

PREFACE

Passage of the United States Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) in 1986 changed many of the fundamentals of the domestic farm labor market. Unfortunately, there has been an insufficient knowledge base on farm labor markets in Florida and elsewhere to begin to analyze and/or predict future directions in farm labor supplies, wage rates, and other relevant aspects of the farm labor market for seasonal and perishable crops.

This report represents an attempt to fill some of the gaps in our current understanding of Florida farm labor markets, particularly regarding the relatively labor intensive fruit and nut industries. Special attention will be placed upon labor practices in the orange, grapefruit, and strawberry sectors of the industry. Survey results are reported for such topics as wage rates for seasonal workers, some sociodemographic characteristics of workers, prospective labor supplies, the likely impact of IRCA, and possible actions to be taken by employers faced with labor shortages.

Statements and interpretations in this report are the responsibility of the authors and are not meant to reflect the official position or policy of the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences of the University of Florida or any other agency or group, public or private. It is hoped, however, that this report will shed some new knowledge on current farm labor markets in Florida, the sociodemographics of farm workers, and the outlook regarding future farm labor supplies.

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