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University of Illinois,
Iowa State University

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[MARKETMAKER JOB BOARD]

Using current MarketMaker connections and a web-based platform to bring laborers and farmers together.

Abstract

North Central Regional Center for Rural Development (NCRCRD) put out a call for special studies, one of which was a **MarketMaker Enhancement Project**. MarketMaker is a web-based database that allows producers of agricultural-based products and their customers to discover each other. Originally developed in Illinois, it has expanded its reach to 20 other states through a subscription program. The contract NCRCRD was proposing would be to explore ways to increase the speed at which new states come into the system, and how to make the system more useful for research on market opportunities for rural areas. To meet this request, MarketMaker staff from the Iowa State University Extension & Outreach, University of Illinois Extension and the Iowa Workforce Development Agency will work together to create a web-based platform that would help both farmers and laborers find each other. The following document will explore a needs assessment of a web-based platform to address labor issues, the components that will be included in the platform, and an impact assessment that will include stakeholder feedback.

Needs Assessment

Timely availability of labor is necessary for the successful production of farm products, especially fruits and vegetables. A shortage of farm labor reports from across the country are appearing in newspapers.

Contra Costa Times, Aug 1, 2012 “California farmers warned for years of a future without enough skilled pickers and packers, of fruits and vegetables rotting in place... With the pear season in full swing it's been more difficult finding enough workers ... “

Newsobserver.com, July 25, 2012. “North Carolina is a top producer of tobacco, sweet potatoes and other fruits and vegetables – but in the near future, farmers might not have enough workers to pick them. Across the nation, the number of seasonal agricultural workers is shrinking, costing billions. That’s largely the result of a diminishing number of migrant workers...”

In late June last year, Iowa Workforce Development received word from an Iowa strawberry producer that he was short on labor for harvest that season. Iowa Workforce Development could only refer workers who came in looking for work to the strawberry producer. Due to lack of labor the producer lost nearly a third of his harvest for that year. Staff from Iowa Workforce Development later learned that there were a group of migrant laborers waiting for the apple harvest to start in nearby Wisconsin. The strawberry harvest could have been saved had there been a better mechanism of communication. MarketMaker staff from the Iowa State University Extension & Outreach, University of Illinois Extension and the Iowa Workforce Development Agency will work together to create a web-based platform that would help both farmers and laborers find each other.

Lack of farm labor is not a localized problem, but one that is plaguing areas across the United States. The University of Georgia’s Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development created a study to look at the impact of labor shortages in Georgia. The study examined seven staple Georgia crops, and the

findings were shocking: 18 Vidalia-producing farms lost an estimated \$16,312,345 and 835 jobs. In total, the seven crops studied lost almost \$75 million and more than 5,200 jobs because of the labor shortage.

And the problem of lack of labor is affecting every part of the farming sector as farms of all sizes hire seasonal workers. As you can see in the chart below larger farms hire an especially large amount of seasonal laborers, but due to their size sometimes have an easier time finding labor small farms.

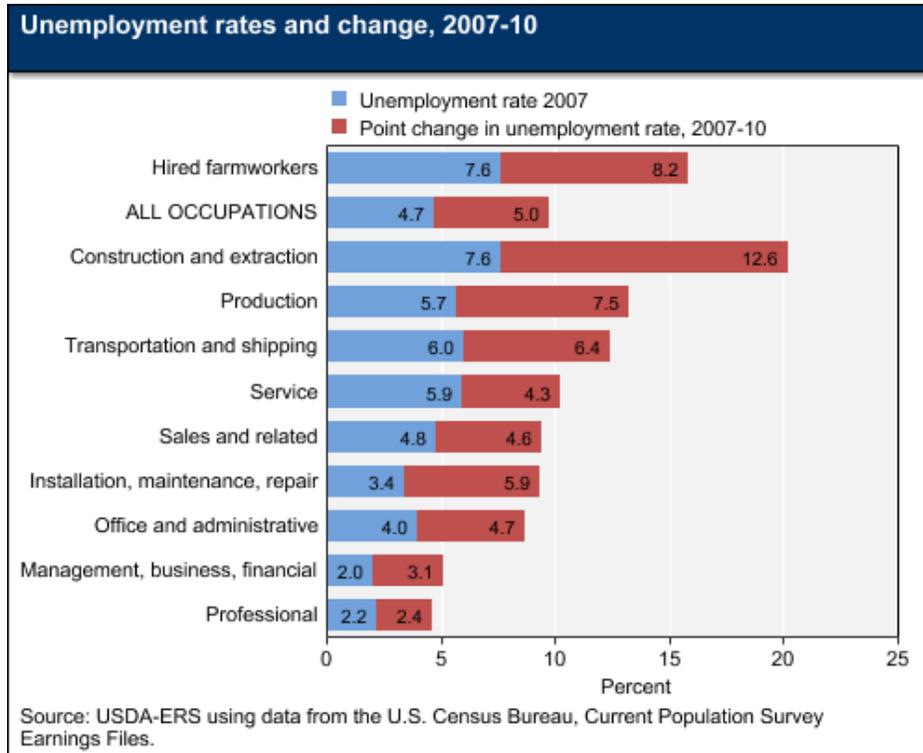
Hired Workers by Number of Workers on Farm (USDA April, 2012)		Hired Workers by Economic Class of Farm (USDA April, 2012)	
Employed on farms hiring	Percentage of Farms	Gross value of sales	Percentage of Farms
1 worker	9	Less than \$50,000	10
2 workers	10	\$50,000-\$99,999	5
3-6 workers	20	\$100,000-\$249,999	8
7-10 workers	8	\$250,000-\$499,999	9
11-20 workers	8	\$500,000-\$999,999	13
21-50 workers	13	\$1,000,000 and over	55
51 or more workers	32		
Total	100	Total	100

