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Professionalizing Migrant Workers Good for All Involved in Fresh Produce Supply Chain

CIERTO Co-Founder Tapped for International Panel on Sustainable Recruiting

In April, CIERTO Co-Founder and CEO, Joe Martinez was himself recruited to participate in a panel on fair recruitment in Agriculture. The panel took place at the 2021 Global Forum for Responsible Recruitment (GFFR).

CIERTO is one of [North America's leading recruiters](#), dedicated to assisting employers with the federal H-2A visa program by recruiting, training, and placing experienced, ethically recruited workers on farms in the United States and Mexico.

The annual conference [provides a platform](#) for global brands, suppliers, recruitment agencies, governments, employers and employers' organizations, workers and workers' organizations, intergovernmental, and civil society organizations to plan collaboratively and strategically to accelerate the fair, ethical, and responsible recruitment of migrant workers.

Mr. Martinez was asked to participate on the Fair Recruiting in Agriculture panel thanks to his leadership spearheading the idea that ethical recruiting practices are better for every participant, at every link, up and down the global fresh produce supply chain.

"Responsible recruitment is not just a social cause. It's good business as well. These workers are professional and this is skilled labor. They've been working the land, and they know how best to harvest their crops in a manner that's going to be the best, most efficient way."

His assertion – that clean recruitment can provide dependable jobs for recruits, labor supply stability for growers, reputation protection for brands, and safe, affordable produce for consumers – is something of a paradigm shift in the international migrant workers recruitment community.

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The old paradigm held that for growers and brands to profit and to remain competitive, they would be forced to at least look the other way regarding unethical recruiting, if not to actually encourage shady recruiting practices.

Some of the activities Martinez noted during the panel include forcing workers to pay for access to jobs, poor housing conditions, hijacked wages, and – for female workers – a culture tolerant of sexual abuse.

In spite of, *or perhaps because of*, this still-unorthodox stance, CIERTO, has grown substantially since Martinez founded the recruiting firm with Axel García in late 2014, becoming one of the largest international recruiting agencies operating in North America.

His goal is to drive home the idea that there's no conflict between responsible recruiting and profitable farming operations. In fact the professionalism and dedication that responsibly recruited workers bring to the table is a huge net plus for growers and brands.

"Once we've established clean, ethical recruiting as the baseline, we have an opportunity to demonstrate that agricultural workers are professionals, and that this is a skilled labor force. By working to ensure fair recruiting, we ensure that they have a voice, and the opportunity to come to a farm, give their all, and to share their expertise."

During the panel, Martinez stressed that above all, the way to ensure the integrity of the supply chain is for the entire web of organizations and businesses involved in recruiting to cooperate, noting that "it takes an ecosystem of entities working together to achieve ethical recruitment."

CIERTO and Martinez are currently focusing on strategies to incentivize ethical recruiting, providing consulting and tool kits, and continuing to excel at providing H-2A recruitment services.

"When you treat workers with dignity and respect, they bring the best to their employment. It's not just the right thing to do; it makes good business sense."

Highlights of the panel are available here: <https://www.ciertoglobal.org/fair-recruitment-in-ag/>.

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CIERTO is one of North America's leading recruiters, dedicated to assisting employers with the federal H-2A visa program. We recruit, train, and place experienced workers on farms in the United States.

Our mission is to actively develop and maintain a professional, career-oriented, agricultural workforce, committed to returning to farms year after year