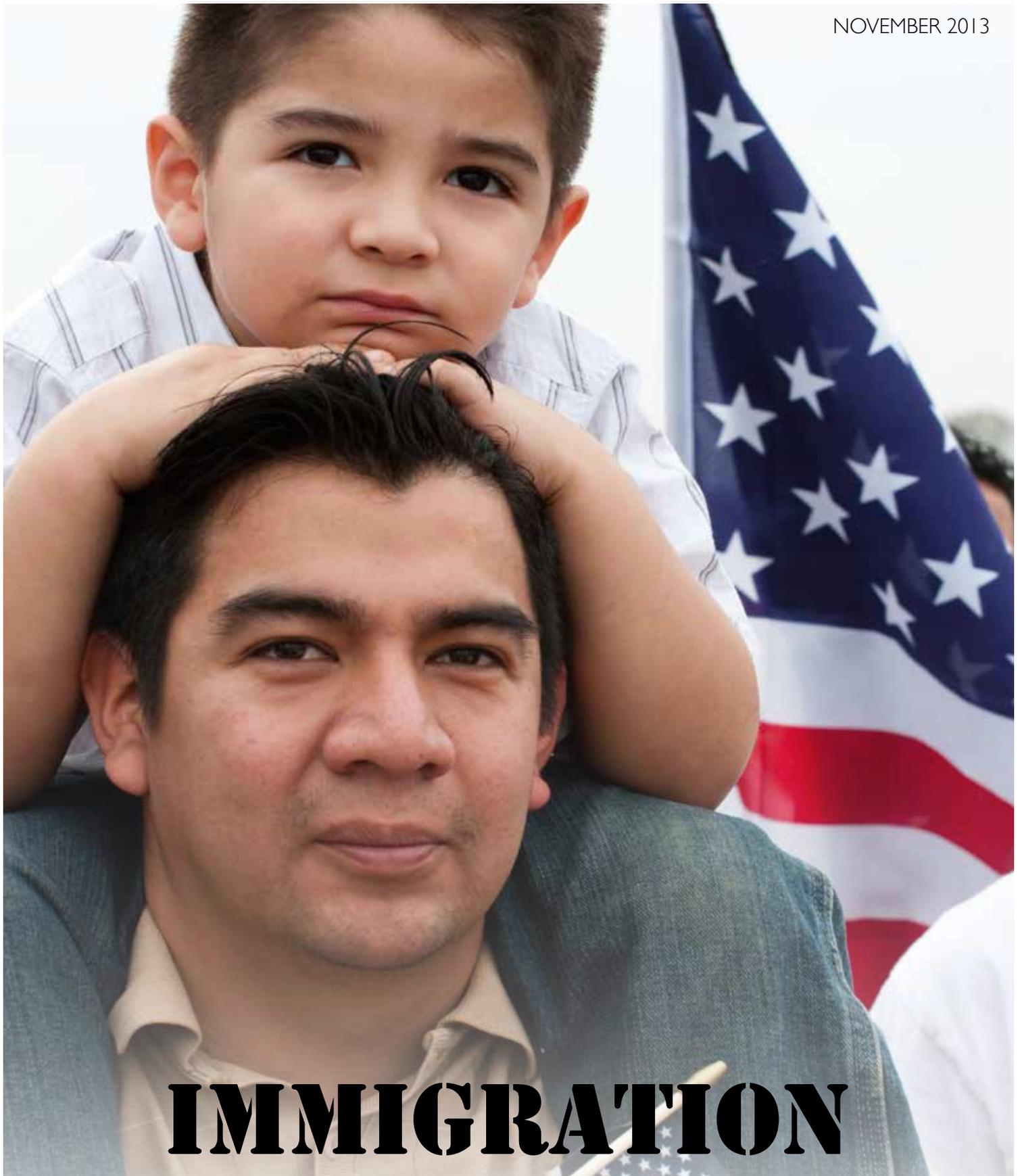


# RuralCONNECTIONS

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# IMMIGRATION



## RuralCONNECTIONS

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Driven by high levels of immigration, Hispanic and Asian populations have increased dramatically in the West and the rest of the US in recent decades. In 1980, 73.8 percent of the residents of the West were White; by 2010 this proportion had been reduced to 52.8 percent. At present, the populations of three western states (California, Hawaii, and New Mexico) have become majority-minority areas as less than one-half of the residents of the state are White. Between 1980 and 2010, the Hispanic population in the West increased by 229 percent while the Asian population grew by 202 percent. In comparison, the number of White residents in the West increased by only 19.4 percent. Between 1980 and 2010, the total population of the West increased by 28.8 million people. Hispanic population growth accounted for about one-half of this increase and Asian population growth accounted for an additional 15 percent. An additional feature of immigration is that immigrants tend to be relatively young. Consequently Hispanic and Asian populations are likely to continue to grow rapidly in the future with or without continued immigration. For example, only 24.8 percent of the residents of the West age 18 and older are Hispanic while 56.9 percent are White. In comparison, among residents of the West who are 17 years old or younger, 40.6 percent are White and 40.1 percent are Hispanic. In California the 2010 Census revealed that there were 4.8 million Hispanics age 17 and younger compared to 2.5 million Whites in this same age group.

High levels of immigration and growing minority populations present both opportunities and challenges for residents and communities of the West. In this issue of *Rural Connections*, we are pleased to provide articles written by experts from throughout the West that provide guidance on both enhancing the benefits and addressing the issues and challenges emerging as a consequence of these changes. Our hope is that these articles will help achieve two major objectives. First, we hope these articles provide insights to help guide immigration policy discussions. As noted by Jim Peach in this volume, US immigration policy is in need of a major overhaul as current policies are convoluted, confusing, and not aligned with economic reality. Policy decisions should be guided by the best available information. Second, we hope community leaders and extension professionals use this information to guide program development for and discussions in relation to their increasingly diverse communities.

--Don E. Albrecht, Director

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"The most important issue regarding effects of potential immigration legislation is a high degree of uncertainty. Data, such as that discussed in this brief article, can tell us that the impacts of comprehensive immigration reform will not be uniform across states or regions. The data can also tell us that the West will be impacted differently than the rest of the nation." Page 7.

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# The History of Immigration and Demographic Trends in the Western United States

BY SABRINA TUTTLE