The May 2011 Bureau of Labor Statistics occupational data for [Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse](#) stated that there are 233,280 laborers in this occupational area and they earn mean annual salary of \$20,020 dollars. As a group, the income generation for this occupation would be roughly \$4.5 billion dollars in total. The number of workers in this field is much lower than most other estimates and maybe explained by not counting undocumented labor in this field. In Iowa, for example, the Bureau’s estimated number of farmworkers is 650. Iowa Workforce Development, on the other hand, would estimate that Iowa has over 7,000 farmworkers, based on the number of job placement requests they receive. Even if you count the Ag. Equipment Operators, Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch, and Aquicultural Animals, and Ag. Sorters and Graders in addition to Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery and Greenhouse, the Bureau of Labor Statistics only counts 4,240 workers in all four agriculture related categories. The inaccuracies in data related to migrant and local farm labor make it hard to determine the exact number of farm laborers and thus their economic impact.

The 2006 American Farm Bureau Federation [study](#) titled: Impact of Migrant Labor Restrictions on the Agricultural Sector, estimated that the number of *migrant* farm laborers was closer to 1 million, and that the elimination of such labor would lead to a loss of “as much as \$5-9 billion in annual production of primarily import-sensitive commodities most dependent on migrant labor would be lost in the short term.” Though loss of our immigrant labor all at once would be rather unlikely and drastic we have already seen some labor laws in states like Arizona, Georgia, and California cause huge decreases in the amount of labor those states have available. Increased communication among the workers and farmers in such states would help increase efficiencies and economize.

One might ask if there are even enough laborers to fill the jobs currently required by farm owners, and some news reporters will state that with new immigrant labor restrictions and laborers moving to other, higher-paying, jobs there simply isn’t enough labor to meet the labor demanded. This doesn’t seem to

be the case though when you look at the increase in unemployment for workers in the Hired Farmworker category, which has risen by 8.3 percent from, 2007-2010 (see chart below). The census data shows roughly 17 percent of the people looking for work as hired farm labor are unemployed. A lack of workers isn't the problem. The problem is helping the workers find the work.

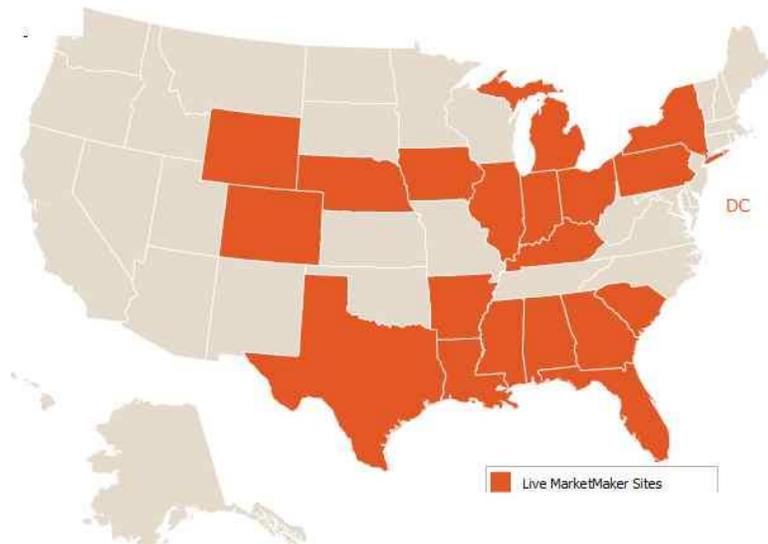


Using a web-based program to connect farmers and laborers will help decrease agriculture losses in MarketMaker states, and hopefully states currently outside the MarketMaker system. A conservative estimate on the number of agricultural laborers in MarketMaker states is 86,340. Between 50 and 77% of hired laborers are Hispanic and according to [data](#) from the Pew Research Center just over 50% of migrant Hispanics in the United States use the Internet. So, even in the MarketMaker states there are a large number of laborers able to access the site. If we translated the pages into Spanish that number could be nearly doubled.

MarketMaker (<http://national.marketmaker.uiuc.edu/>) can be a tool to help laborers find jobs using the Buy/Sell form. The form is similar to want ads in newspapers. Businesses can list wants and needs for products, services, equipment and transportation in a public forum that is widely available. An Employment Opportunities section can be added where businesses can post employment opportunities, workers can submit a job application and state employment agencies can be involved to assist both the employer and workers.

MarketMaker covers 19 states and the District of Columbia representing 171.2 million people. MarketMaker has 601,000 business profiles including 8,000 farms. The MarketMaker web site averages

1,460,000 hits per month from 93,000 users.



A MarketMaker web interface would help producers and laborers overcome obstacles. Natural obstacles like weather patterns and bug infestations have been enormous problems for both farmers and farm laborers in the past, and will continue to be major problems in the future, but with the web-based MarketMaker system both farmers and laborers would have more flexibility. No longer would workers have to wait weeks for a late harvest. They could easily look online to see what other work was needed immediately in nearby areas. Farmers would also be able to more easily find labor if the harvest were to come earlier than expected. As we said before a lack of workers isn't the problem. **The problem is helping the workers find the work.**

The MarketMaker Solution

MarketMaker (<http://national.marketmaker.uiuc.edu/>) is an excellent web based marketing tool helping over 601,000 businesses in 20 states find a market for their unique products and services. The web site receives 17.5 million hits from 1.2 million unique visitors a year. While marketing is the primary focus, the web site provides other supporting services to the members like posting want ads for products, services, equipment and trucking needs.

