



## **Utah Farm Bureau Backs Immigration Reform Legislation**

**June 26, 2007 –Sandy, UTAH** – The United States immigration system is broken. Is the Senate’s immigration reform compromise perfect? No, but the status quo is not acceptable.

Utah Farm Bureau Federation President Leland Hogan is asking Utah’s United States Senators Orrin Hatch and Bob Bennett to support the Senate’s bipartisan immigration package and allow for continued Congressional debate. Recognizing how divisive the issue is, without immediate Senate action, it could be years before policymakers take up immigration reform again.

“Of all the sectors of the U.S. economy, agriculture is the most dependent on immigrant and seasonal labor,” Hogan, a Stockton, Utah farmer noted. “Utah Farm Bureau is asking for support of the comprehensive immigration reform package to strengthen border security, address workplace enforcement and provide a workable guest worker program.”

Farm Bureau is concerned that failure to reform U.S. immigration law, including a comprehensive guest-worker provision, could leave many industries including agriculture without a stable, legal workforce. Utah’s low unemployment rate means agriculture is already experiencing labor shortages and we are concerned it will only get worse as food harvest demands increase. Utah’s fruit and vegetable growers, dairy farmers, food processors, nursery industry and landscapers will be hit hardest.

“Utah citizens will not be immune from the ultimate costs that will be inflicted if Congress chooses to continue to do nothing,” Hogan said. If the U.S. Congress fails to take into account the unique needs of agriculture, American Farm Bureau economists estimate that \$9 billion domestic food sales will move offshore to farmers in foreign countries. Consumers will get a product that is not as fresh, not as cost effective, energy efficient and we all should be concerned from a national food security, health and safety standpoint. The consequences for American agriculture, including Utah’s farmers, ranchers, food processors, nursery industry and landscapers will be dire.

Farm Bureau support efforts to tighten America’s borders and to ensure that those who work here are legally entitled to do so. Agriculture, however, is unique in that we are highly dependent on temporary workers to fill jobs that most Americans do not want to perform.

“Under current law, our farmers and ranchers face a “Catch 22” when verifying a prospective workers status,” Hogan said. “It is illegal to knowingly hire an unauthorized

worker, but further investigation by farmers can be viewed as discriminatory under the Civil Rights Act of 1964.”

**About Utah Farm Bureau Federation**

The Utah Farm Bureau is the largest general farm and ranch organization in the state with more than 22,000 member families. Its mission is to improve the net income of the state’s farmers and ranchers and the overall quality of life in the state and nation through political action, educational and informational means. The Farm Bureau is a non-partisan, voluntary organization, and its efforts are based on grassroots policies developed by members at the local, county, state and national levels. It is affiliated with the American Farm Bureau Federation, the world’s largest general farm organization, with more than 5 million family members in 50 states and Puerto Rico. For more information, call (801) 233-3000 or visit the Utah Farm Bureau Web site at [www.utfb.fb.org](http://www.utfb.fb.org).

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