

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue has issued a statement applauding the Department of Labor's final rule modernizing the H-2A visa program.

He said this final rule streamlining and modernizing the H-2A visa process "will go a long way in ensuring American farmers have access to a stable and skilled workforce, all while removing unnecessary bureaucratic processes.

"USDA's goal is to help farmers navigate the complex H-2A program that is administered by Department of Labor, Department of Homeland Security, and the State Department so hiring a farm worker is an easier process," said Secretary Perdue.

"These modernizations make the Federal government more responsive to our customers, ensuring American agriculture continues to lead the world for years to come."

The final rule will streamline the H-2A application process by mandating electronic filing of job orders and applications.

These elements are designed to bring the H-2A application process into the digital era, by harnessing the power of the FLAG electronic filing system to share information with other federal agencies like the Department of Homeland Security while also sharing information with the State Workforce systems and domestic farmworkers.

Additionally, the final rule will provide additional flexibilities to cut down on unnecessary burdens on the agricultural employers that use the program.

These flexibilities include the ability to stagger the entry of workers into the country over a 120-day period and allowing agricultural employers the flexibility to file a single application for different dates of need instead of multiple applications.