MarketMaker staff feel the addition of an Employment Opportunities job posting service will help businesses find seasonal and full time labor. We estimated for all the types of businesses in the 20 states listed on MarketMaker there could be over 66 million employees, and ag related jobs are over 102,000.

A team from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, University of Illinois Extension and Iowa Workforce Development are working together to develop the Employment Opportunities feature on MarketMaker. The team includes:

- Ray Hansen and Craig Tordsen Iowa State Extension, Value-Added Ag
- Barbara Bobb, Venus Walsh, Mike Witt and Marco Adasme, Iowa Workforce Development
- Rich Knipe, Dar Knipe, Mike Cokel and Nick Carlson, University of Illinois, MarketMaker

The plan of work is in three phases; Phase 1: Short-Term Development; Phase 2: Mid-Term Development; Phase 3: Long-Term Development. Phase 1 work has been completed while Phase 2 and 3 work will start when funding is found. The plan is as follows:

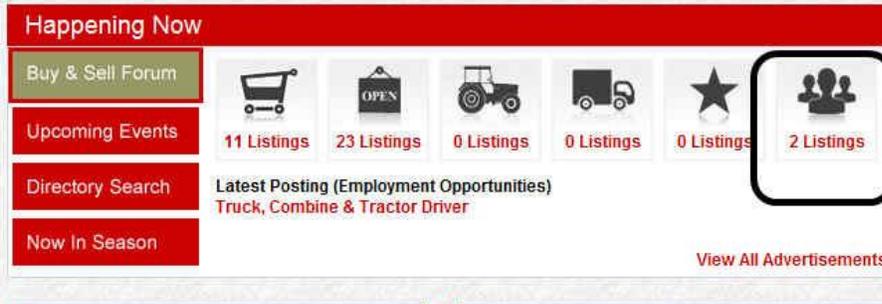
Phase 1: Short-Term Development

Work completed

- Creation of additional Buy & Sell Forum category: Employment Opportunities.
- Creation of additional Buy & Sell Forum alerts categories used to alert interested businesses.
- Creation of general application functionality to facilitate responding to job postings.
- Creation of end-user tools for managing and monitoring application responses.

Posting to Employment Opportunities Category

Employment Opportunities was added to the MarketMaker Buy & Sell Forum. The image of three people is the link to Employment Opportunities



This category allows registered users of MarketMaker to post available job openings for their organization. Each job posting will request the following information:

- Job Title
- Job Description
- ONET Description (chosen from agricultural ONET descriptions in a drop-down menu)
 - Agricultural Equipment Operators
 - Farm Labor Contractors
 - Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop
 - Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse
 - Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch and Aquaculture Animals
- Qualifications/Certifications
- Number of Positions Available
- Expiration Date

Title:*

Job Category:* ?

Description:*

B I U | ↶ ↷ | ☰ ☷

We need several temporary workers to help us bring in our apple crop this year. The harvest will begin in mid-September and run through the end of October.

Path: p

Qualifications:

B I U | ↶ ↷ | ☰ ☷

We need willing laborers who don't mind long days (8+ hours) and getting dirty. We provide accommodations and very competitive pay.

Path: p

Positions Available:*

Duration (Days):

In addition, the following is added to the job listing using the business's MarketMaker information:

- Business Name
- City
- State
- [Link to Business Details on MarketMaker](#)

Craig's Testing Business

62785 280th Street
Nevada, Iowa 50201

Email: [Contact Us](#)
Phone : (555) 555-5555
Contact: Craig Tordsen
Last Updated: Aug 9, 2012

Farmer/Rancher

Grains
Grain Product Type
Beans (Soybean)

Vegetables
Vegetable Product Type
Corn

Upon submitting this information, the appropriate job posting is reviewed to remove inappropriate content and vetted to maintain the quality of job postings. During this phase of development, this process is facilitated by way of email alerts in this fashion:

- When a new job posting is submitted, an email alert with the business and posting details will be sent to Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) personnel.
- Based on the posting contents contained in the email, IWD personnel will make a decision as to the relevance and quality of the job posting.
- IWD personnel will direct National MarketMaker administrators to approve or reject the new job posting.
- The business that posted the job is notified by email when the posting is approved or rejected. If approved, the posting will appear in the Employment Opportunities category in the Buy & Sell Forum in a format that can be swept by the National Labor Exchange (<http://us.jobs/>) indexing service.

The posted job will appear on MarketMaker as follows:

Employment Opportunities

Need Help Harvesting Apples

Apply Online!

Category: Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop

Description:

We need several temporary workers to help us bring in our apple crop this year. The harvest will begin in mid-September and run through the end of October.

Qualifications:

We need willing laborers who don't mind long days (8+ hours) and getting dirty. We provide accommodations and very competitive pay.

General Details:

Employer:	Craig's Testing Business
Positions Available:	14
Email:	Contact Us
Location:	Nevada, Iowa

Listing Details:

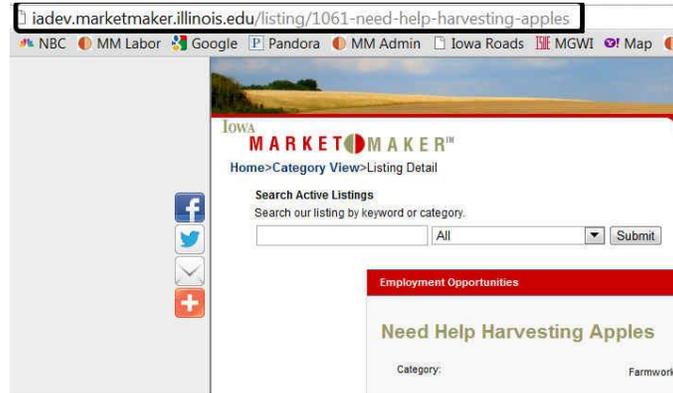
Listing views:	11
Listing expires:	10/21/2012
Listing posted:	07/23/2012

Indexing with National Labor Exchange

Daily, the US.jobs indexing service will sweep the Employment Opportunities category of MarketMaker to collect information about the job postings. This information will be displayed on US.jobs and will additionally appear in the daily distribution of job bank database files received by IWD. Armed with this information, the IWD will be able to contact workers or crews of workers that would be appropriate for the job postings.

