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conduct investigations in a manner which protects the confidentiality of any complainant or other party who provides information to the Secretary in good faith.

(c) Any person may report a violation of the Act or these regulations to the Secretary by advising any local office of the Employment Service of the various States, or any office of the Wage and Hour Division, U.S. Department of Labor, or any other authorized representative of the Administrator. The office or person receiving such a report shall refer it to the appropriate office of the Wage and Hour Division, for the region or area in which the reported violation is alleged to have occurred.

(d) In case of disobedience to a subpoena, the Secretary may invoke the aid of a United States District Court which is authorized to issue an order requiring the person to obey such subpoena.

[48 FR 36741, Aug. 12, 1983, as amended at 82 FR 2226, Jan. 9, 2017]

§ 500.8 Prohibition on interference with Department of Labor officials.

It is a violation of section 512(c) of the Act for any person to unlawfully resist, oppose, impede, intimidate, or interfere with any official of the Department of Labor assigned to perform an investigation, inspection, or law enforcement function pursuant to the Act during the performance of such

duties. (Other Federal statutes which prohibit persons from interfering with a Federal officer in the course of official duties are found at 18 U.S.C. 111 and 18 U.S.C. 1114.)

§ 500.9 Discrimination prohibited.

(a) It is a violation of the Act for any person to intimidate, threaten, restrain, coerce, blacklist, discharge, or in any manner discriminate against any migrant or seasonal agricultural worker because such worker has, with just cause:

(1) Filed a complaint with reference to the Act with the Secretary of Labor; or

(2) Instituted or caused to be instituted any proceeding under or related to the Act; or

(3) Testified or is about to testify in any proceeding under or related to the Act; or

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(4) Exercised or asserted on behalf of himself or others any right or protection afforded by the Act.

(b) A migrant or seasonal agricultural worker who believes, with just cause, that he has been discriminated against by any person in violation of this section may, no later than 180 days after such violation occurs, file a complaint with the Secretary alleging such discrimination.

§ 500.10 Waiver of rights prohibited.

Any agreement by an employee purporting to waive or modify any rights inuring to said person under the Act or these regulations shall be void as contrary to public policy, except that a waiver or modification of rights or obligations hereunder in favor of the Secretary shall be valid for purposes of enforcement of the provisions of the Act or these regulations. This does not prevent agreements to settle private litigation.

§ 500.20 Definitions.

For purposes of this part:

(a) *Administrator* means the Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, United States Department of Labor, and such authorized representatives as may be designated by the Administrator to perform any of the functions of the Administrator under this part.

(b) *Administrative Law Judge* means a person appointed as provided in title 5 U.S.C. and qualified to preside at hearings under 5 U.S.C. 557. Chief Administrative Law Judge means the Chief Administrative Law Judge, United States Department of Labor.

(c) *Agricultural association* means any nonprofit or cooperative association of farmers, growers, or ranchers, incorporated or qualified under applicable State law, which recruits, solicits, hires, employs, furnishes, or transports any migrant or seasonal agricultural worker.

(d) *Agricultural employer* means any person who owns or operates a farm, ranch, processing establishment, cannery, gin, packing shed or nursery, or who produces or conditions seed, and who either recruits, solicits, hires, employs, furnishes, or transports any migrant or seasonal agricultural worker.

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Produces seed means the planting, cultivation, growing and harvesting of seeds of agricultural or horticultural commodities. *Conditions seed* means the in-plant work done after seed production including the drying and aerating of seed.

(e) *Agricultural employment* means employment in any service or activity included within the provisions of section 3(f) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 203(f)), or section 3121(g) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (26 U.S.C. 3121(g)) and the handling, planting, drying, packing, packaging, processing, freezing, or grading prior to delivery for storage of any agricultural or horticultural commodity in its unmanufactured state.

(f) *Convicted* means that a final judgment of guilty has been rendered by a court of competent jurisdiction from which no opportunity for appeal remains.

