Concentration in the H-2A Labor Market: Evidence from Fiscal Year 2025

August 6, 2026

Abstract

The H-2A temporary agricultural worker program certified 400,000 jobs in fiscal year 2025 to be filled by legal guest workers, about 19% of average employment on U.S. crop farms. Over 14,000 employers filed 24,000 applications for H-2A workers in fiscal year 2025, and this study examines the distribution of H-2A jobs across employers, states, and commodities. We find concentration: (1) 600 employers - 5% of all H-2A employers - accounted for two-thirds of certified jobs, (2) five states accounted for half of all H-2A jobs and, and (3) within states, the top five counties account for half or more of H-2A jobs in the state. Farm labor contractors (FLCs) were 8% of H-2A employers but accounted for 43% of H-2A jobs, and a higher share in the states with the most H-2A jobs such as Florida, Georgia, and California. This concentration implies that any changes in H-2A regulations, such as wage rules, housing standards, or recruitment requirements, are likely to have disproportionate effects, falling most heavily on the relatively few large employers, farm labor contractors, and states that account for most H-2A jobs.

Introduction

The H-2A program allows agricultural employers in the United States (US) to hire foreign workers if the Department of Labor (DOL) certifies that sufficient domestic workers are unavailable and the presence of the H-2A workers will not adversely affect US farm workers. The program is limited to seasonal or temporary agricultural labor and generally does not cover year-round, labor-intensive agricultural production such as dairy operations unless they can demonstrate that they have a seasonal or temporary need. Over the past decade, the number of certified H-2A jobs more than quadrupled, reflecting agriculture's growing reliance on legal guest workers (Ayoub, 2026; Win, Rutledge, and Maredia, 2025; Castillo, Martin, and Rutledge, 2024). Several factors help explain this pattern: shrinking unauthorized migration from Mexico following the 2008–2009 recession, tightening immigration enforcement (e.g., state E-Verify mandates and laws criminalizing unauthorized presence), and declining domestic willingness to take on seasonal, arduous farm labor (Passel and Cohn, 2019; Charlton and Kostandini, 2020; Luo and Kostandini, 2022). Additionally, H-2A employment follows a type of path dependence as farm employers and farm labor contractors (FLCs) who gain experience with the program expand their use of the program and share their experiences with other employers (Guan et al., 2015; Simnitt and Onel, 2023). The DOL's H-2A application approval rate held steady at 96% of the applications in both FY2020 and FY2025, suggesting that H-2A growth likely reflects rising demand for the program rather than looser selection criteria.

Most H-2A jobs are in labor-intensive commodities including fruits, vegetables, nursery production, and support activities for crop production, particularly in regions with high seasonal labor demand and limited domestic labor availability. Participation in the H-2A program requires employers to comply with numerous administrative and regulatory requirements, including recruitment procedures, transportation arrangements, housing standards, wage requirements, and petition filing processes. These requirements can create substantial administrative costs, particularly for smaller agricultural operations with limited managerial capacity (Castillo, Martin, and Rutledge, 2022). Consequently, many employers rely on growers associations, lawyers, and

specialized agents to navigate the certification process (Castillo, Martin, and Rutledge, 2022). FLCs, the intermediaries who recruit and supply workers directly to employers, have also become a major driver of H-2A scale and concentration, as shown below (see also Castillo, Martin, and Rutledge, 2024).