Responding to Job Postings

Registered and non-registered users of the MarketMaker site are able to respond to job postings listed in the Buy & Sell Forum. As per the indexing requirements, each posting will be assigned a unique URL for applying for the position.



This link directs the user to a standard web form that, upon completion, will submit the application into the system.

IOWA MARKETMAKER™

HOME | GETTING STARTED | SEARCH | RESOURCES | CONTACT US | LOGIN

JOB APPLICATION

* required

Applicant Information

*First Name:

Middle Name:

*Last Name:

Email:

*Primary Phone: () - ext:

Mailing Address

*Address:

*City:

*State:

Eligibility

*Zip Code:

*Are you 18 years of age or older?

*Are you legally able to work in the United States?

Application Information

Highest level of education:

Employment History:

Qualifications:

Professional References:

The application is processed as follows:

1. When a new application is submitted, an email alert with the application details will be sent to IWD personnel.
2. Based on the application contents contained in the email, IWD personnel will make a decision as to the relevance and quality of the application.
3. IWD personnel will direct National MarketMaker administrators to approve or reject the new application.
4. The user that applied will not be notified by email when his or her application is approved or rejected, as communication with applicants should only come from the prospective employer. If approved, the application will become visible in the Member's Area of the business that posted the job. Additionally, the business that posted the job will be notified of the new application via email.

Managing Job Postings & Applications

The employer has the ability to log into MarketMaker and review and edit his or her job postings. Additionally, the employer will be able to review all applicants that have submitted applications for those postings.

The screenshot shows the Iowa MarketMaker interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: HOME, GETTING STARTED, SEARCH, RESOURCES, CONTACT US, and LOG IN. Below the navigation bar, the page title is "My Buy & Sell Listings".

Under "My Buy & Sell Listings", there is a "New Listing" section with a table:

Ad Title	Ad Date	Expires On	Delete	Repost
Backhoe Operator	Jul 23, 2012	Aug 22, 2012		
Need Help Harvesting Apples	Jul 23, 2012	Oct 21, 2012		
Tractor Driver	Jul 23, 2012	Aug 22, 2012		

Below the listings table, there is a section titled "Applications Pending Review" with a table:

Applicant	Related Posting	Applied	Delete
John Doe	Need Help Harvesting Apples	Jul 23, 2012	
Mike Smith	Backhoe Operator	Jul 23, 2012	

When an employer fills a position posted on MarketMaker, he or she will log into the system and either update the Number of Positions Available field or will remove the posting entirely. Should an employer not be able to locate a suitable worker, the option remains to renew the posting on the site—effectively extending the expiration date by a set duration. Should an employer neglect these duties, the job posting will expire according to the original posting's timeline.

Alerting Users to New Postings

Registered members of MarketMaker may choose to receive email alerts whenever new jobs are posted to the Buy & Sell Forum. In this way, users will be able to monitor the activity in the Employment Opportunities category and respond quickly to appropriate postings.

- Buy & Sell Forum Alerts
 - Employment Opportunities
 - Looking To Buy
 - Fish and Seafood
 - Fruit
 - Grains
 - Livestock
 - Specialty Product
 - Vegetables
 - Looking To Sell
 - Fish and Seafood
 - Fruit
 - Grains
 - Livestock
 - Specialty Product
 - Vegetables
 - Other
 - Services and Equipment
 - Transportation
- Trade Alerts

Phase 2: Mid-Term Development

Phase 2 and 3 will be started when funding is in place. The plan calls for:

- Creation of multi-lingual support for the Employment Opportunities category.
- Generating mass mail tool access to non-administrators.
- Modification of administrative tools to allow third-party administrators to review, approve, and reject job postings and applications.

Adding Multi-Lingual Support

Each post will be translated into Spanish. Additionally, the response web form utilized by job-seekers will also be translated.

Granting Mass Mail Access to Non-Administrators

Agents approved by the parties involved will be granted limited access to the MarketMaker administration system. This will allow these special users to perform the following functions:

- Conduct specialized searches for businesses
- Send mass mail messages to MarketMaker users

Modifying Administrative Tools

Agents approved by the parties involved will be granted limited access to the MarketMaker administration system. This will allow these special users to perform the following functions:

- Review all aspects of job postings and applications within the state.
- Edit all aspects of job postings and applications within the state.
- Approve or reject job postings and applications within the state.
- View MarketMaker business information related to job postings.

This new functionality will supersede the Phase 1 implementation, which involves emails being sent back-and-forth between IWD and MarketMaker personnel to perform these operations. Therefore, upon completion of this functionality, IWD personnel will be responsible for logging into MarketMaker and completing tasks previously completed via National MarketMaker staff proxies.

Phase 3: Long-Term Development

Up to now, only businesses can register on MarketMaker. The plan is to allow anyone who wants to be notified of products to buy, employment opportunities and/or other information to register in a special section of MarketMaker. The plan calls for:

- Creation of non-public, non-business MarketMaker user accounts.
- Enabling of text message alert features.

