

How a Computer Glitch Might Make Your Peaches Pricier This Summer

News

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Ann Margaret Pointer was quoted on *Motherboard* on June 18, 2015. The article “How a Computer Glitch Might Make Your Peaches Pricier This Summer” discussed how cherries, cucumbers, and tomatoes might be more expensive this summer thanks to a computer glitch that’s prevented hundreds of seasonal workers from getting the visas needed to come work at US farms.

“It’s going to be a crisis,” said Ann Margaret.

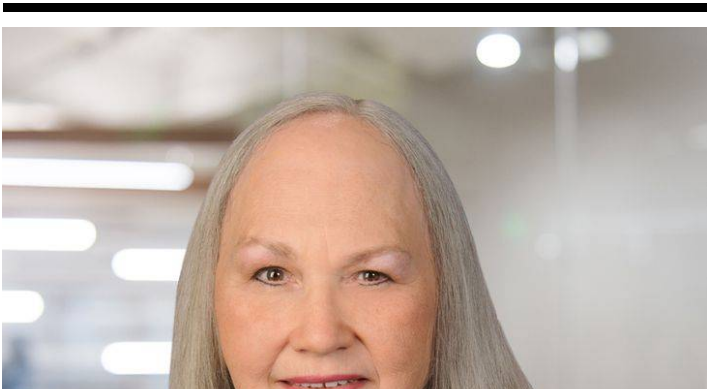
“The farmers need them badly,” she said. “If the work isn’t done, the crops can be lost.”

Ann Margaret recalled one colleague’s client in South Dakota who is “desperate for 30 workers to pick his cucumbers.” Cucumbers have to be within a certain size and weight for market sale: if they grow too big, they become bitter. But they grow so quickly that if they’re not harvested at the right time they can grow too big in just one night, according to the Farmer’s Almanac, which recommends checking the plant daily once the fruit starts to grow. If cucumbers grow too big, not only is that fruit lost, but also it prevents the plant from starting to grow a new cucumber until the old, fat one is picked. Once a backlog starts, it can be impossible to catch up without the needed hands, Ann Margaret said. And when farms lose crops, there’s always a risk that prices could rise.

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