Using the DOL's H-2A Disclosure Data (U.S. Department of Labor, 2025), we investigate the concentration of H-2A jobs by geography, employer type, and commodity. We aim to document patterns of H-2A job concentration, examine the role of farm labor contractors in shaping this distribution, and inform key stakeholders about the implications of these patterns. This analysis contributes to the literature on the H-2A program (Ayoub, 2026; Castillo, Martin, and Rutledge, 2022; Castillo, Martin, and Rutledge, 2024) by documenting the extent and structure of H-2A job concentration. Understanding this concentration is essential for anticipating the impacts of future changes to the H-2A program, particularly as intensifying immigration enforcement continues to tighten the supply of undocumented labor and makes legal pathways to agricultural employment increasingly critical. We find that H-2A jobs are highly concentrated among relatively few large employers, states, counties, and commodities. These findings reveal that policy changes to H-2A regulations, such as adjustments to wage rules, housing standards, or recruitment requirements, are likely to have disproportionate effects that will fall most heavily on the relatively few large employers, farm labor contractors, and states that account for most H-2A jobs.

Overview of the H-2A Program in Fiscal Year 2025

In fiscal year (FY) 2025, DOL processed 24,400 H-2A applications, of which 96% were fully or partially certified, resulting in almost 400,000 certified jobs to be filled by H-2A guest workers across 14,000 unique employers (Table 1).[1] As shown in Table 1, H-2A workers are in the US an average of almost six months, making their work equivalent to 188,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) workers.[2,3,4]

The number of certified H-2A jobs has been increasing. Between FY2020 and FY2025, the number of H-2A jobs rose from 275,000 to 400,000, while the share of H-2A workers on US crop farms increased from 13% to 19% (see Figure B1). This increase reflects a genuine rise in H-2A's share of crop farm employment, as total crop farm employment has remained relatively stable over this period (Figure B2).

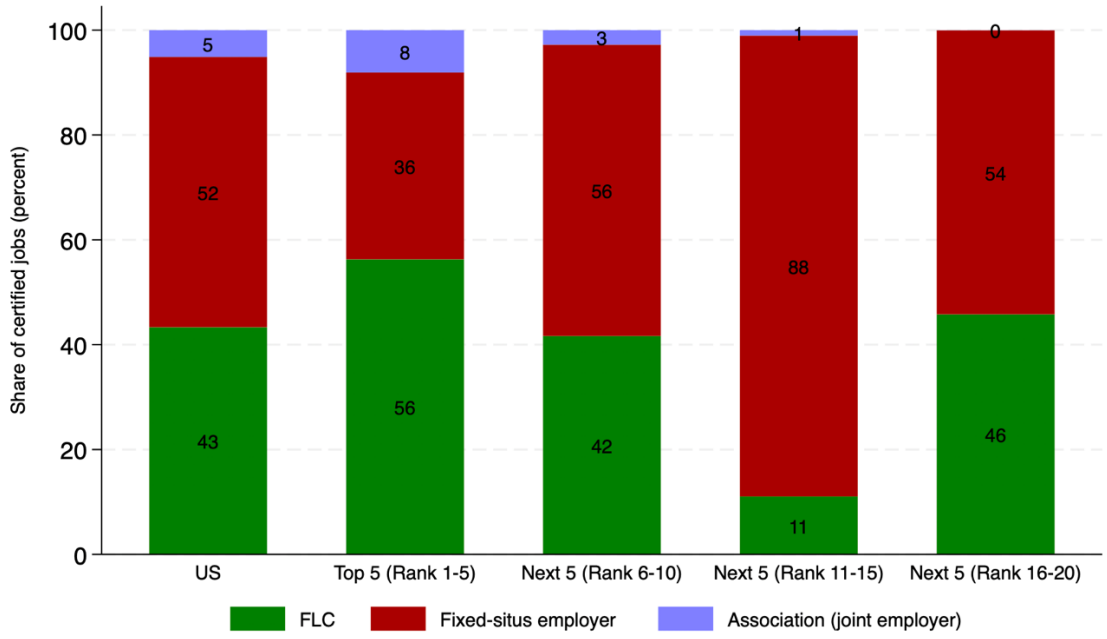
Average H-2A contracts promised 942 hours of work in FY2020 and 1,000 in FY2025, while the average wage offered to H-2A employees rose from approximately $13.16 to $17.37 per hour, raising average contract values from $12,405 to $17,370 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2025). As a