## Introduction

In this article I will outline the history of immigration, from the first populations of Native Americans, through European colonization and subsequent penetration of European, Asian, and more recent Latin American immigrant groups, and the effect on both the demography and rural development in the US West, from the distant past to the present. Each immigrant wave has had varying effects upon US population and landscape, and upon how rural areas developed and diffused from urban areas and small towns, into remote areas, from east to west through the late nineteenth century, a continuous, complex phenomenon, which can be difficult to articulate. The middle of the 20th century showed the opposite demographic trend, as large numbers of people moved from rural areas and small towns to cities, until the 1970s, when a rural reversal of population began to repopulate certain areas deemed desirable because of abundant natural resources with recreational and other amenities, including the Mountain and Pacific West.

## History of Immigration in the United States and the US West

After working with two Native American Tribes, I am wary of documenting historical and anthropological movements that do not agree with tribal origin stories, some of which would contradict the historical record, in order not to offend native peoples. On the other hand, recent historical findings about the first immigrants to North America, do concur with some tribal origin stories: "like North America's Native People, anthropologists and archeologists also have creation stories which explain how America's native peoples came to be . . . it's not a better story, just a different one" (Smith, 2007). Smith outlines the commonly accepted theory that Native peoples in North America came across a land bridge that formed between Siberia and Alaska during the last Ice Age, approximately 12,000 years ago. These groups were large game hunters, who entered the new continent when an ice free corridor opened in British Columbia; the migrating groups reached the Great Plains around 11,400 years ago, and then dispersed throughout the US and Mexico. Recently, however, this theory seems to be too simple, according to new findings. The crossing may have occurred on an ice-free corridor through the Pacific Coast of the Americas, as the oldest findings of inhabitation are in South America.

Additional theories support boat crossings from Europe, similar to the Viking boat routes of approximately 1,000 years ago, as there seem to be similarities in technologies and tools between the Solutrean people who resided in France and the Clovis people who were denizens of North America. Initial arrival of people in the Americas range from 12,500 to as much as 30,000 years ago (Smith, 2007). As the groups dispersed and settled, at first they mostly exhibited nomadic, hunter-gatherer, egalitarian socio-political systems, focused on subsistence, which later evolved, in some cultures, to sedentary settlements with very complicated, often extremely stratified class and economic systems. Later groups began to affect the landscape and society in different ways, by using fire, developing trade routes, and producing pottery. By 3,000-5,000 years ago, some peoples became full-time agriculturists and built cities of over 10,000 people, or built complex housing and apartments and roads connecting their settlements (Smith, 2007).





