



A Case Study of How Foreign  
Workers Help American Farms  
Grows Crops- and the Economy  
(2013)

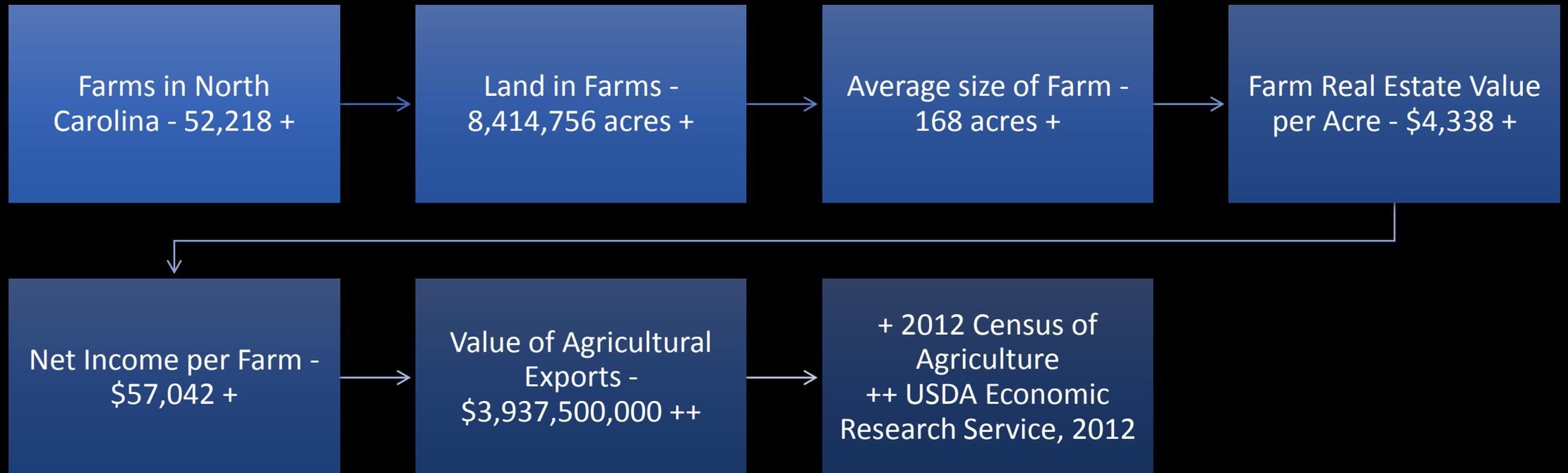
# North Carolina Agriculture Overview

North Carolina's agricultural industry, including food, fiber and forestry, contributes \$84 billion to the state's economy, accounts for more than 17% of the state's income, and employs 17% of the work force. \*

One of the most diversified agriculture states in the nation. The state's 50,200 farmers grow over 80 different commodities, utilizing 8.4 million of the state's 31 million acres to furnish consumers a dependable and affordable supply of food and fiber. +

Produces more tobacco and sweet potatoes than any other state and ranks second in Christmas tree cash receipts and the production of hogs and turkeys. The state ranks seventh nationally in farm profits with a net farm income of over \$2.8 billion. Net income per farm in the state is over \$57,000. +

# Farm Facts



# Overview

1

Many of North Carolina's farms band together every year to apply collectively as North Carolina's Growers Association (NCGA) for H-2A visas- temporary visas for foreign seasonal farmers.

2

Prior to this application, the NCGA actively recruits native workers to fill the jobs it offers through advertising.

3

By law, before securing visas for foreign workers, the NCGA must demonstrate that US natives will not fill the NCGA farms' labour needs.



# FINDINGS

# 01

In 2011, there were on average 489,000 unemployed people in North Carolina and approximately 6,500 available farm jobs offered through NCGA.

# 02

Only 268 of the nearly 500,000 unemployed North Carolinians applied for the jobs.

# 03

More than 90 % of the applicants were hired yet only 163 showed up for the first day of work.

# 04

Only 7 native workers of the US workers hired-completed the entire growing season.

There's virtually no supply of native manual farm laborers in North Carolina



# No matter how bad the economy becomes, native workers do not take farm jobs

- The study showed that if unemployment rose from 2% to 14% only about 100 more US workers would apply for NCGA jobs.





