-or.gov.

Legal-36-2-102

LEGAL

PUBLIC LIEN SALE U-STORE SELF STORAGE Salem, Oregon Sun., September 10, 2017 10AM

1501 Hawthorne Ave NE
Keyla Almestica Looney, 2C54;
Jose Anaya, 1H06; Perla Anaid Cabello-Herrera, 1G16; Jillian Kay Collins, 2B21; Danielle Debusk, 2B31; Carmen Rocio Duran Ramirez, RJ14; Steven Fernandez, 2B09; Juan Flores, 2C03; Stacy Ford, 2A10; Cecelia Fuqua, 2C46; Kristina Gonzalez, 2B08; Shea Ann Greaves, 2A50; Austin Greene, 1C40; Cali Guthrie, Y223; Charles D Harris, 1G09; Randall Jordan, 2A77; Vernita M Knell, 2B69; Dustin Leja, Y1-7; Christina Leskowsky, 2A71; Maria de Martinez Hernandez, 1E21; Andrew Meyer, RC07; Nichole Morris, 1F35; Kimberly Munz, Y217; Siplus Ruba, 1G03; Barry A Sindingler, 2D06; Linda Snook, 2C31;

legal-34-3-1/T1D

LEGAL

PUBLIC LIEN SALE U-STORE SELF STORAGE Albany, Oregon Sun, September 10, 2017 1PM 1668 Industrial Way SW

Barry Hovelsrud, J039; Jennifer James, H022; James Kimble, F008; Allyson, E014; Harold Miller, J042; Elizabeth Meyers, J031; Alan Price, H015

legal-34-3-1/T1D