Enabling Non-Public, Non-Business Accounts

MarketMaker will begin to allow registrations from non-business owners. These profiles will not be searchable or otherwise viewable by the public. They will exist for the purpose of accessing specialized MarketMaker tools. Specifically, registrants of this variety will be able to set alert preferences in order to be notified when new posts are made in the Buy & Sell Forum. This may even be a useful way for potential workers to be made aware of new opportunities.

Creating Text Message Alerts

Additions to the My Alerts and general registrant information will allow MarketMaker to send Buy & Sell Forum alerts via text message. This will allow for on-the-go notifications about new job opportunities.

Roles & Responsibilities

The technical development work for this project will come primarily from the MarketMaker team at the University of Illinois. Iowa State University Extension and Iowa Workforce Development will provide ongoing support, awareness campaigns, and interaction with potential and existing users, as well as additional guidance for the goals and outcomes of the project. Initial administrative duties (managing/vetting job postings and applications) will be a partnership between Iowa Workforce Development and the MarketMaker team.

Impact Assessments

On July 31, 9 MarketMaker Administrators from Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Mississippi, South Carolina and Texas viewed a demonstration of the web sites Employment Opportunities feature and provided comments via survey. Based on the survey responses the consensus is that this new tool for connecting migrant and seasonal laborers to producers would be a benefit to the MarketMaker website and that it would be of help in recruiting new state members. This was deemed especially true due to the fact many work force agencies have little to no cross-cooperation among organizations and states. MarketMaker on the other hand is already in multiple states and so will be able to help strengthen the efforts of current state run work force agencies. Even though the current program has a lot of laudable attributes there were also some comments and ideas from the reviewers for improving on the current system. In this section, we will discuss the most important survey questions

asked, their answers and the additional comments given by those surveyed. The complete list of questions and their answers can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

One question on the survey was meant to get our MarketMaker Administrators' feedback on how **farmers secured seasonal workers**. From the responses we identified a few trends. Though methods varied slightly between states larger farmers and smaller farmers used different techniques to procure seasonal labor. Larger operations with 50 plus hired hands tend to use contractors or field labor managers to hire the seasonal labor. Though still uncommon the use of H2A visas seems to be growing, especially with citrus producers. Some large farms also have the same labor crews come back to work every year, but that would be more likely to occur for smaller operations. Smaller farms often will have that returning work, rely on state programs like work force development centers, or other methods that are more hit-or-miss. Those hit-or-miss methods include but are not limited to: radio, newspaper, signs, Craigslist, Woofers or Biodynamic Assn. web site.

So how difficult of a task is it for farmers to find laborers? We asked our survey recipients to rate this difficulty on a scale from 1 to 5. The average response for the **difficulty of finding seasonal labor** was 4.8 (Very difficult), while their ability to find year round labor had an average score of 3.8 which would still be difficult.

Based on these two responses there seems to be a need for a system like our MarketMaker "jobs board". Farmers are having difficulty finding enough qualified seasonal labor, and they need a reliable source of labor. The MarketMaker system has the potential to be more reliable than some of the state run job agencies simply because of the size of the program. Workers who migrate from state to state could use the MarketMaker platform to plan their migration through the states and farmers could know further in advance how many workers they can expect.

Even so, we don't expect this access to labor drastically change the **size of farming operations**. Our MM Administrators were asked whether or not they thought that small family-run operations would consider expanding if they had access to seasonal workers. The majority of responses were negative and the feeling was that farmers would benefit from better access to seasonal labor, but there are many other limiting factors when it comes to expanding. Even so, it was expressed that production could be expanded by increasing farmers' access to labor.

The current system is still in its infancy and our MarketMaker team was more than happy to include **criticisms and ideas for improvement**. One comment that was voiced a few times was the concern that migrant laborers wouldn't have easy access to the site, and so wouldn't be able to find jobs, apply for them, and then wait for responses. A solution that was tossed around for this problem was to include some sort of email or text message notification system that would notify workers when there were jobs available in their selected field and area, and also notify them when someone had accepted their application. A similar system should be implemented for the farmers. Another concern was whether or not the MarketMaker program would be accepted by states that already have their own job placement programs. Most surveyed felt MarketMaker would cooperate and work with the programs already in place which would result in little resistance, and the state run programs would benefit from

MarketMakers multi-state platform. Some workforce development agencies have expressed that they don't have the resources to meet the needs of seasonal agricultural labor and that MarketMaker would be filling a need for the work force development centers in those states.

Some of the other concerns were that the site might be too difficult for some laborers to navigate. Providing a **Spanish page** and making the site easy to navigate in general would help increase the number of workers able to use the service.

One commenter mentioned that finding a way to have the workers **GAP certified** through the site would save both the workers and farmers a good deal of time and effort. As of now most laborers have to be recertified for each new place of work and thus farmers are having to recertify workers who have been certified multiple times during the season. Finding a way to offer some sort of permanent certification for workers using MarketMaker would be a unique benefit and undoubtedly bring more people and more consistent use for the MarketMaker "Job Board".

All in all there were many good things said about the current MarketMaker platform and even without changes the general consensus is that the "job board" would be of value to the site and help bring new states to MarketMaker. With changes MarketMaker could be one of the premiere agricultural job posting services in the country. BETA testing will start in Iowa and then this fall Iowa Work Force Development Agency and ISU VAA will begin bringing MM state administrators and state labor agencies and advocacy groups together to share the web-site with these groups and help them understand how they can work together to improve the employment efficiencies with in their respective states. Making this application accessible and having MarketMaker centers get the word out will start the ball rolling on a dynamic program that could help hundreds of thousands of farmers and seasonal laborers around the country.