# Foreign farm workers create jobs for American workers

- The 7,000 seasonal foreign workers recruited by the NCGA in 2012 added at least an estimated \$248 million to \$371 million to the North Carolina economy.





The NCGA spends more money on immigration law compliance designed to protect American workers than it does on American farm workers salaries

- The Association spent more than \$100,000 to advertise farm jobs and comply with immigration laws in 2011, while it paid out just \$87,000 to the seven native workers.





# H-2A VISA

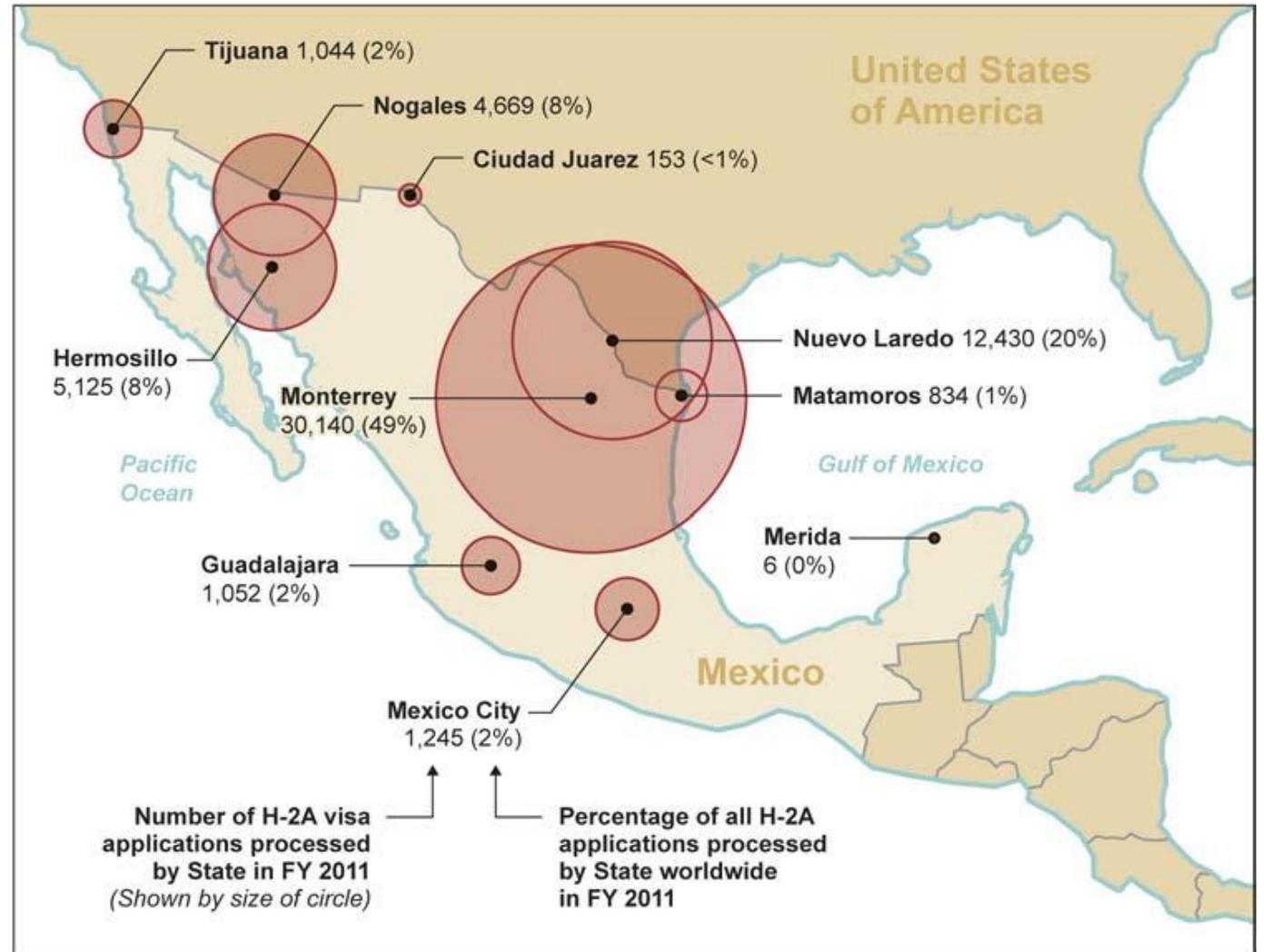
- Whenever there is a need for farm workers that cannot be satisfied by U.S Citizens the farm owners advertise for foreign farm workers through the North Carolina Growers Association.
  - The NCGA facilitates the applications on behalf of the farmers as it can sometimes be a strenuous exercise.
  - The NCGA works through a network of agents outside the U.S in recruitment of the workers.
  - For Foreign Workers who are within the United States in a valid status and with no requirement to leave the United States, can simply transition to H-2A status.
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## Number of H-2A Visas Processed in 2017