(g) *Day-haul operation* means the assembly of workers at a pick-up point waiting to be hired and employed, transportation of such workers to agricultural employment, and the return of such workers to a drop-off point on the same day. This term does not include transportation provided by an employer for individuals who are already employees at the time they are picked up nor does it include carpooling arrangements by such employees which are not specifically directed or requested by the employer, farm labor contractor or agent thereof.

(h)(1) The term *employ* has the meaning given such term under section 3(g) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 203(g)) for the purposes of implementing the requirements of that Act. As so defined, *employ* includes to suffer or permit to work.

(2) The term *employer* is given its meaning as found in the Fair Labor Standards Act. *Employer* under section 3(d) of that Act includes any person acting directly or indirectly in the interest of an employer in relation to an employee.

(3) The term *employee* is also given its meaning as found in the Fair Labor Standards Act. *Employee* under section 3(e) of that Act means any individual employed by an employer.

(4) The definition of the term *employ* may include consideration of whether or not an *independent contractor* or *employment* relationship exists under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Under MSPA, questions will arise whether or not a farm labor contractor engaged by an agricultural employer/association is a bona fide independent contractor or an employee. Questions also arise whether or not the worker is a bona fide independent contractor or an employee of the farm labor contractor and/or the agricultural employer/association. These questions should be resolved in accordance with the factors set out below and the principles articulated by the federal courts in *Rutherford Food Corp. v. McComb*, 331 U.S. 722 (1947), *Real v. Driscoll Strawberry Associates, Inc.*, 603 F.2d 748 (9th Cir. 1979), *Sec'y of Labor, U.S. Dept. of Labor v. Lauritzen*, 835 F.2d 1529 (7th Cir. 1987), *cert. denied*, 488 U.S. 898 (1988); *Beliz v. McLeod*, 765 F.2d 1317 (5th Cir. 1985), and *Castillo v. Givens*, 704 F.2d 181 (5th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 464 U.S. 850 (1983). If it is determined that the farm labor contractor is an *employee* of the agricultural employer/association, the agricultural workers in the farm labor contractor's crew who perform work for the agricultural employer/association are deemed to be employees of the agricultural employer/association and an inquiry into joint employment is not necessary or appropriate. In determining if the farm labor contractor or worker is an employee or an independent contractor, the ultimate question is the economic reality of the relationship—whether there is economic dependence upon the agricultural employer/association or farm labor contractor, as appropriate. *Lauritzen* at 1538; *Beliz* at 1329; *Castillo* at 192; *Real* at 756. This determination is based upon an evaluation of all of the circumstances, including the following:

(i) The nature and degree of the putative employer's control as to the manner in which the work is performed;

(ii) The putative employee's opportunity for profit or loss depending upon his/her managerial skill;

(iii) The putative employee's investment in equipment or materials required for the task, or the putative employee's employment of other workers;

(iv) Whether the services rendered by the putative employee require special skill;

(v) The degree of permanency and duration of the working relationship;

(vi) The extent to which the services rendered by the putative employee are an integral part of the putative employer's business.

(5) The definition of the term *employ* includes the *joint employment* principles applicable under the Fair Labor Standards Act. The term *joint employment* means a condition in which a single individual stands in the relation of an employee to two or more persons at the same time. A determination of whether the employment is to be considered joint employment depends upon all the facts in the particular case. If the facts establish that two or more persons are completely disassociated with respect to the employment of a particular employee, a joint employment situation does not exist. When the putative employers share responsibility for activities set out in the following factors or in other relevant facts, this is an indication that the putative employers are not completely disassociated with respect to the employment and that the agricultural worker may be economically dependent on both persons:

(i) If it is determined that a farm labor contractor is an independent contractor, it still must be determined whether or not the employees of the farm labor contractor are also jointly employed by the agricultural employer/association. *Joint employment* under the Fair Labor Standards Act is joint employment under the MSPA. *Such joint employment* relationships, which are common in agriculture, have been addressed both in the legislative history and by the courts.