[1] Full certification means that an employer who requests, for example, 100 positions, is approved to fill all 100 H-2A jobs, whereas partial certification means that the employer is approved to fill fewer than requested number of positions.
[2] H-2A full-time equivalent (FTE) employment for a given region is derived by converting each certified job's contract duration into an annual equivalent and then summing across all certified H-2A job offers within that region. For example, if a state has a single contract covering two H-2A positions, each lasting 200 days, total FTE employment would equal 2 × (200/365) = 1.10 FTEs. Contract duration is measured as the total number of calendar days between the contract start and end dates, including weekends. See Appendix A for detailed calculation.
[3] Unique employers are identified by cleaning and standardizing employer names in Stata, a statistical software program, to account for minor differences in employer names entered into the database across applications (e.g., "Foothill Packing, LLC" and "Foothill Packing, L.L.C.").
[4] This study focuses on the 48 contiguous US states.

result, the estimated H-2A wage bill rose from $3.4 billion to $6.9 billion between 2020 and 2025, accounting for an increasing share of total U.S. cash labor expenses, from roughly 9% to 13% (Appendix C).

There are three major types of H-2A employers: fixed-situs employers (individual farms that directly hire workers for their own operations), farm labor contractors (FLCs), and grower associations that can move H-2A workers between member farms (Figure 1). Fixed-situs employers accounted for the majority of H-2A jobs in FY2025, receiving certifications for approximately 52% of all H-2A jobs, followed by FLCs with 43%. Grower associations accounted for the remaining 5% of certified jobs.

Figure 1. Share of certified H-2A jobs (%) by employer type, fiscal year 2025



Source: U.S. Department of Labor (2025), FY2025 H-2A Disclosure Data

Note: FLC = Farm Labor contractor. FLCs are defined following the US Department of Labor definition of labor contractors, referring to entities that recruit, solicit, hire, furnish, or transport agricultural workers on behalf of other employers for compensation. This definition is broader than employers classified solely under NAICS code 115115 and may therefore include entities operating under other industrial classifications. Fixed-situs employers refer to farms or agricultural establishments that directly hire workers for their own agricultural operations and are neither FLCs nor grower associations (joint employers). Top 5, Top 10, Top 15, and Top 20 refer to states ranked by the number of certified H-2A jobs in FY 2025. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding. Top 5 (Rank 1-5): Florida, Georgia, California, Washington, North Carolina ; Next 5 (Rank 6-10): Michigan, Texas, Louisiana, Arizona, New York; Next 5 (Rank 11-15): Arkansas, Idaho, Kentucky, Mississippi, South Carolina; Next 5 (Rank 16-20): Tennessee, Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, North Dakota

Concentration of H-2A jobs by Employer

Some 14,300 employers were certified to employ H-2A workers in FY2025, including just over 1,200 farm labor contractors (FLCs). Although 70% of employers were certified for fewer than 10 H-2A workers, the largest 5% of employers (about 600) accounted for roughly two-thirds of all certified H-2A jobs nationwide.

The role of FLCs varied substantially across states (Figure 1). In the five largest H-2A states, FLCs accounted for 56% of certified H-2A jobs compared to 43% nationally, while fixed-situs employers accounted for just 36% versus 52% nationally. FLCs also accounted for 42% of H-2A jobs in states ranked 6–10, whereas states ranked 11–15 relied primarily on direct-hire employers (88% of jobs). These patterns indicate that the largest H-2A states depend more heavily on labor intermediaries than smaller H-2A states.

