

Let's imagine....

A business is launched in your area by people you know. The business offers to solve problems for you by doing these things:

Connect you with

1. Provide you with steady (ideally year-round) farm work at up to 40 hours per week, and overtime for all hours worked over 40 if it becomes necessary.
2. An opportunity to experience work at more than one farm operation while centralizing the hiring and administrative aspects (paperwork, basic safety training, timesheets, requests for time off, pay stubs) to a central office.
3. A professional human resources experience including processes for filing complaints, getting assistance with dispute resolution, and handling payroll issues.
4. Ready availability of workers' compensation and unemployment insurance no matter the size or location of the farm on which you work.

You would still need to provide training in the specific operations of your farm. Your receipt of workers would be subject to availability, and to rules about when and how you request workers.

Take a moment to reflect.

As an employee, would you choose to work with Entity X? In other words, would Entity X provide value to you?

Particularly when it comes to overtime, is the potential to receive time and a half for all hours worked over 40 of value to you? What if it is unlikely Entity X would ask you to work overtime?

Is unemployment benefits of value to you? Would you draw on those benefits?

We are interested in your thoughts on each aspect of the value proposed.

Ownership and Control

Let's say that you had the opportunity to influence the organization and start-up of Entity X. For example, you could assist in creating this enterprise- how workers are recruited, how they are hired and what they are paid, etc. You would shape the process for how and when a farm business requests workers, how those workers are allocated, the extent of training provided, etc. Of course, you'd do that in cooperation with other participating farm workers, the benefit being that you'd be more likely to get your needs met.

Last, let's say that the business model was profitable- that it took in more money with hourly fees to producers than it spent on wages and overhead. This could be possible in a few different scenarios such as achieving economy of scale or serving a related market like landscaping businesses. Workers may have the opportunity to benefit from that profitability in two ways.

Take another chance to reflect. Might that be of value to you? Or no?

Logistics....

Entity X would likely need to comply with federal and state OSHA requirements. This means that as an employee, you would need to

- Engage in additional training on farm safety, provided by Entity X
- Follow reporting procedures for injuries
- Wear personal protective equipment as required by law

Entity X would also have to register with the federal government as a farm labor contractor go through additional paperwork verifications including:

- Verifying that employees have been provided with written information about workers compensation insurance and the specific conditions of the work they will perform on your farm
- Posting information on your farm about worker rights and legal protections
- Ensuring that the business is properly paying workers on time and paying overtime if you become aware that a worker is not being properly paid

Would these logistics have any bearing on your willingness to work for or be involved in the organization of Entity X?

Take a few more moments to reflect. We look forward to hearing your detailed thoughts in our focus group!