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[00:00:00] **Speaker 1** Oh, they just cut my audio to you. I'm sorry. We can pick it up on the back end, but that's cool. I want to hear about it.

[00:00:11] **Speaker 2** We are recording.

[00:00:31] **Speaker 1** This week the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency confirmed the arrest of 24 undocumented immigrants in Manitowoc County, one of whom was arrested for sexual assault of a child in May, according to authorities. A few others have convictions for traffic offenses, including drunk driving and possession of narcotics equipment. Immigrant advocates said some of those detained were dairy workers swept up in the raid. Is ICE coming for immigrant farm workers who supply upwards of 80% of the labor milking cows on Wisconsin dairy farms? We turn to longtime dairy farmer who employs workers from Mexico on his Western Wisconsin operation, John Roseno, who joins us from Buffalo County. And thanks very much for being here.

[00:01:17] **Speaker 2** Glad to be here.

[00:01:18] **Speaker 1** So have you seen or heard about immigration enforcement on farms in Wisconsin?

[00:01:25] **Speaker 2** No, so far there hasn't been any and not on wood. There's been one in Vermont and one in New Mexico in the United States since the election.

[00:01:35] **Speaker 1** How dependent on immigrant labor are Wisconsin dairy farms?

[00:01:41] **Speaker 2** Any farm that employs anybody is going to have immigrants on any dairy farm. And we estimate, I sat down with a CEO of a large dairy co-op a number of years ago. At that point, we determined based on everything that we know that at least 80%, and I would guess 90% of the milk harvested every day in Wisconsin is harvested by immigrants. Thank you.

[00:02:09] **Speaker 1** And so are these workers in the U.S. Legally?

[00:02:15] **Speaker 2** Well, there is no visa available for immigrants to get to work on dairy farms. The H2A visas for short-term employment, 10 months, and dairy is 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. So there is not legal way for them to get here.

[00:02:39] **Speaker 1** And so the answer would be that most of these people are not legally in the U.S.

[00:02:47] **Speaker 2** That would be my guess. What each employer has to do, whether you're a dairy farmer or you're steel mill, is you have to fill out an I-9 and a W-4 within three days of employment. And you look at the documents, and if you're reasonable person, according to the directions from the IRS, if you look the documents and they appear genuine, you accept them, and that's what we do. And all of our employees have green cards.

[00:03:17] **Speaker 1** So the latest version of the Farm Workforce Modernization Act of 2025 would make those H2A visas year-round and allow for a path to permanent residency for dairy workers. What do you think about this legislation and where might that go?

[00:03:38] **Speaker 2** Well, it's not going to go anywhere because none of them do. And we've had, probably from the last 25 years that I've been involved in this, I think every year somebody introduces something and nothing ever happens. Most of the time it's political posturing. People introduce a bill and then they tell their constituents that they're doing something about it, but it never gets out of committee. Nobody wants to touch it. And so I have no hope. Like I told somebody, I think it'd be better off, rather than reading the bill, it'd better off if I went and walked my dog.

[00:04:11] **Speaker 1** So you're cynical about this, and in the meantime dairy farmers need to do the work.

[00:04:18] **Speaker 2** We have to get those cows milked every day. I've been to Washington and I talked to the Republicans. The Republicans say, as soon as we get the border secure, then we'll do something. And I talked with the Democrats and they say, well, we've got no power, so I can't do anything. In the meantime, we have to the cows milk and that's what farmers do. If Congress isn't going to do their work, we still have to milk the cows. We still have produce the milk. We still had to deliver calves. We can't just sit and wait for some political posturing. We have to do reelection things and everything else. So we get things done and that's what we need to do.

[00:04:55] **Speaker 1** What are your own 13 immigrant workers saying in the midst of the current climate on immigration enforcement?

[00:05:04] **Speaker 2** When the current president was elected last time, there was a lot more concern and not a lot happened to them or their friends or neighbors or people they knew. So this time they're going with it's going to be the same as last time. So they're probably less concerned this time than they were last time

[00:05:24] **Speaker 1** So do you suspect that even in the midst of this kind of heightened ice activity that there is a recognition that farmers, particularly dairy farmers, need this labor?

[00:05:39] **Speaker 2** Yes, I've been involved in a few calls with leadership in the administration, conference calls. And what I can gather from that is that there are two factions, one faction led by Stephen Miller that thinks all immigrants are bad, doesn't make any difference who or where you are. They've all got to go. And then the other side is people from like Secretary of Agriculture, Secretary of Labor. And Secretary of Homeland Security are on the other side that there are immigrants that are really helping the country. And I think this is the battle that's happening within the administration. I hope common sense prevails.

[00:06:20] **Speaker 1** We leave it there. John Rosenau, thanks very much. I've got to say it's super cool that you've been on conference calls with Stephen Miller and the Secretary of Agriculture.

[00:06:39] **Speaker 2** Well, the Secretary of Agriculture with Stephen Miller, no.

[00:06:42] **Speaker 1** Oh, yeah. Well, super interesting stuff, and thank you for your perspective. And I think we'll follow up via email about what you're doing with your workers and their families and that, what you were about to tell me.

[00:07:07] **Speaker 2** Yeah, we have our grand opening is at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire at the McIntyre Library, October 14th at 4 p.m.

[00:07:15] **Speaker 1** Oh, that's coming right up.

[00:07:17] **Speaker 2** Yeah, so we think it's good. It's some recognition of people that maybe don't get recognized very often, and they deserve it. They're the real heroes.

[00:07:30] **Speaker 1** Can you send me anything you have on that?

[00:07:35] **Speaker 2** We will do that.

[00:07:36] **Speaker 1** Thank you. Thank you again for doing this with us.

[00:07:40] **Speaker 2** Okay, thank you.