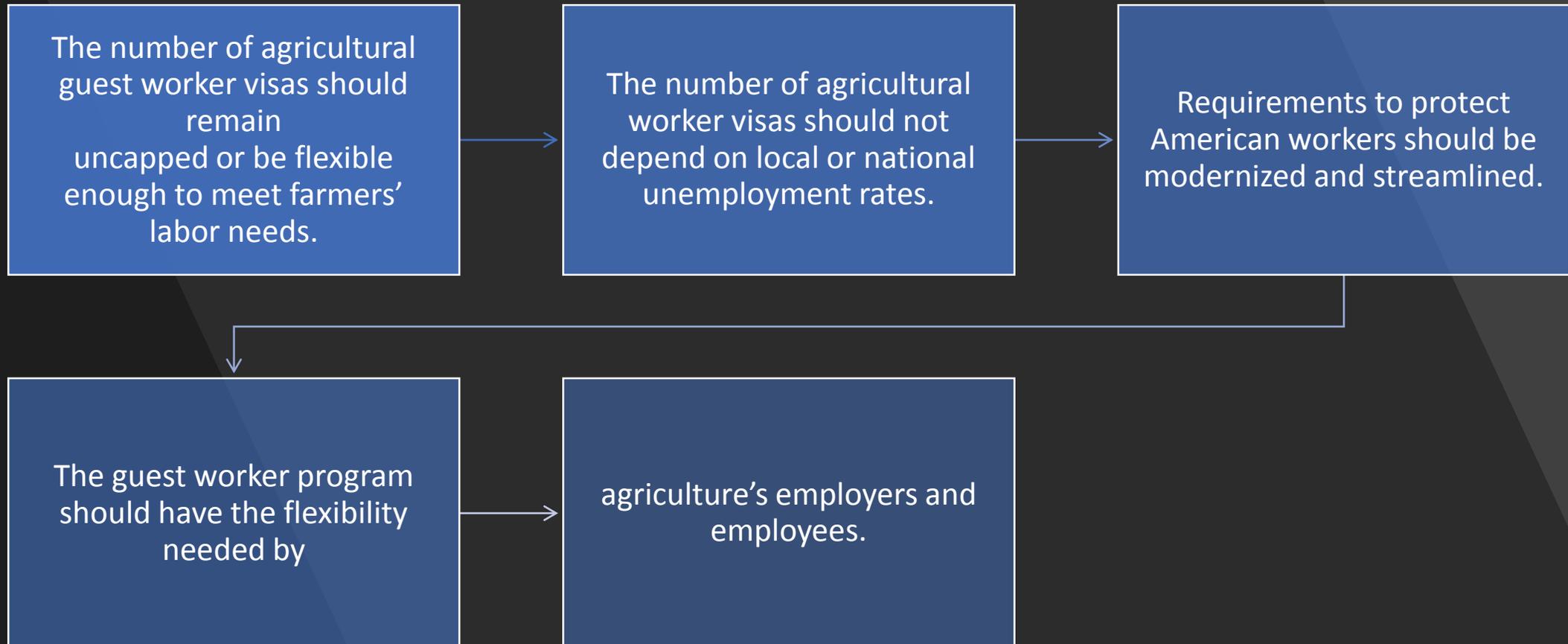
- During the first three months of 2017, the Department of Labor approved applications to fill 69,272 farm jobs with workers on H-2A visas. That's up from 50,887 positions approved during same period a year ago, an increase of 36 percent.

# Number of H-2A visas processed in Mexico according to location in the year 2011



Sources: GAO analysis of State via issuance data; National Atlas of the United States (base map).

# RECOMMENDATIONS



# REFERENCE

- [Link to full report](#)



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