

AG ISSUES UPDATE

Edited by Sara Hricko

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USApple Updates

USDA to Purchase \$35 Million in Fresh Apples

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced today that it intends to purchase up to \$35 million of fresh apples for distribution through nutrition assistance programs (such as food banks) across the country.

USApple plays an active role in helping ensure these purchases deliver maximum impact. We conduct market update webinars for USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) staff and survey major apple-producing states to report the varieties and sizes most available. This coordination helps USDA stretch its dollars further, reaching more Americans and doing the most good for the apple industry.

The fresh apple purchase will be made through Section 32 of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1935. Section 32 allows USDA to purchase surplus commodities and distribute them through nutrition programs, better aligning supply with demand while strengthening agricultural markets.

As one of just five commodities selected in today's announcement, apples are a key part of Secretary Rollins' initiative to support U.S. agriculture.

Future information, including solicitation amendments and award notices, will be published on the Selling Food to USDA page on the AMS website

Other Pertinent Articles on Immigration:

H-2A Application Costs Jump 198% in Two Years

Applying for certifications and visas for H-2A temporary agricultural workers is the beginning of a long list of requirements for farmers who cannot find enough U.S. workers. Farmers who are unable to find domestic farmworkers may petition the U.S. government to grant foreign workers

temporary work visas. This process requires interactions with three different federal agencies, all with independent application processes and, of course, corresponding fees.

Despite workers being required to apply for their visas themselves, H-2A employers bear the responsibility for paying or reimbursing all application fees associated with H-2A employment. In recent years, rapid increases to agency fees have hit farmer’s margins in nearly every step of the H-2A filing process. These fee increases are the latest in a long line of costly updates to H-2A employer requirements, most notably mandated wages that are increasing much faster than domestic wages or inflation. These costs rack up as farmers are waiting on much needed farmworkers during time sensitive planting and harvesting seasons when an extra day of administrative delays could mean the difference between a perfect or lost crop, and each additional dollar could threaten the farm’s financial future.

H-2A Application Costs		
Expense	Cost	Occurrence
Employment Certification (<i>DOL</i>)	\$100 \$10	per certification per employee
I-129 Filing Fee (<i>USCIS</i>)	\$760-\$1,690	per 25 employees
Visa Application (<i>State</i>)	\$205	per employee
Visa Integrity Fee (<i>DHS</i>)	at least \$250	per employee
Border Stamp (<i>USCIS</i>)	\$24	per employee
TOTAL	at least \$1,349	for 1 employee

-MarketIntel By Samantha Ayoub 8.14.25