Table 1. H-2A applications, jobs, and average contract values by employer type, fiscal year 2025

	US	FLC	Direct Hire (Crop)	Direct Hire (Animal)
Applications processed	24,394	3,934	13,591	4,498
Applications certified	23,301	3,740	13,111	4,204
Jobs certified	396,716	171,893	171,184	19,159
FTE jobs	188,040	68,869	88,348	12,041
Jobs per application	17	46	13	5
Unique employers	14,297	1,215	8,895	3,149
Jobs per employer	28	141	19	6
Average weeks	24.72	20.89	26.91	32.77
Average hours per week	40	38	42	44
Hours per contract	1,000	791	1,130	1,451
Hourly wage ($)	17.37	17.33	17.48	16.64
Average contract value ($)	17,372	13,714	19,754	24,145
H-2A wage bill (million $)	6,892	2,357	3,382	463
Share of H-2A wage bill (%)	100	34	49	7

Source: U.S. Department of Labor (2025), FY2025 H-2A Disclosure Data

Note: FLC = Farm Labor contractor. Approximately 5 percent of applications report wages on a monthly basis; we exclude these observations and focus on hourly wages. The estimates using all applications are shown in Appendix Table D1, and there is no significant difference. Average contract values are estimated using these weighted data so that 100 workers paid $17 is weighted 10 times more than a contract for 10 workers paid $15. Total wage bills are calculated by multiplying the average contract value per job by the total number of certified jobs. Farm labor contractors (FLCs) are defined following the U.S. Department of Labor definition of labor contractors, referring to entities that recruit, solicit, hire, furnish, or transport agricultural workers on behalf of other employers for compensation. This definition is broader than employers classified solely under NAICS code 115115 and may therefore include entities operating under other industrial classifications. Direct hire (crop) refers to fixed-situs employers in NAICS 111 that directly hire workers for their own agricultural operations and are neither FLCs nor grower associations (joint employers). Direct hire (animal) refers to fixed-situs employers in NAICS 112.

FLC applications were substantially larger than those of direct-hire employers, averaging 46 certified workers per application compared to 13 for direct-hire crop employers and 5 for direct-hire animal employers. FLC contracts were also shorter, averaging 21 weeks (790 hours), compared with 1,130 hours for direct-hire crop employers and 1,450 hours for direct-hire animal employers, although hourly wage rates were broadly similar.

These differences in contract duration and hours mean that average contract values vary substantially across employer types. Although animal production employers paid somewhat lower hourly wages, they offered more hours, resulting in higher average contract values. FLC contracts averaged $13,700 per worker, compared to nearly $19,800 for direct-hire crop employers and $24,200 for direct-hire animal employers.

FLCs accounted for $2.4 billion in H-2A wage expenditures in FY2025, while direct-hire crop employers accounted for $3.4 billion and direct-hire animal employers accounted for $470 million. These figures represented approximately 34%, 49%, and 7% of the total H-2A wage bill, respectively.

Concentration of H-2A Jobs by Geography

H-2A employment in FY2025 exhibited substantial geographic concentration. The top five H-2A employing states accounted for about 195,000 certified H-2A jobs or roughly 50% of total H-2A employment (Table 2). The next five states accounted for an additional 18% of H-2A jobs. Together, the top 10 states represented roughly two-thirds of all H-2A employment nationwide.

Table 2. H-2A applications, jobs, and average contract values by top states, fiscal year 2025

	US	Top 5 states (Rank 1-5)	Next 5 states (Rank 6-10)	Next 5 states (Rank 11-15)	Next 5 states (Rank 16-20)
Applications processed	24,394	4,293	4,865	4,110	3,345
Applications certified	23,301	4,038	4,702	3,923	3,275
Jobs certified	396,716	195,362	71,153	37,111	27,512
FTE jobs	188,040	85,651	34,977	19,396	13,052
Jobs per application	17	48	15	9	8
Unique employers	14,297	1,666	3,149	2,803	2,376
Jobs per employer	28	117	23	13	12
Average weeks	24.72	22.86	25.63	27.25	24.74
Average hours per week	40	38	41	44	42
Hours per contract	1,000	871	1,057	1,194	1,037
Hourly wage ($)	17.37	17.35	16.97	15.58	18.76
Average contract value ($)	17,372	15,111	17,930	18,602	19,442
H-2A wage bill (million $)	6,892	2,952	1,276	690	535
Share of H-2A wage bill (%)	100	43	19	10	8

