

# americanMUSHROOM

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## **Background Mushroom Labor January 2025**

Nearly every U.S.-grown mushroom is harvested by hand, and, like other segments of agriculture, mushroom growers are facing labor shortages.

American Mushroom has long pushed for legislation and policies that enable a legal, reliable workforce, and has supported the Farm Workforce Modernization Act, which passed in the U.S. House under both the Trump and Biden Administrations.

The bill would establish a Certified Agricultural Worker status to any agricultural employee working in the States for at least 180 days and would open the H-2A temporary worker program to include the mushroom industry, which, unlike other produce, currently has no visa program for workers, since mushrooms are a year-round crop.

The mushroom farm community extends to companies that provide services (food safety testing), equipment (forklifts), supplies (spawn, gloves, harvesting baskets), technology (computer systems to control growing room temperatures), transportation, cold storage, and many other products. Without the labor force to pick mushrooms, there will be no need for these ancillary businesses or their employees.

Every potential mushroom industry employee is required to submit certain documents for the completion of an I-9 form (used for verifying the identity and employment authorization of individuals hired for employment in the United States). If an applicant cannot provide these documents, s/he is not hired.

Many mushroom workers have parents and grandparents who immigrated decades ago, and who have been employed in the industry for 10, 20, 30 years and more, pay taxes, have purchased homes, and spend money in the communities in which they live and work.

Mushrooms are the number one cash crop in Pennsylvania, with more than 50 mushroom operations in Chester County, accounting for nearly 60 percent of all U.S. mushroom production.

### **Economic Impact of Pennsylvania Mushroom Farming Operations:**

- Contributes \$1.3 billion to the economy
- Supports 9,400 jobs
- Supports \$313 million in worker income
- Contributes over \$18 million in taxes to the State alone annually
- The mushroom farming community provides 6.6 percent of the school tax collections in Chester County
- Pennsylvania mushroom industry supplier and service operations contribute additionally economic benefits, jobs and indirect financial impact to eh County and State.