



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mauritson Farms, Inc. Agrees to Pay \$328,077 to Settle Unfair Labor Practice Complaint that Workers Hired Through The H-2A Visa Program Were Refused Rehire Because They Complained about Dirty Restrooms, Denial of Rest and Meal Breaks and Supervisor Mistreatment

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HEALDSBURG, Calif. – Mauritson Farms, Inc. located in Healdsburg, California agreed to pay \$328,077 in lost wages to 21 agricultural workers to resolve a Complaint filed by the California Agricultural Labor Relations Board (“ALRB”) that the company refused to rehire the workers because they complained about working conditions including dirty restrooms, denial of rest and meal breaks, and foreman mistreatment.

Mauritson Farms recruited and hired many of the same farmworkers through the H-2A guestworker program in 2019, 2020 and 2021. In 2021, several of these workers sought assistance and support from the Santa Rosa-based nonprofit North Bay Jobs with Justice (NBJWJ), which helped them communicate their complaints to Mauritson Farms. During the subsequent season in 2022, Mauritson Farms continued using crews of H-2A workers but did not rehire any of its H-2A employees who had worked during the prior seasons, including all the workers who had complained about conditions in the prior season. NBJWJ then filed a claim with the ALRB alleging that the company’s failure to rehire the workers was in retaliation for their complaints during the 2021 season. The ALRB investigated the claim and filed a complaint against Mauritson Farms in March 2023.

In its June 28, 2023 settlement agreement with the ALRB, Mauritson Farms agreed to compensate the entire crew of H-2A workers who were not rehired for lost wages, as well as to uphold the rights of farmworkers, including workers hired through the H-2A guestworker program, to join together to speak up and seek improvements to their working conditions. As agreed, ALRB agents will go to Mauritson Farms’ worksites to read a Notice to all agricultural workers about their rights under the Agricultural Labor Relations Act (“ALRA”). This Notice will be posted at the ranches for 75 days, and mailed to current and former employees.

The ALRB enforces the ALRA, which states that “it is the policy of the State of California to encourage and protect the right of agricultural employees to full freedom of association, self-

organization, and designation of representatives of their own choosing, to negotiate the terms and conditions of their employment, and to be free from the interference, restraint, or coercion of employers of labor, or their agents, in the designation of such representatives of in self-organization or in other concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection.” The ALRB is headquartered in Sacramento and maintains field offices in Santa Rosa, Salinas, Oxnard, Visalia, and Indio. Those wishing to access ALRB services may call any ALRB office including the Santa Rosa office at (707) 527-3256, or a statewide toll-free phone number, (800) 449-3699. More information is available at www.alrb.ca.gov.

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