Source: U.S. Department of Labor (2025), FY2025 H-2A Disclosure Data

Note: US = United States. Top 5, Top 10, Top 15, and Top 20 refer to states ranked by the number of certified H-2A jobs in FY2025. Approximately 5 percent of applications report wages on a monthly basis; we exclude these observations and focus on hourly wages. The estimates using all applications are shown in Appendix Table D2, and there is no significant difference. Average contract weeks, hours per week and hourly wages are weighted by the number of workers certified. Average contract values are estimated using this weighted data so that 100 workers paid $17 is weighted 10 times more than a contract for 10 workers paid $15. Total wage bills are calculated by multiplying the average contract value per job by the total number of certified jobs. Values shown in the table may not exactly match when multiplied due to rounding. Top 5 (Rank 1-5): Florida, Georgia, California, Washington, North Carolina; Next 5 (Rank 6-10): Michigan, Texas, Louisiana, Arizona, New York; Next 5 (Rank 11-15): Arkansas, Idaho, Kentucky, Mississippi, South Carolina; Next 5 (Rank 16-20): Tennessee, Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, North Dakota

Supplementary analysis in Appendix E shows that this pattern has changed only modestly over time. The top five states accounted for 51% of total H-2A jobs in FY2020 and 49% in FY2025, while the top 10 states collectively accounted for more than two-thirds throughout (Figure E1). The composition of these leading states has remained largely unchanged over the last decade (Table E1).

Although the top five states accounted for half of all H-2A jobs, they represented only 17% of certified applications because of the much larger scale of operations. Employers in these states averaged 48 jobs per application and 117 jobs per employer, compared with national averages of 17 and 28, respectively (Table 2). Contracts in the top five states were also shorter, averaging 23 weeks (871 hours) and about $15,000 per worker, compared with 25 weeks (1,000 hours) and $17,000 nationally. By contrast, states with fewer H-2A jobs had smaller applications but longer contracts, resulting in average contract values ranging from $18,000 to nearly $19,500. These patterns suggest that the largest H-2A states rely on high-volume, shorter-duration seasonal labor, while smaller H-2A states employ fewer workers for longer periods.

The concentration of H-2A employment also translated into substantial concentration in labor expenditures. The estimated H-2A wage bill in FY2025 was $6.9 billion nationwide; the top ten states accounted for two-thirds of total H-2A wage expenditures, consistent with their share of certified jobs. This concentration in labor expenditures implies that changes in program costs will have disproportionately large fiscal effects on the handful of states where H-2A use is concentrated. For example, Rutledge, Martin, and Hall (2026) find that DOL's new AEWR methodology, announced in October 2025, is expected to save California employers over $100 million in 2026, with roughly $63 million concentrated in just the top five counties. Future research could extend this analysis to other high-use states and explore other H-2A-associated costs, such as how housing requirements shape labor expenditures.

Concentration of H-2A Jobs by Commodity

H-2A employment is concentrated in labor-intensive commodities (Table 3). Support activities for crop production accounted for the largest share of H-2A employment (158,800 jobs, 40%), followed by vegetables and melons (63,700 jobs, 16%) and fruit and tree nuts (58,700 jobs, 15%). Excluding crop support activities, labor-intensive crop sectors accounted for one-third of all H-2A jobs, while crop agriculture overall represented three-quarters of H-2A employment.

The largest commodity cluster was Washington fruit and tree nut production, which accounted for 40% of all H-2A jobs in that sector, with nearly 90% concentrated in just five counties. Vegetable and melon production was similarly concentrated in Florida and Georgia, each accounting for 16–18% of sector employment, with about two-thirds of jobs located in the top five counties. Crop support activities were also geographically concentrated, with Florida (25%), California (15%), and Georgia (15%) together accounting for more than half of all H-2A jobs in the sector.

