

LABOR

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receive enough support in the Senate. Julie Suarez, of the New York Farm Bureau, said serious economic repercussions could result.

Farm Credit Associations of New York conservatively estimated more than 900 farms, \$195 million in agricultural production, and more than 200,000 acres will be lost due to the current disruption in the labor force.

Such losses would raise prices and, most likely, increase the amount of food imported from other countries, said apple farmer John Teeple, of Teeple Farms in Wayne.

“And that increases food safety risks because we lose control over the quality of the food,” said Teeple.

Farmers looking to replace migrant workers say they can’t find any takers in the local labor supply.

“I think this country is doomed without Mexican labor,” said one dairy farmer. “American people won’t work.”

The dairy farmer, who wanted to remain anonymous for fear the INS would raid his farm, admitted he had three illegal immigrants working for him. He would prefer his workers could be here legally.

He said when he puts ads in the paper, locals respond but they want weekends off and big pay. Those that do get hired tend to last between two hours and a week, he said.

“If I had to go back to American labor I would leave farming,” he said.

Jeff Morris, of Glenora Farms in Dundee, said he tried to bring in high school students over Easter break but found most of them unreliable and inefficient.

Wagner said he’s heard the complaint migrants workers take away jobs from Americans. However, as a fourth-generation farmer, his impression is the local work force has dried up.



ERIC WENSEL | THE LEADER

Vintners and the migrant workers they hire are closely watched.

Census data released Friday shows 225,000 residents left New York between July 2005 and July 2006, according to the Business Council of New York State, Inc. In the same time period, 125,000 legal immigrants came to New York.

Also, area farmers said they don’t know of anyone in the region not paying top dollar to migrant workers.

Fruit and vegetable farmers paid workers according to how much they pick.

Most of the migrant workers picking apples at Teeple Farms make about \$12 an hour, Teeple said.

The dairy farmer said he pays his employees between \$7.50-\$9 an hour and provides housing.

“I pay my workers more than minimum wage because I am afraid to lose them,” he said.

Many other farmers say they make every attempt to hire people here legally.

In the grape industry, vineyard owners mostly hire their workers through a crew boss who brings documents for each worker.

“I have paperwork on everybody who comes in and I don’t racially profile,” said Wagner. “I am not going to be the INS and do background checks.”

Suarez said farmers tend to be in a legal bind even if they suspect one of their workers

gave false information. In the same letter the Social Security Department sends to notify a discrepancy, it says the employee cannot be fired.

Instead, the employer must check with the worker about the inconsistency, who will most likely give a new Social Security number, she said. By the time the paperwork has been processed, the immigrant worker has usually moved on.

Furthermore, the agricultural industry and particularly the wine industry, tends to be watched closely by the state and federal governments, said James Trezise, president of the New York Wine and Grape Foundation.

But while various arms of government may have a tight grip on the industry, Trezise admitted there might not be anyone specifically overseeing a business’ labor force.

That is one thing that concerns Bob Misuraca, regional representative for the United Steelworkers union.

“People should have the opportunity to come into the country, but immigrants need to be paid fairly, follow the laws, and not take away jobs from citizens,” he said.

Misuraca said some area companies stopped hiring union employees for landscaping and began contracting the work out. Now there are illegal immigrants doing the work for less wages, he said.

But Misuraca sides with agriculture and wants the 12 million illegal immigrants already in the country to be given a path to citizenship without first having to go home.

“People don’t understand what the ramifications would be to eliminate 12 million people from the work force,” said Wagner. “If farmers are given a way to work within legal boundaries they will. But when they are given hoops to jump through, it does not give them a fair shot at doing business.”



ERIC WENSEL | THE LEADER

The Pride Ride stopped Saturday in the Wegmans parking lot in Corning.

It’s Christmas in July at annual Pride Ride

Annual benefit benefits Toys for Tots holiday drive

BY JOHN ZICK
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It was loud, fun and for a good cause.