Agencies Statements of Support

Barbara Bobb, The Bereau Chief of Targeted Services at Iowa Workforce Development:

With the aging of the workforce in agriculture, it is very important to ensure farmers have the help they need to grow food for our nation and abroad. A growing concern is having tools and a labor exchange system that is quick, nimble and user friendly both for the grower and migrant/seasonal worker. I believe MarketMaker is one tool that will bridge the gap and provide the resources needed for both employer and employee. For the smaller, organic and specialized crop grower to access employees in a timely and economical way, as well as for agricultural laborers to have the information about when and where work is available, this tool will ensure a quick response for agricultural needs, ensuring that there will never again be crops rotting in the field from a lack of workers. We fully expect other states to join this project as it grows, and will support marketing efforts to other states, farmers, workers and anyone else interested who might support it, such as local grocers, hotel/motel and housing owners and other merchants.

Marco Adasme, State Monitor Advocate IWFD:

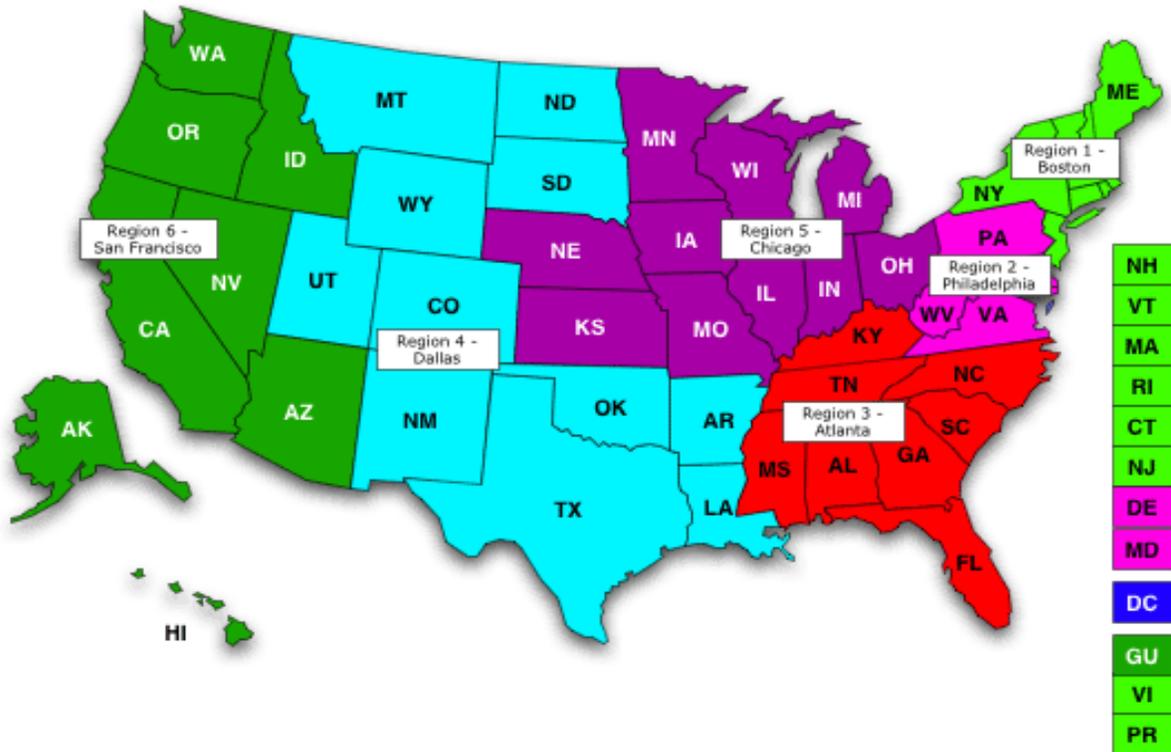
In direct opposition to common believe, the farming industry in Iowa and in the rest of the country is not destined to diminish. Although the trend shows an aging farmer holding his desires to keep farming, their heirs are not interested in pursuing on their parents footsteps, and at end the big-scaled operations will run the unwanted farmlands. Still, however, many small to midsize farms, where a second and even a third operator might be playing a crucial role, are in full control of their own operations. Big corporations, small and midsize farmers are still in need of skilled migrant and seasonal farm workers as technology it still years away from replacing the hands-on work in all the farming aspects.

One of the big issues that seem to be lacking is a better work correlation between growers and farm workers. Dedicated growers have lost their yearly crops because of lack of reliable and timely efforts from farm workers which were inaccessible because of unknown work opportunities.

With an already existing growers' membership, MarketMaker seems to open an extra door to bring farm workers into a direct working relationship with the growers, and at the same time provides the farmers with a window to request those need skilled farm workers. A win-win situation that only can add to the success of the labor exchange system which will bring, through indexing, all of those jobs placements lost to the labor exchange. I can only see success with this new employment related project.