The top five H-2A states in greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture accounted for 35% of H-2A jobs in this sector. Similar to crop production, H-2A use in animal production is also geographically concentrated, with Louisiana, Texas, California, Montana, and Colorado accounting for 45% of jobs (Tables 3 and F1). Most of the H-2A jobs certified for animal production were for cattle, sheep, goat, and aquaculture operations (Figure F1). County-level concentration within states was

substantial, with the top five counties accounting for between 47% and 76% of state H-2A jobs in greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture production and between 14% and 67% in animal production and support activities (Table 3).

Table 3. H-2A Jobs by Commodity (Direct Hire Employers and FLCs)

Industry	Industry H-2A jobs	Top 5 states	State H-2A jobs	State share (%)	Top 5 counties in state	Top 5 county share (%)
Vegetable & Melon	63,727	Florida	11,246	18	Hendry, Palm Beach, Collier, Manatee, Hardee	66
		Georgia	10,300	16	Colquitt, Tattnall, Decatur, Toombs, Lowndes	60
		California	5,176	8	Imperial, Fresno, San Diego, Monterey, Santa Barbara	78
		Mississippi	3,274	5	Calhoun, Chickasaw, George, Webster, Pontotoc	95
		Nevada	2,955	5	Lyon, Humboldt, Douglas, Clark	100
Fruit & Tree Nut	58,691	Washington	23,836	41	Grant, Yakima, Chelan, Franklin, Okanogan	88
		New York	6,493	11	Wayne, Orleans, Clinton, Ulster, Columbia	83
		Georgia	6,421	11	Appling, Coffee, Bacon, Atkinson, Clinch	58
		California	4,264	7	Siskiyou, Lassen, Monterey, Santa Barbara, Sonoma	77
		Florida	3,638	6	Hillsborough, Hardee, Manatee, Lake, Marion	86
Support Activities for Crop Production	158,827	Florida	39,272	25	Hillsborough, Manatee, Polk, Palm Beach, Hendry	65
		California	23,478	15	Monterey, Santa Barbara, Fresno, Ventura, Riverside	65
		Georgia	23,050	15	Bacon, Coffee, Clinch, Tift, Tattnall	47
		Arizona	10,569	7	Yuma, Maricopa, Cochise, Pinal, Graham	97
		North Carolina	9,469	6	Sampson, Wilson, Bladen, Henderson, Greene	59
Greenhouse, Nursery & Floriculture	21,482	Texas	2,072	10	Lee, Waller, Bexar, Cherokee, Bastrop	47
		Ohio	1,523	7	Erie, Lake, Lorain, Geauga, Clark	76
		North Carolina	1,411	7	Sampson, Ashe, Alleghany, Cabarrus, Alamance	61
		Florida	1,254	6	Lake, Highlands, Orange, Miami-Dade, Volusia	56
		Georgia	1,080	5	McDuffie, Berrien, Evans, Paulding, Peach	52
Animal Production & Support Activities	19,891	Louisiana	3,585	18	Acadia, Jefferson Davis, Evangeline, Avoyelles, Vermilion	67
		Texas	2,238	11	Pecos, Trinity, Matagorda, Liberty, Brazoria	14
		California	1,258	6	Kern, Solano, Fresno, Placer, Tulare	49
		Montana	1,067	5	Beaverhead, Richland, Yellowstone, Blaine, Madison	37
		Idaho	1,063	5	Gooding, Twin Falls, Minidoka, Jefferson, Bingham	51

