

# The teams that never quit are the teams that win



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You hear the crack of the bat. You have just hit a short bouncer right to the third baseman. She fields it easily, turns, sets her stance and prepares to throw to the man on first. Do you stop running to watch her throw you out? Or, do you give it all you have and bear down on first base just in case she hesitates, mists, or the first basemen is pulled off the bag or misses the ball and it rolls past him into the dugout.

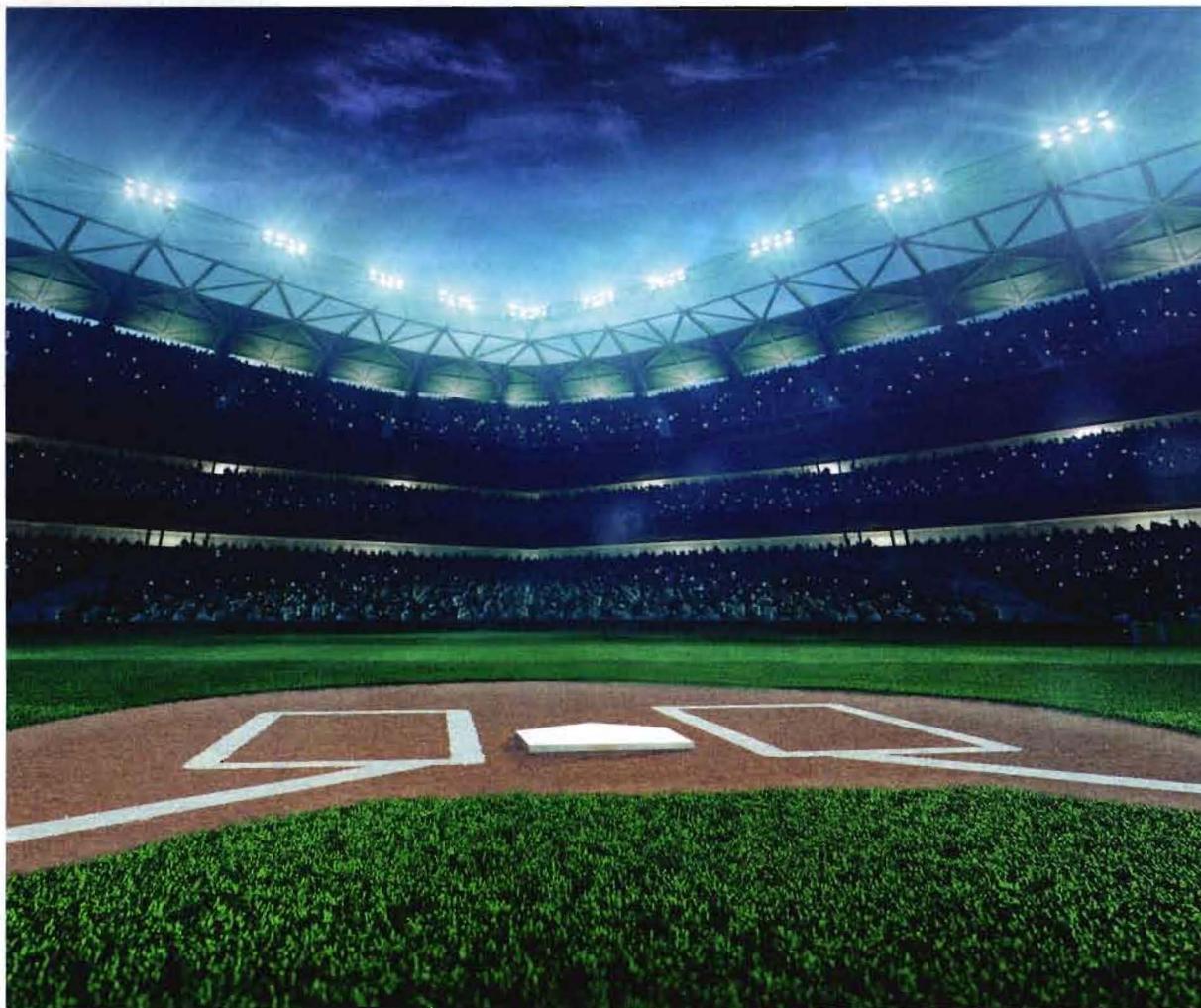
By the time you read this, the 2016 World Series will most likely be history, and all the players will have a few weeks off before they begin to prepare for next season. For some players, winter will be a time of passing the baton to the next generation – something that I, and many of us boomers, are thinking about more and more these days.

It is easy to worry about “how the youngsters will do when we are not there.” Believe it or not, the answer to that question is they will do just fine!

Last month, we talked about how the “game” of being an agricultural employer is rapidly changing. We talked about whether there is a future for the next generation. Again, the correct answer is yes, there is a bright future – it will just be different than our reality.

We have an election coming up. 2017 may bring us potential for new legislative proposals. Perhaps we will have an opportunity to fix, or at least improve, some of the laws that govern agricultural labor – particularly immigration. Regardless of who is elected, there will be either readjustments or wholesale changes in the leadership of regulatory and enforcement agencies, so we expect to be able to improve the regulatory climate, at least.

But separate from the regulations that govern workforce availability, there are regulatory actions, dating back as long ago as 1938, that the next generation of agricultural employers will deal



with. Regardless of this year's election, the issues of agricultural exemptions and exceptions relative to many issues will be re-opened and re-determined.

Immigration will be resolved – or not – but regardless, we will be dealing with a smaller labor pool and competing with other industries and countries. We, the agricultural employer community, must learn to talk about these issues, including discussing potentially less preferred fallback options and strategies without accusing one another of “selling out” or engaging in yet another “agricultural circular firing squad.” We must look forward and not re-fight the battles and causes

of the past. We need to talk and work through real strategies, and sometimes accommodations, to allow our businesses to thrive.

Back to the baseball analogy. The teams that fight to win instead of fighting with one another, and never quit on any play no matter how hopeless, are the teams who win in the end. Whether your preferred candidates win in November, team agriculture needs you to leg-out every hit, field every foul ball and keep slugging every time you go to the plate on immigration, labor issues, regulations and other issues that will keep us, and the next generation, in the game for the long haul. **VGN**