(ii) The legislative history of the Act (H. Rep. No. 97-885, 97th Cong., 2d Sess., 1982) states that the legislative purpose in enacting MSPA was “to reverse the historical pattern of abuse and exploitation of migrant and seasonal farm workers * * *,” which would only be accomplished by “advanc[ing] * * * a completely new approach” (Rept. at 3). Congress’s incorporation of the FLSA term *employ* was undertaken with the deliberate intent of adopting the FLSA *joint employer* doctrine as the “central

foundation” of MSPA and “the best means by which to insure that the purposes of this MSPA would be fulfilled” (Rept. at 6). Further, Congress intended that the *joint employer* test under MSPA be the formulation as set forth in *Hodgson v. Griffin & Brand of McAllen, Inc.* 471 F.2d 235 (5th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 414 U.S. 819 (1973) (Rept. at 7). In endorsing *Griffin & Brand*, Congress stated that this formulation should be controlling in situations “where an agricultural employer * * * asserts that the agricultural workers in question are the *sole* employees of an independent contractor/crewleader,” and that the “decision makes clear that even if a farm labor contractor is found to be a bona fide independent contractor, * * * this status does not as a matter of law negate the possibility that an agricultural employer may be a joint employer * * * of the harvest workers” together with the farm labor contractor. Further, regarding the *joint employer* doctrine and the *Griffin & Brand* formulation, Congress stated that “the absence of evidence on any of the criteria listed does not preclude a finding that an agricultural association or agricultural employer was a joint employer along with the crewleader”, and that “it is expected that the special aspects of agricultural employment be kept in mind” when applying the tests and criteria set forth in the case law and legislative history (Rept. at 8).

(iii) In determining whether or not an employment relationship exists between the agricultural employer/association and the agricultural worker, the ultimate question to be determined is the economic reality—whether the worker is so economically dependent upon the agricultural employer/association as to be considered its employee.

(iv) The factors set forth in paragraphs (h)(5)(iv)(A) through (G) of this section are analytical tools to be used in determining the ultimate question of economic dependency. The consideration of each factor, as well as the determination of the ultimate question of economic dependency, is a qualitative rather than quantitative analysis. The factors are not to be applied as a

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checklist. No one factor will be dispositive of the ultimate question; nor must a majority or particular combination of factors be found for an employment relationship to exist. The analysis as to the existence of an employment relationship is not a strict liability or *per se* determination under which any agricultural employer/association would be found to be an employer merely by retaining or benefiting from the services of a farm labor contractor. The factors set forth in paragraphs (h)(5)(iv)(A) through (G) of this section are illustrative only and are not intended to be exhaustive; other factors may be significant and, if so, should be considered, depending upon the specific circumstances of the relationship among the parties. How the factors are weighed depends upon all of the facts and circumstances. Among the factors to be considered in determining whether or not an employment relationship exists are:

(A) Whether the agricultural employer/association has the power, either alone or through control of the farm labor contractor to direct, control, or supervise the worker(s) or the work performed (such control may be either direct or indirect, taking into account the nature of the work performed and a reasonable degree of contract performance oversight and coordination with third parties);

(B) Whether the agricultural employer/association has the power, either alone or in addition to another employer, directly or indirectly, to hire or fire, modify the employment conditions, or determine the pay rates or the methods of wage payment for the worker(s);

(C) The degree of permanency and duration of the relationship of the parties, in the context of the agricultural activity at issue;

(D) The extent to which the services rendered by the worker(s) are repetitive, rote tasks requiring skills which are acquired with relatively little training;

(E) Whether the activities performed by the worker(s) are an integral part of the overall business operation of the agricultural employer/association;

(F) Whether the work is performed on the agricultural employer/association's

premises, rather than on premises owned or controlled by another business entity; and

(G) Whether the agricultural employer/association undertakes responsibilities in relation to the worker(s) which are commonly performed by employers, such as preparing and/or making payroll records, preparing and/or issuing pay checks, paying FICA taxes, providing workers' compensation insurance, providing field sanitation facilities, housing or transportation, or providing tools and equipment or materials required for the job (taking into account the amount of the investment).