Hundreds of bikers – many lugging passengers – took to Twin Tiers roadways Saturday for the 12th annual Pride Ride, an event that collects toys to donate to needy kids during Christmas.

Last year, Pride Ride raised \$25,000 worth of toys for the local “Toys for Tots” program. This year, organizers hoped to raise even more, and by the number of bikers participating, that goal wasn’t out of reach, participants said.

“A great turnout,” said Corning resident Dominic Lisi, who was riding with his 14-year-old son, Devin. “I think it’s a terrific thing. It’s for a good cause and a good time.”

The horde of bikers, each donating a toy, started Saturday morning at the Elmira-Corning Regional Airport and meandered through the Twin Tiers, ultimately ending back at the airport and parading onto the runway before “Set the Night to Music,” a fireworks show.

The group traveled through downtown Elmira to Athens, Pa., headed west to Mansfield, Pa., then rode north to Corning. After a Crystal City stop, the bikers rode to Watkins Glen for a lap around the track at Watkins Glen International, then made their way back to the airport.

At the Corning stop, Lee Parks and his 9-year-old son, Chase, met up with the rest of the family. Last year, Lee Parks rode with his daughter, Kira, 12, and next year, his wife wants to ride.

“It’s for a good cause,” said Sheri Parks. “Next year it’s my turn.”

Chase said Pride Ride went “really good.”

“It’s been kind of loud with all the Harleys and crotch-rockets,” Chase said.

Lee Parks said he’s been riding motorcycles for nearly 30 years and his Pride Ride experiences have been exciting.

“The best part is the race track and the runway at the airport,” Lee Parks laughed. “There’s no speed limit.”

The Parks family donated a combo set of games, and the Lisis – traveling with the riding club Southern Cruisers – kicked in a remote-controlled car.

“(Pride Ride) is not about who you are,” Dominic Lisi said. “It’s about what you’re doing.”

SEVEN-DAY FORECAST

WETM 18 Storm Team
Chief Meteorologist Scott Mayer
Meteorologist Joe Pasquarelli
Meteorologist Matthew Szwedjka

Today	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Partly sunny, unseasonably cool	Mostly sunny and breezy	Partly cloudy, afternoon sprinkles	Partly sunny, chance of sct. showers	More clouds than sun	Partly cloudy, chance for showers	Partly cloudy, chance for showers
High 71 Low 44	High 75 Low 44	High 76 Low 45	High 76 Low 55	High 80 Low 65	High 76 Low 55	High 79 Low 56

National forecast
Forecast highs for Sunday, July 1

Fronts
Cold Warm Stationary

Pressure
Low High

Legend
Showers Rain T-storms Flurries Snow Ice

	YESTERDAY			TODAY			TOMORROW		
	Hi	Lo	Prc	Hi	Lo	Otk	Hi	Lo	Otk
Albany	77	59		76	50	Clr	72	50	Clr
Albuquerque	95	66		96	65	PCldy	97	67	Clr
Amarillo	82	55		87	59	PCldy	87	63	PCldy
Anchorage	66	45		65	51	PCldy	61	52	Cldy
Bismarck	88	56		92	63	Clr	92	68	PCldy
Boise	94	68		87	58	Clr	96	61	Clr
Boston	70	65	.02	83	58	Clr	74	59	PCldy
Brownsville	91	75		92	76	PCldy	92	77	PCldy
Buffalo	76	58		73	53	Clr	69	51	Clr
Burlington,Vt.	74	52		72	50	PCldy	67	47	PCldy
Casper	99	47		93	55	Clr	93	55	Clr
Charleston,S.C.	92	73		91	73	Rain	88	74	Cldy
Charleston,W.Va.	82	69	.48	83	61	PCldy	82	56	Clr
Charlotte,N.C.	92	73		88	71	Rain	89	69	PCldy
Cheyenne	85	52		89	55	Clr	91	57	Clr
Chicago	70	56		79	54	Clr	75	57	PCldy
El Paso	95	71	.09	99	70	PCldy	102	72	PCldy
Evansville	82	70		85	65	PCldy	85	69	PCldy
Fairbanks	83	56		79	56	PCldy	78	54	Rain
Fargo	80	51		84	61	Clr	86	64	Clr
Flagstaff	86	45		89	46	Clr	90	47	Clr
Grand Rapids	79	57		76	52	Clr	75	54	Clr
Great Falls	91	59		81	57	PCldy	85	53	PCldy
Greensboro,N.C.	91	71	.01	87	69	Cldy	84	66	PCldy
Raleigh-Durham	92	73	.18	87	71	Clr	85	69	PCldy
San Juan,P.R.	89	77		92	79	Rain	93	78	Rain
Sioux Falls	80	52		84	57	Clr	86	65	PCldy
Spokane	75	61	.14	74	49	Clr	80	49	PCldy
Syracuse	73	57		73	53	PCldy	69	51	PCldy
Tampa	92	74		89	75	PCldy	92	77	PCldy

