



February 7, 2022

**For Immediate Release**

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**NCAE Partners with Labormex to Locate CDC/WHO Approved Vaccines in Mexico**

(Washington, D.C.) The National Council of Agricultural Employers (NCAE) has partnered with longtime member Labormex to locate CDC/WHO approved vaccines in Mexico for H-2A Temporary Workers. Mexico is the largest provider of H-2A Temporary Agricultural Workers to U.S. farms and ranches.

“Last year, NCAE members invested heavily to get farmworkers vaccinated when COVID-19 vaccines became available here in the U.S.,” noted Michael Marsh, President and CEO of NCAE. “However, there are several challenges for American farmers and ranchers with the Biden Administration’s recent requirement that, effective January 22, 2022, all essential workers seeking to transit to temporary seasonal agricultural jobs in the U.S. must first provide proof of being fully vaccinated with a CDC/WHO approved vaccine.”

According to Marsh, “Last season, thousands of workers returned home at the conclusion of their contracts prior to vaccines being made widely available here in the U.S. Even though many temporary workers received the vaccine in clinics set up around the country, not all did. It appears much of the vaccine made available to potential workers in rural areas of Mexico are not CDC/WHO approved vaccines, even though the U.S. donated millions of doses.”

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Last fiscal year, more than 258,000 temporary foreign workers received H-2A visas to fill the more than 317,000 farm and ranch jobs for which no qualified, willing, and available domestic workers could be recruited. This was an increase of approximately 21% in the number of temporary foreign workers employed in the prior fiscal year. Early data from the U.S. Department of Labor indicates FY 2022 will reflect a new record demand for temporary seasonal H-2A workers.

“A consequence of the Administration’s regulation is that supply chain maladies created by the pandemic are likely to be aggravated by this requirement. We have had quite a number of reports of potential workers being frustrated in their attempts to acquire CDC/WHO approved vaccines,” said Marsh. “This is why we have searched for in-country strategies to overcome the challenge that too few approved vaccines have been provided to H-2A eligible workers in Mexico.”

According to Lydia Hock, President of Labormex, “We collect information from the potential employers and connect the workers with Mexican government health services that have access to approved vaccines necessary for transit to the U.S. We’re excited to have the opportunity to partner with NCAE and provide this critical service to America’s farm and ranch employers. Not only is the H-2A program an imperative for necessary agricultural labor, but it also positively transforms the communities from whence these temporary workers live.”

NCAE is the national trade association focusing on agricultural labor issues from the employer’s viewpoint.