(i) *Farm labor contracting activity* means recruiting, soliciting, hiring, employing, furnishing, or transporting any migrant or seasonal agricultural worker.

(j) *Farm labor contractor* means any person—other than an agricultural employer, an agricultural association, or an employee of an agricultural employer or agricultural association—who, for any money or other valuable consideration paid or promised to be paid, performs any farm labor contracting activity.

(k) *Farm Labor Contractor Certificate of Registration* or *Certificate of Registration* means the certificate issued by the Administrator which permits a farm labor contractor to engage in farm labor contracting activities.

(l) *Farm labor contractor employee* who is required to obtain a Certificate of Registration as an employee of a farm labor contractor means a person who performs farm labor contracting activity solely on behalf of a farm labor contractor holding a valid Certificate of Registration and is not an independent farm labor contractor who would be required to register under the Act in his own right.

(m) *Farm Labor Contractor Employee Certificate* or *Farm Labor Contractor Employee Certificate of Registration* or *Employee Certificate* means the certificate issued by the Administrator to an employee of a farm labor contractor authorizing the performance of farm labor contracting activities solely on behalf of such farm labor contractor and not as an independent farm labor

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contractor who would be required to register in his own right.

(n) *Illegal alien* means any person who is not lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the United States or who has not been authorized by the Attorney General to accept employment in the United States.

(o) *Immediate family* includes only:

- (1) A spouse;
- (2) Children, stepchildren, and foster children;
- (3) Parents, stepparents, and foster parents; and
- (4) Brothers and sisters.

(p) *Migrant agricultural worker* means an individual who is employed in agricultural employment of a seasonal or other temporary nature, and who is required to be absent overnight from his permanent place of residence.

(1) *Migrant agricultural worker* does not include:

(i) Any immediate family member of an agricultural employer or a farm labor contractor; or

(ii) Any temporary nonimmigrant alien who is authorized to work in agricultural employment in the United States under sections 101(a)(15)(H)(ii)(a) and 214(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

(2) *Permanent place of residence*, with respect to an individual, means a domicile or permanent home. Permanent place of residence does not include seasonal or temporary housing such as a labor camp. The term *permanent place of residence* for any nonimmigrant alien is that individual's country of origin.

(q) *Person* means any individual, partnership, association, joint stock company, trust, cooperative, or corporation.

(r) *Seasonal agricultural worker* means an individual who is employed in agricultural employment of a seasonal or other temporary nature and is not required to be absent overnight from his permanent place of residence:

(1) When employed on a farm or ranch performing field work related to planting, cultivating, or harvesting operations; or

(2) When employed in canning, packing, ginning, seed conditioning or related research, or processing operations, and transported, or caused to be transported, to or from the place of

employment by means of a day-haul operation.

(i) *Seasonal agricultural worker* does not include:

(A) Any migrant agricultural worker;

(B) Any immediate family member of an agricultural employer or a farm labor contractor; or

(C) Any temporary nonimmigrant alien who is authorized to work in agricultural employment in the United States under sections 101(a)(15)(H)(ii)(a) and 214(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

(ii) *Field work related to planting, cultivating or harvesting operations* includes all farming operations on a farm or ranch which are normally required to plant, harvest or produce agricultural or horticultural commodities, including the production of a commodity which normally occurs in the fields of a farm or ranch as opposed to those activities which generally occur in a processing plant or packing shed. A worker engaged in the placing of commodities in a container in the field and on-field loading of trucks and similar transports is included. Nursery, mushroom and similar workers engaged in activities in connection with planting, cultivating or harvesting operations are intended to be covered. An individual operating a machine, such as a picker, or tractor is not included when performing such activity.