Flooded-out Texans urged to leave after returning home

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WEATHERFORD, TEXAS | A few hours after the Brazos River subsided enough to allow residents to return to their homes, a new threat of flooding on Saturday may force them to leave again.

The river was expected to rise over flood stage after Brazos River Authority officials opened a fourth flood gate at Possum Kingdom Lake in north Texas on Saturday afternoon.

Parker County officials urged residents to seek higher ground for the night, saying that flood waters could re-enter homes that had been flooded earlier last week.

County spokesman Joel Kertok said roads near the river were waterlogged and remained barricaded. “It still could be a deadly situation and that is why we’re strongly urging people to stay out of the water,” he said.

Storms on the southern Plains have claimed 11 lives in Texas starting last week. On Saturday, there were reports of tornadoes touching down in southwest Missouri. No injuries or damages were reported.



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lacey Mitchell carries her sons Jaxxon, three months, and Dauntae, four years, as her husband, Mikey Mitchell, follows behind in high water in Wichita Falls, Texas.

In southeastern Kansas, three days of rain led to voluntary evacuations in Iola.

“Various sections in the south of town are under water, and the water is climbing,” said assistant city administrator Corey Schinstock. “We have had over 15 inches of rain the last three days. ...All the creeks are flooding.”

East of Iola, emergency workers used ropes and a harness to rescue two teenagers

trapped on top of a pickup truck. They were trapped for about two hours after the truck became wedged against a tree at a low-water crossing in Crawford State Park, the Crawford County sheriff’s department said.

Lt. Chuck Yokley of the Kansas Highway Patrol said some homes and businesses in Neodesha, Kan., were damaged from flooding and that residents were being told to boil their drinking water.

CENSUS

Continued from 1A

The declining population led former U.S. Rep. Amory Houghton Jr., R-Corning, to remain in Congress during a pivotal period after the 2000 Census. Houghton’s seniority in the House was a key factor when federal districts were redrawn after 2002, according to Houghton’s aid Bob VanWicklin.

At that time plans for the district included annexing portions of the Southern Tier

to the nearest major city, said VanWicklin, now spokesman for U.S. Rep. John R. “Randy” Kuhl Jr., R-Hammondsport.

Instead, the district was expanded north to include a portion of Monroe County. “Randy, of course, definitely feels there needs to be a Southern Tier-based seat,” Van Wicklin said.

According to the NYSAC study, Southern Tier growth ranged from a 4 percent jump in Tompkins County to a 2.7 percent decline in Chemung

County. To the west, only Allegany County showed any growth, with a 0.7 percent increase, according to the study.

But even if the lines are redrawn to include all of Monroe County, it is possible a Southern Tier politician would remain in Congress, VanWicklin said.

“It all has to do with voter turnout,” VanWicklin said. “In the Southern Tier, voters turned out. In Monroe, they didn’t.”