

## Labor Shortages

- Dramatic change in the number of applicants for ag jobs
- People will attend training and not show up again
  - Lack of work ethic
- Consumers are buying cheap imported goods even though they can buy produce grown in CA for slightly more
- People that live in urban areas (Vacaville, Sacramento) do not want to work in the agriculture industry
- There is a stigma that ag jobs are “dirty work”
  - People have no interest in agriculture
- Some workers do not want to risk benefits and do not work as much as is needed from them
- During harvest, if workers do not get the hours they want they will leave and work for somebody else.
- Outside the harvest season, they get paid as much as an unemployment check, so they prefer to collect the check instead of having to work.
- People are 2-3 generations removed from the farm
  - Some people don't even know where their food comes from
- Solutions:
  - Buy local/domestic
  - Farmers will automate as much as possible
  - Bi-crop
    - The entire state shifts to only growing 2-3 things
- Regulations that impact farmers and their workers
  - Ag overtime- some farmers can't afford the overtime, especially during harvest
  - Heat prevention regulations- 10 minute breaks every hours when temperatures reach 100 farenheight or more
    - Bell pepper growers have moved to Mexico or Arizona
- California is a hostile environment for business owners
- 60% of farmers cost is labor
  - No room for profit
- Consumers are not buying quality and are choosing price instead
- Organic produce
  - Stores are designating entire areas of their store to products that are labeled organic
  - Almonds- organic almonds are difficult to get net yield to obtain a profit
  - Food safety/ food conscious consumers want more “good” food without paying the price
- Hydroponic/aquaponics
  - High production costs may not be a possible solution
  - Technical jobs- robotics and engineering required to shift to this industry
- Have to make ag jobs appeal to young people

- Seasonal workers as a solution?
  - Process is very difficult
  - These programs are heavily used in rural areas because they do not have the population locally to connect local employees with jobs
- Long term outlook
  - Less labor intensive crops
  - No variety
  - Grow for market (local area)
  - Automated crops that can only be grown in CA or very specialized crops