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Latino Community Studies and Outreach

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Sliced and Diced: The Labor We Eat
(taken from Christopher Cook’s book, “Diet for a Dead Planet”)

Outline

• Definitions
• Demographics
• History of Migrant Farmworkers in WA
• Contributions
• Recommendations

Data taken from various sources including: “The New Rural Poverty” by Philip Martin et al; “The Endless Cycle: Migrant Life in the Yakima Valley” by Karen M. James, et.al, PEW Hispanic Center, National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS), AFL-CIO, National Center for Farmworker Health (NCFW), and others.
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Definitions
Definitions

A migrant farmworker is a seasonal farmworker who had to travel to do the farm work so that he/she was unable to return to his/her permanent residence within the same date (DOL).

A migrant farmworker is someone who works primarily in agriculture or an agriculture-related industry, like food processing. Migrant farmworkers move from 'home base' communities in patterns known as "migrant streams“ (HUD).
A seasonal agricultural worker is a person employed in agricultural work of a seasonal or other temporary nature who is not required to be absent overnight from his or her permanent place of residence. (MSAWPA)

Seasonal workers for the purpose of the WA survey are those working less than 150 days per year (WA State Employment Security Agency)
KANSAS/NEBRASKA
WASHINGTON
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers

Demographics and Employment
North America, 1820
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Streams
Farmworker trends 1950-2006

While the total number of farmworkers has declined, the share of hired farmworkers has grown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Family Farmworkers</th>
<th>Hired Farmworkers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>6.35</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>1.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Data collection on the number of family farmworkers was discontinued in 2001.

Note: Family farmworkers include self-employed farmers and unpaid family members. Hired farmworkers include direct hires as well as agricultural service workers who are often hired through labor contractors. For more information, see box on this page.

## Farmworkers and their disadvantage in the labor market

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Noncitizen</th>
<th>Citizen</th>
<th>Noncitizen</th>
<th>Citizen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>82.7</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>50.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic ethnicity</td>
<td>94.6</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than ninth grade education</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican-born</td>
<td>90.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-1986 U.S. entry (foreign-born)</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>60.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only Spanish spoken in household</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>55.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children under 18 in household</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age (years)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Employment characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment characteristics</th>
<th>Noncitizen</th>
<th>Citizen</th>
<th>Noncitizen</th>
<th>Citizen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median weekly earnings (dollars)</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median hourly wage (dollars)</td>
<td>7.50</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>13.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed part-time (percent)</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed (percent)</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median unempl. duration (months)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union membership (percent)</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>1412.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of workers</td>
<td>284,315</td>
<td>472,470</td>
<td>12,082,393</td>
<td>116,455,584</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hired farmworkers  Other wage and salary workers
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers in Washington
Historical view

• First report of migrant workers: 1929
• In 1936, the State conducted the first survey on farm labor in the Yakima Valley
• In 1942, Yakima County was described as the worst area in the nation in treatment and housing of migrant farm workers
• The Bracero Program (1942-1964) sent more than 5 thousand Mexican farm laborers to Washington by 1945.
Additionally, many migrant workers came from Texas in 1949 due to droughts and lack of employment opportunities.

Other migrant workers came after irrigation dramatically expanded tree fruit and vegetables agriculture in the 50’s and 60’s.
Latinos/as in Washington

Hispanic/Latino Population
Washington State, 2006

Note: Hispanic is an ethnic category. Hispanics may be of any race.
Percent change Latinos/as 2000-2008

Source: Increasing Diversity in Washington State, Annabel Kirschner, 2009
Washington Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers and Non-workers
Total - 289,235

Washington Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers
Total workers: 93,582 (w/o families) in 2006

Besides CA, WA and OR employ the largest numbers of farmworkers.

Seasonal agricultural employment grew by 15.7 percent from March 2008 to March 2009.

187,000 farmworkers labor in Washington's fields and orchards in an average year and 102,000 are dependent family members.

70 percent of the farmworkers are year-round residents of Washington.

The average income for a farmworker family is $17,596/year. This is only 35 percent of the state median income.
Cesar Chavez, Migrant Farmworker Leader

YouTube - A History of Hispanic Achievement in America - Cesar Chavez.URL

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VcZKjlva2Js
Latino workers in agriculture
Social and Economic

• Provide key labor in the food and agriculture industry
• Help slow down or stop population decline
• Revitalize rural communities
• Increase state and federal funding for schools, clinics, hospitals, and other social services
• Increase the local tax base and use local services
• Introduce cultural and social diversity
Latino workers in agriculture

What Can You Do?
Opportunities

• On campus: Get informed and get involved (Join Student Clubs concerned with Latino issues, attend events, talk to faculty and ask for info or classes on similar topics)

• At home: Educate family members on MSFW’s role and issues in WA (talk about this presentation, your related readings, ask for their thoughts)

• In your community/church: Participate and/or organize events that address MSFW, visit a farm with migrant farmworkers and a farmworker camp
Resources

• “Diet for a Dead Planet” by Christopher Cook
• “The Human Cost of Food” Ed. by Charles Thompson Jr and Melinda Wiggins.
• “With These Hands” by Daniel Rothenberg
• “Mexican Labor and World War II: Braceros in the Pacific Northwest, 1942-1947” by Erasmo Gamboa
• “The New Rural Poverty” by Philip Martin, et al
Resources (cont.)

• National Center for Farmworker Health (www.ncfh.org)
• National Agricultural Workers Survey (http://www.doleta.gov/agworker/naws.cfm)
• Washington State Migrant Council (http://www.wsmconline.org/)
• Latinos in Northwest Project (http://www.josealamillo.com/latinos%20northwest.htm)
• Yakima Valley Farm Worker Clinics (http://www.yvfwc.com/)
“We are sons and daughters of the farm workers' revolution, a revolution of the poor seeking bread and justice.”

Cesar Chavez, Farmworker leader
Thank you!

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