

Ag Groups Call for More Resources to Protect Employees, Communities from Coronavirus

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, September 24, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Washington, D.C. (September 24, 2020)—Over 160 farm, food and agriculture organizations today sent a letter to the White House Coronavirus Task Force calling for the federal government to take additional steps and devote new resources to help farmers, ranchers and growers across the country protect their employees from the novel coronavirus.

“[F]armers continue to do our best to provide a safe workspace for all employees, promoting safety on and off the farm. Across the agriculture sector, employers have instituted best practices including social distancing, enhanced hygiene and sanitation procedures, employee training, and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE),” the letter states. “With the broad strain on PPE availability, testing, and other resources, however, we ask for your help as we continue to promote the health and safety of our farm employees and rural communities.”

Among the actions the groups recommend that the Task Force take are:

- Adapting farmworker housing requirements to facilitate greater social distancing and allow for the use of alternative housing structures;
- Ensuring that COVID-19 testing resources are accessible to agricultural employers and their employees and that results are available in a timely fashion;
- Helping farmers offset the costs of COVID-19 mitigation expenses, while maintaining existing farm programs, by increasing Commodity Credit Corporation funds;
- Prioritize PPE and future vaccine distribution for the food and fiber supply chain;
- Leverage networks, in cooperation with states, counties, associations and community-based non-profits, to address the areas of community exposure risks to our workforce that are outside the occupational setting and ensure care is available and accessible to those who become ill, even in rural communities.

The letter notes that across many of these recommendations, expanding the pandemic response beyond the farm gate and into farming communities will be critical to ensuring the well-being of employees, their families, and their neighbors.

A copy of the letter is available at http://www.agworkforcecoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/d5_AWCLettertoWHCoronavirusTaskForce.pdf.

About the Agriculture Workforce Coalition

The Agriculture Workforce Coalition (AWC) brings together organizations representing the

diverse needs of agricultural employers across the country. AWC serves as the unified voice of agriculture in the effort to ensure that America's farmers, ranchers and growers have access to a stable and secure workforce. For more information, please visit www.agworkforcecoalition.org.
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