



# **From Interns and Apprentices to H2A Attempts to Address Farm Labor Needs**

**Luna Bleu Farm  
Tim Sanford & Suzanne Long  
South Royalton, VT**



**First Five years of our farm:  
Covering all labor ourselves. Barter with Friends for help,  
Family coercion.....**

**1993-2003. Relied primarily on Apprentices (2-3/season)  
(and family coercion)**

**2003. More regular hiring local part-time to full-time wage  
labor in addition to Apprentices**

**2015. More dependence on local full-time and part-time  
wage labor. Phased out apprentices.**

**2018. Our daughter and her husband came to work with us**

**2020. Applied for H2A visa program, and Covid sets in**

**2025. Will be 6<sup>th</sup> season with workers from Mexico, and  
local labor**



**Established the farm in 1988 on leased land  
Lebanon, NH then Strafford, VT in 1991**

**Veggies, chickens, family milk cow, beef cows**

**Propagation greenhouse only infrastructure**

**Lucas born 1990 Shona born 1991**

**Tim worked full time off farm until spring 1991**





## **Markets:**

**Norwich VT Farmers Market**

**Hanover NH Food Coop**

**Restaurants: Three Tomatoes  
in Lebanon NH and  
D'Artagnon's in Lyme NH**

**In 1991 started a small CSA in  
Strafford VT**





**In 1993 we purchased 42 acres in South Royalton.**

- **5-6 acres flat tillable land with access to water**
- **15 acres pasture for beef cows and poultry**

**Monthly mortgage payments were sometimes tough in the first few years**

**We could slowly invest in infrastructure and grow our business and improve our production and cash flow.**









# Apprenticeship years

Balancing the Practical, Philosophical and Reality



What resources did we have to offer?

- Food
- Experience and training
- Housing
- Money

Over time the quality (and quantity) of these items increased and we were able to shift what was offered so they perhaps are seen in a different order:

- Housing
- Money
- Training and experience
- Food

We were always asking if we able to pay more, and how do we create more learning opportunities?



# H2A Requirements Benefits & Challenges

- Free housing, meeting inspection standards
- Pay cost of transportation and subsistence to and from home in country of origin
- Provide free daily transportation from housing to worksite and for regular shopping for provisions
- All workers must be paid the AEWR wage or more (Adverse Effect Wage Rate) \$18.83 for NE 2025
- Hiring an agent such as Reliable Labor Services or Southern Impact is recommended to navigate visa process and insure your workers are not forced to pay any fees during the recruitment or visa process.