Supplemental Information:

Appendix 1 additional labor Data



	Labor Code	Region						Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	
Agricultural Equipment Operators	45-2091	180	390	1,980	4,850	7,740	6,630	21,770
Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	45-2092	5,290	4,460	32,140	11,450	8,190	170,340	231,870
Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch, and Aquacultural Animals	45-2093	1,200	3,110	6,160	6,930	8,200	3,990	29,590
Total Workers		6,670	7,960	40,280	23,230	24,130	180,960	283,230
Estimated Salary (Millions)		\$ 164.7	\$ 195.1	\$ 824.4	\$ 523.6	\$ 630.1	\$ 3,578.5	\$ 5,916.4
Avg. Hourly Pay		\$ 12.12	\$ 12.87	\$ 10.95	\$ 11.61	\$ 12.57	\$ 12.07	\$ 12.10
Percentage of Workers by Region		2.4%	2.8%	14.2%	8.2%	8.5%	63.9%	100.0%

(Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2011 Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates. http://www.bls.gov/oes/oes_dl.htm)



Farm Labor as of April 2012

Region	LABOR, HIRED - NUMBER OF WORKERS	LABOR, HIRED - TIME WORKED, MEASURED IN HOURS / WEEK
APPALACHIAN I	28,000	41.7
APPALACHIAN II	29,000	32.4
CALIFORNIA	156,000	39.8
CORN BELT I	44,000	37.3
CORN BELT II	24,000	32.6
DELTA	23,000	39.4
FLORIDA	55,000	36.5
HAWAII	6,000	37.5
LAKE	57,000	35.6
MOUNTAIN I	29,000	38.4
MOUNTAIN II	19,000	42.4
MOUNTAIN III	20,000	50.7
NORTHEAST I	30,000	41.9
NORTHEAST II	35,000	39.3
NORTHERN PLAINS	33,000	41.1
PACIFIC	66,000	42.3
SOUTHEAST	36,000	36.4
SOUTHERN PLAINS	58,000	40.9
United States	748,000	39.2

Farm Labor: Released May 17, 2012, by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Agricultural Statistics Board, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Appendix 2: Survey Questions and Results

July 31, 2012 Webinar, MarketMaker Employment Opportunities Survey

Response provided by the following.

State	Name	Position
Arkansas	Ron Rainey	Associate Professor, University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture
Colorado	Martha Sullins	Extension Regional Specialist-Agriculture & Business Mgmt, Colorado State University
Florida	Allen Wysocki	Food and Resource Economics Development, Professor, University of Florida
Florida	Fritz Roka	Associate Professor, University of Florida
Iowa	Ray Hansen	Value Added Agriculture Program, Iowa State University Extension & Outreach
Michigan	Tom Kalchik	Michigan State University, Product Center for Agriculture and Natural Resources
Mississippi	Dr. Ben C. Posadas	Associate E&R Professor of Economics, Mississippi State University
South Carolina	Dr. Dave Lamie	Clemson Institute for Economic and Community Development
Texas	(Pancho) Francisco Abello	Graduate Assistant, Dept. of Agricultural Economics, Texas A&M University
Georgia	Sharon P. Kane	Public Service Associate, University of Georgia

1. To your knowledge how do farmers that you work with currently find and secure seasonal workers?	
Arkansas	Big farms use labor contractors. Small producers are hit and miss.
Colorado	Depends on scale: 1) larger operations (50+ employees) have a relationship with traveling work crews or have a field labor manager who does the recruiting. Some use H2A, some use prison labor crews. 2) our smaller-scale operators use a variety of recruitment methods: radio, newspaper, signs, Craigslist, Woofor or Biodynamic Assn web site.
Florida	Farmer/Grower response: Depends on whether farmer is IN or OUT of the H2A program. If NOT using H2 program, workers are recruited at local "pick-up" sites. Larger vegetable growers in south Florida report that 50% of the workers they recruit follow their farming operations up the east coast after the south Florida season is finished (Oct – May). Very few vegetable operations have pushed into the H2A program. The number of citrus harvesting companies using H2A workers, however, has been increasing rapidly in the past 3 years. An estimated 40% of the processed juice crop was harvested by H2A workers during the 2011-12
Iowa	hit and miss system unless tied into Workforce Develop
Michigan	In Michigan, larger operations tend to use contractors. For mid and smaller farms, ongoing ties with seasonal worker families and sharing workers between farms. Very few use any sort of governmental program unless desperate. Feeling is quality of worker is lower.
Mississippi	Word of mouth, hiring through employment agency. Not sure...
South Carolina	Labor brokers, farm labor contractors, same as Florida answer.
Texas	2% temporary workers. Word of mouth, Ads, Local Newspaper
2. Have you personally had an opportunity to work with agencies that are involved in ag workforce development? Which organizations?	
Arkansas	Yes, AgWorks, Inc. Lake Park, GA. AgWorks helped with Extension labor training meeting.
Colorado	Yes. Our Office of Economic Development and International Trade, and a few work force centers. They are just now realizing the scope of the problem but there's still little coordination.
Florida	No. But University of Florida does work with Workforce FL, FL Works, Department of Equal Opportunity. Farmer/Grower response: In Florida the regional offices of the Agency for Workforce Innovation (old name - recently changed in 2011 per Governor Scott's order) handles I-9 forms for agricultural employers.
Iowa	Yes, IA Workforce Development
Michigan	Yes, we work with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) which encompasses workforce development
Mississippi	No. Dept. of Labor MS
South Carolina	No, Dept. of Labor
Texas	No

3. To your knowledge, who is considered to be the lead organization in your state in matters related to agricultural work force development?	
Arkansas	Unknown
Colorado	Our Governor's Office of Economic Development and international Trade.
Florida	Whatever agency that used to be called AWI (Agency for Workforce Innovation).
Iowa	State Workforce Development
Michigan	MEDC is the lead organization in MI. The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is also involved in ag labor issues and growers often perceive it as the primary organization.
Mississippi	Department of Development and Employment. WIN Job Center
South Carolina	Department of Agriculture
Texas	TX workforce commission

4. On a scale of 1 to 5, how difficult is it for farmers you work with to find ag laborers? 1, least difficult . 5, most difficult										
	Arkansas	Colorado	Florida	Georgia	Iowa	Michigan	Mississippi	South Carolina	Texas	Average
Year Round	4	3	5		3			4	4	3.8
Seasonal	5	5	5		5			5	4	4.8
Don't Know						X				