Source: U.S. Department of Labor (2025), FY2025 H-2A Disclosure Data

Note: The information in this Table reflects H-2A jobs requested by commodity for both direct-hire employers and FLCs. Farm labor contractors (FLCs) are defined following the U.S. Department of Labor definition of labor contractors, referring to entities that recruit, solicit, hire, furnish, or transport agricultural workers on behalf of other employers for compensation. This definition is broader than employers classified solely under NAICS code 115115 and may therefore include entities operating under other industrial classifications. In FY2025, 87% of FLCs reported H-2A jobs under crop-support activities rather than a specific commodity, compared to only 5% of direct-hire employers (see Appendix H); as a result, the support-activities figures shown above substantially reflect FLC activity. Vegetable and melon farms represent NAICS 1112; fruit and tree nuts, NAICS 1113; greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture, NAICS 1114; animal production and support activities, NAICS 112 and 1152; and support activities for crop production, NAICS 1151. Top five states and counties are ranked by the number of certified H-2A jobs in FY2025 within each industry. Where fewer than five counties are listed, H-2A employment in that industry was reported in fewer than five counties within the state.

Some of the concentration of H-2A jobs across states partly reflects differences in the number of counties. For example, Georgia has 159 counties, North Carolina 100, Florida 67, California 58, and Washington 39. Nevertheless, even after accounting for these differences, H-2A employment remains highly localized within a relatively small number of agricultural regions and counties.

This persistent geographic concentration is consistent with the underlying geography of labor-intensive, seasonal crop production. Fruits and vegetables are themselves concentrated in a small number of growing regions and counties (Figure G1), whose narrow, predictable harvest windows

generate large, time-sensitive labor demand that is difficult to meet with local labor or mechanization, resulting in H-2A use clustering where these crops are grown. Some regions may still rely on H-2A more heavily than others with similar production, possibly reflecting path dependence or network effects among growers, a channel we do not evaluate directly in this study but flag as a potential topic for future research.

Appendix Figure H1 also shows how commodity composition differs by employer type. FLCs are concentrated in crop support activities (87%), reflecting their role as labor intermediaries rather than farm operators. More than half of fixed-situs employers' requests are for labor-intensive crops such as vegetables, melons, fruits, and tree nuts, tying their H-2A use closely to specialty crop production. By contrast, 91% of association requests fall outside these categories — 70% classified under the association's own organizational NAICS code (8139) — suggesting associations, like FLCs, serve multiple employers rather than a single commodity. Together, these patterns show that intermediary employers organize H-2A labor around their multi-employer function, while fixed-situs employers' use tracks the crops they grow.

Conclusions

This report analyzes the structure and concentration of H-2A employment in FY2025 using US Department of Labor disclosure data. We find that H-2A employment is highly concentrated by geography, employer type, and commodity. The five leading H-2A states accounted for half of all certified H-2A jobs and more than 40% of the H-2A wage bill, with employment further concentrated in a small number of counties. Labor-intensive crop sectors accounted for one-third of all H-2A positions, and farm labor contractors (FLCs) represented more than half of H-2A employment in the five largest H-2A states.

H-2A employment was also concentrated among a relatively small group of employers: although 70% of employers were certified for fewer than 10 H-2A workers, the largest 5% of employers accounted for two-thirds of all certified H-2A jobs. This concentration suggests economies of scale in recruiting, housing, transportation, and regulatory compliance, allowing larger farmers and FLCs to manage the administrative requirements of the H-2A program more efficiently than smaller employers.

One caveat of the H-2A program is that contracts generally cannot exceed 10 months, putting year-round operations such as dairy largely off-limits and leaving these employers reliant on workers already in the United States, including individuals who do not have legal work authorization (Castillo, Martin, and Rutledge, 2022). Consistent with this constraint, animal-production contracts already average 33 weeks — the longest of any employer type — and are less FLC-intermediated than crop production, leaving this sector more exposed than crop producers to a shrinking unauthorized labor supply with no comparable legal alternative.

The findings from this study suggest that the modern H-2A program increasingly operates through concentrated networks of large employers, labor contractors, and geographically clustered agricultural production systems. As a result, changes in H-2A regulations, administrative procedures, or labor market conditions, such as increases in wage rules, housing standards, or recruitment and filing requirements, will disproportionately affect the relatively small number of large employers, farm labor contractors, and states, where H-2A employment is concentrated.

