

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PICNIC AND PUBLIC HEARING

On Sunday UAMOS hosted its annual Farmworker Appreciation Day Picnic to thank the migrant farmworkers and families for their hard work while in Wisconsin.

Each year, 4,000-5000 migrant farmworkers, mainly from Texas and Florida, travel to Wisconsin to supplement the state's agricultural workforce. "Without migrant farmworkers, many Wisconsin farmers, and farmers nation-wide, would not be able to bring their products to market," says Lupe Martinez, President and Chief Executive Officer, UAMOS. "They are essential to Wisconsin's agricultural economy."

Farmworker families enjoyed hot dogs, hamburgers, chicken sandwiches and ice cream supplied by Culvers, as well as corn on the cob donated by area growers. The Farmworker Appreciation Day Picnic took place at the UAMOS Migrant Head Start Center in Beaver Dam. Approximately 150 attended.

Also, The Wisconsin Council on Migrant Labor, a state statutory council, held their annual public hearing on the UAMOS grounds before the picnic. The Council is comprised of state legislators, farmworker advocate organizations and agricultural employers. The Council is coordinated by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development.

The purpose of the hearing was to listen to testimony from agricultural employers, farmworker advocates and organizations, farmworkers, community members and other interested parties.

Issues raised by representatives from Legal Action of Wisconsin included:

-migrant work agreements

-Wisconsin's migrant farmworkers face barriers in meeting work search requirements required for receiving Unemployment Insurance

-many Wisconsin farmworkers, both documented and undocumented, are unable to access a Wisconsin Driver's License.

The Council hearing took place from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Sunday.

UMOS is a non-profit, advocacy organization that provides programs and services which improve the employment, educational, health and housing opportunities of under-served populations.