5. In what order would you place these as challenges most likely to limit a farmer's decision to "Scale up"? (1 Most Limiting, 5 Least Limiting)

	Arkansas	Colorado	Florida	Georgia	Iowa	Michigan	Mississippi	South Carolina	Texas	Average
Capital	2	1	3		1	1	3		1	1.7
Lack of Markets	1	3	2		3	4	4		2	2.7
Labor	3	2	4		2	3	2		4	2.9
Regulations	4	4	5		4	2	1		5	3.6
Lifestyle (stay small)	5	5	1		5	5	5		3	4.1
Other E-Verify			5							5.0

6. Do you think small family run operations would consider expanding if they had access to seasonal workers? Why or why not?	
Arkansas	Yes, They need labors.
Colorado	I'm not sure that labor is the true bottleneck. It depends on the type of expansion we're talking about. Sometimes producers need more skilled management to take over an entire function. A lot of times it's capital that really holds our producers back.
Florida	NO. For most specialty crop growers, and especially small family run operations, labor management would prove more difficult than production and marketing challenges. Even if farmers had unlimited access to legal workers (domestic or foreign), if they were not fully aware of ALL the regulatory responsibilities associated with migrant and seasonal workers, they would go insane.
Iowa	Don't think it's a critical issue for expansion. More important in expanding production.
Michigan	I'm not sure that labor is the sole factor. We helped a group of small hoop house producers form a cooperative to market their crops to institutional buyers rather than at farmers markets. Their reason, even though they knew they would get less money, was that they did not have the time to go to 4 or 5 farmers markets each week to sell their products. They preferred to take less money but double or triple their production. Hiring people to work for them was not an option because, even if they stayed with retail, it would have meant lower profits. Therefore I am not sure labor is the catalyst that would stimulate expended production among small farmers.
Mississippi	No, 60% fall in that below \$250,000 in sales, they seem content with lifestyle and size
South Carolina	yes, though not sure about the details
Texas	Probably not. - Some small farmers are recreational farmers, and this is an activity on their side. - For some other farmers this is a life style. - It has to be economically feasible too, there is no capital to take risks (probably cheap seasonal labor might have a greater impact). - Small niche markets or no ability (or possibility) to access to bigger markets might be their bottle neck.

7. After seeing the prototype, does this seem like a useful tool for matching workers with growers?	
Arkansas	Yes, the program makes it much easier to attempt to find workers.
Colorado	My fear is that our workers (Hispanic, Hmong) who do provide labor for a lot of operations wouldn't find this or be able to get access.
Florida	There are other sites out there pulling all the around the web. If Florida MM had active posting, it would be beneficial to University of Florida.
Iowa	
Michigan	Could be useful in states that do not currently have a seasonal worker program. Before MarketMaker invests in this we need to see how many states would use it versus their current program. In MI we have a Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Program (http://www.michaglabor.org/index_agriculture2.jsp) that provides several services to farmers and food processors.
Mississippi	Timeliness is critical. WinJobCenter in Mississippi, how do we connect with them? Notifications for ads to producers?
South Carolina	
Texas	Yes it does. It seems to be a good tool that might help us to spread marketmaker faster. We should consider that the website and the labor link should be very simple to use and find, especially for seasonal workers.

8. What would you do to make it more useful/functional tool?	
Arkansas	Add other features like is housing available, the pay rate.
Colorado	I think having it tied to other web sites, in Spanish. I'm just not sure how much some of our farm labor uses the Internet to search for employment. I would need to research that aspect more.
Florida	
Iowa	
Michigan	Don't just list farms seeking workers or workers seeking jobs. Need job descriptions, rates of pay, worker skill level. Seasonal workers will need to know availability of housing, day care and education and other services.
Mississippi	Not sure this was really discussed much. Mostly notifications to producers either through email or text.
South Carolina	
Texas	Have lesser, simpler, and easier steps to get to the labor forum in the website and use it. It should be very simple and friendly to use.

9. On a scale of 1-5, how much more value do you think this feature will add in recruiting new states to marketmaker? (1 lowest, 5 highest)										
	Arkansas	Colorado	Florida	Georgia	Iowa	Michigan	Mississippi	South Carolina	Texas	Average
Aid in Recruiting Other States to MarketMaker		3	3.5			3		3	2	2.9

10. Other Comments	
Arkansas	Contact Farm Bureau
Colorado	I know what producers are experiencing in Colorado but I truly have no knowledge from the farm laborer's perspective. I just don't know how they seek employment, and what interfaces would work best. Therefore I'm having a hard time answering these questions!
Florida	Employee florida.com... 109 job postings in 50 mile radius for "farm". do we get info or postings from other sites? Hard to go out and inform people of tool. How do we help populate our stuff. GAP certified job postings. So worker only has to get certified once.
Iowa	Workforce development doesn't have the resources to coordinate as well anymore. Current system doesn't collect job postings from other sites. Filling a need for workforce development. Good because we can work together. Discuss with workforce centers, to see if migrant laborers would use it.
Michigan	My concern is if states that have developed seasonal worker programs will buy into this or merely focus on their own programs. Like the coordination between states. Cause its not happening it. MEDC their site is much more sophisticated, might not get much support from Michigan.
Mississippi	Spanish. how can we integrate the use of cellular devices? Texting workers and farmers.
South Carolina	
Texas	It will be a useful tool for the ones who are already there, but it might not add value for recruiting new states to MarketMaker. We might have to focus on a easier to use and friendlier website target to consumers in order to attract new state partners.