(s) *On a seasonal or other temporary basis* means:

(1) Labor is performed on a seasonal basis where, ordinarily, the employment pertains to or is of the kind exclusively performed at certain seasons or periods of the year and which, from its nature, may not be continuous or carried on throughout the year. A worker who moves from one seasonal activity to another, while employed in agriculture or performing agricultural labor, is employed on a seasonal basis even though he may continue to be employed during a major portion of the year.

(2) A worker is employed on *other temporary basis* where he is employed for a limited time only or his performance is contemplated for a particular piece of work, usually of short duration. Generally, employment, which is

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contemplated to continue indefinitely, is not temporary.

(3) *On a seasonal or other temporary basis* does not include the employment of any foreman or other supervisory employee who is employed by a specific agricultural employer or agricultural association essentially on a year round basis.

(4) *On a seasonal or other temporary basis* does not include the employment of any worker who is living at his permanent place of residence, when that worker is employed by a specific agricultural employer or agricultural association on essentially a year round basis to perform a variety of tasks for his employer and is not primarily employed to do field work.

(t) *Secretary* means the Secretary of Labor or the Secretary's authorized representative.

(u)(1) *Solicitor of Labor* means the Solicitor, United States Department of Labor, and includes attorneys designated by the Solicitor to perform functions of the Solicitor under these regulations.

(2) *Associate Solicitor for Fair Labor Standards* means the Associate Solicitor, who, among other duties, is in charge of litigation for the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (MSPA), Office of the Solicitor, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC 20210.

(3) *Regional Solicitors* means the attorneys in charge of the various regional offices of the Office of the Solicitor.

(v) *State* means any of the States of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and Guam. *State agency* means a State agency vested with all powers necessary to cooperate with the U.S.

Department of Labor for purposes of entering into agreements to carry out the Act as provided in section 513 thereof.

(w) *Temporary nonimmigrant alien* means a person who has a residence in a foreign country which he does not intend to abandon and who comes temporarily to the United States, with approval of the Attorney General, to perform temporary service or labor.

(x) The *Wagner-Peyser Act* is the Act of June 6, 1933 (48 Stat. 113; codified in 29 U.S.C. 49 *et seq.*), providing, inter alia, for the establishment of the U.S. Employment Service. *Employment Service of the various States* means a State agency vested with all powers necessary to cooperate with the U.S. Employment Service under the Wagner-Peyser Act.

(y) The *Immigration and Nationality Act* (INA) as amended by the *Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986* (IRCA) to effectively control unauthorized immigration to the United States and for other purposes, is set out in 8 U.S.C. 1101 *et seq.*

[48 FR 36741, Aug. 12, 1983; 48 FR 38374, Aug. 23, 1983, as amended at 54 FR 13329, Mar. 31, 1989; 56 FR 54708, Oct. 22, 1991; 62 FR 11747, Mar. 12, 1997; 82 FR 2227, Jan. 9, 2017; 86 FR 1786, Jan. 11, 2021]

APPLICABILITY OF THE ACT: EXEMPTIONS

§ 500.30 Persons not subject to the Act.

(a) *Family business exemption.* Any individual who engages in a farm labor contracting activity on behalf of a farm, processing establishment, seed conditioning establishment, cannery, gin, packing shed, or nursery, which is owned or operated exclusively by such individual or an immediate family member of such individual, if such activities are performed only for such operation and exclusively by such individual or an immediate family member, but without regard to whether such individual has incorporated or otherwise organized for business purposes.

(b) *Small business exemption.* Any person, other than a farm labor contractor, for whom the man-days exemption for agricultural labor provided under section 13(a)(6)(A) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 213(a)(6)(A)) is applicable. That exemption applies to an agricultural employer who did not, during any calendar quarter of the preceding calendar year, use more man-days of agricultural labor than the limit specified under that statute.

(1) Currently the limit for exemption is 500 man-days.