The rising use of H-2A labor between 2020 and 2025 is consistent with tightening domestic farm labor supply. DOL certified 96% of H-2A applications in FY2025, so denials account for only a small share of requests — but this cannot capture demand from employers who never apply, whether due to administrative costs or other program requirements, so the true scale of unmet farm labor demand cannot be inferred from this data alone. Whether unmet demand is more acute in states already reliant on H-2A, or in labor-intensive states and commodities with comparatively low H-2A adoption, is a question beyond this study's scope, but an important direction for future research. Readers seeking a more detailed understanding of the H-2A program may consult Castillo et al. (2021) on the growth of H-2A labor between FY2010 and FY2019, and Castillo, Martin, and Rutledge (2022) for further detail on H-2A labor use by sector and geography in FY2020.

References

Ayoub, Samantha. (2026). H-2A Program Use Continues to Soar. *American Farm Bureau Federation Market Intel*. https://www.fb.org/market-intel/h-2a-program-use-continues-to-soar

Castillo, M., Simnitt, S., Gregory, A., & Minor, T. (2021). *Examining the Growth in Seasonal Agricultural H-2A Labor.* USDA Economic Research Service Economic Information Bulletin No.226. https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/102014

Castillo, M., Martin, P., & Rutledge, Z. (2022). *The H-2A Temporary Agricultural Worker Program in 2020.* USDA Economic Research Service Economic Information Bulletin No.238. https://ers.usda.gov/sites/default/files/_laserfiche/publications/104606/EIB-238.pdf?v=70203

Castillo, M., Martin, P., & Rutledge, Z. (2024). Whither the H-2A Visa Program: Expansion and Concentration. *Choices* 39 (1): 1–9. https://www.choicesmagazine.org/choices-magazine/submitted-articles/whither-the-h-2a-visa-program-expansion-and-concentration

Charlton, D., & Kostandini, G. (2021). Can Technology Compensate for a Labor Shortage? Effects of 287(g) Immigration Policies on the U.S. Dairy Industry. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, *103*(1), 70–89. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajae.12125

Guan, Z., Wu, F., Roka, F., & Whidden, A. (2015). Agricultural Labor and Immigration Reform. *Choices* 30 (4).

Giri, A.K., & Subedi, D. (2025). Labor and Interest Expenses of American Farms and Ranches. *Choices* 40 (4).

Luo, T., Kostandini, G., & Jordan, J. L. (2023). Stringent immigration enforcement and the farm sector: Evidence from E-Verify adoption across states. *Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy*, *45*(2), 1211–1232. https://doi.org/10.1002/aepp.13269

Passel, J., & Cohn, D. (2019). Mexicans Decline to Less Than Half the U.S. Unauthorized Immigrant Population for the First Time. *Pew Research Center.* *https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/06/12/us-unauthorized-immigrant-population-2017/*

Rutledge, Z., Martin, P., & Hall, M. (2026). *H-2A Changes Could Reduce H-2A Wages by $100 Million in 2026.* University of California Giannini Foundation of Agricultural Economics. ARE Update 29(4): 9-11.

Simnitt, S. M., & Onel, G. (2023). Earnings differentials between H-2A and unauthorized citrus harvesters in Florida. *Agricultural and Resource Economics Review*, *52*(3), 547–562. https://doi.org/10.1017/age.2023.14

U.S. Department of Labor. (2025). *H-2A Disclosure Data, FY2025* [Data set]. U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration (ETA). Retrieved from: https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/foreign-labor/performance

Win, M. T., Rutledge, Z., & Maredia, M. K. (2025). Labor shortages and farmer adaptation strategies. *Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy*, *47*(3), 896–913. https://doi.org/10.1002/aepp.13527