The “discovery” of America by Italian Christopher Columbus, under the auspices of Spain’s King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella in 1492, began the process of European immigration to North America. This gradual influx would irrevocably change the lives of the first immigrants to the continent, which Columbus called “Indians.” The period of colonization, which England, France, and Spain engaged in from the 16th through the 18th century, eventually propelled two independent revolutions that led to the countries of the United States of America in 1776, and Mexico in 1821. Even before the first large wave of European immigration in 1820 to the US, Native Americans were in conflict with the early colonists and later citizens of both countries, and more established US residents complained about the poverty and pauperism of new immigrants, whose perceptions and realities concerning immigrants still remain in both rural and urban areas today. Initially, some European groups, such as William Penn’s colony of Pennsylvania, strove to treat Native peoples fairly, as well as some political figures in the early US government such as Secretary of War Henry Knox in 1789, who stated, “The Indians, being the prior occupants, possess the right of the soil. It cannot be taken from them unless by their free consent, or by the right of conquest in a just war. To dispossess them on any other principle would be a gross violation of the fundamental laws of nature, and of that distributive justice which is the glory of a great nation.” Others, such as the commissioner to Iroquois representatives negotiating the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1784, were not as generous – he stated the following, “You are mistaken in supposing you are a free nation . . . You are a subdued people, you have been overcome in war in which you entered into with us.” (Schmoop, 2012).

The first wave of immigrants arrived from Europe, due to more available ocean transport, and US employer recruitment, as well as hopes for a better life, and from 1820 to 1860, several million immigrants arrived, mostly from northeastern Europe. The 1862 Homestead Act, where new and more established residents could occupy vacant land for farming, dispersed even more people, and increased the migration toward the western US. The next wave of European immigrants hailed primarily from Southern Europe, and manifested differences of language, religions, and culture; therefore, assimilation into the existing society was more complicated. Though immigrants eventually became economically successful, social perceptions were that they were not. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 halted Chinese labor immigration. Also, governmental Acts limiting those who were poor and illiterate, and eventual passage of the Immigration and Nationality Acts of 1921 and 1924, set immigration quotas which were biased toward northwestern Europe.

Therefore, 1930-1965 was a time of limited immigration, except for during WWII and with exceptions such as the Mexican Bracero program, where farmers recruited farmworkers from Mexico. Congress amended the Immigration and Nationalization Acts to eliminate country quotas in 1965, but the amendments also placed limits on numbers of people who could emigrate from Mexico (Gabbaccia, 2013). After this time, more immigrants from Latin America and Asia entered the US, who were poorer and also exhibited diversity in cultural, language, and appearance. Concerns about US worker replacement in agriculture and meat packing arose, as well as with other employment, as agricultural workers shifted to more permanent positions, and affected the economies of both urban and rural areas (Jensen, 2006).

Although the highest number immigrants, as well as illegal immigrants, to the US, now come from Mexico, and many US citizens have ancestors who lived in areas that originally belonged to Mexico—in the current states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, and California, which were acquired by the US through purchase or war in the 19th century. The Mexican Revolution (1916-1921) was an agrarian revolution that led to land reform and freedom from the oppressive rule of hacienda owners who forced peasants to work in plantations or on ranches as peons (Wikipedia, 2013). In the US, the Green Corn Rebellion highlighted the concerns of the Mexican Revolution—1,500 white, black, and Native American tenant farmers organized a working class rebellion against capitalist agriculture and the US government, which ultimately failed, but showed solidarity among disparate races who were oppressed, and originally immigrants or migrants to Oklahoma (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2009). Later protests by Mexican and Mexican-American migrant farmworkers in the 1960s to the present have been more successful in raising wages, values for piecework, or better living conditions through organized boycotts of the companies they work for or secondary boycotts of grocers who sell their products, although they faced strong opposition from their employers. These protesters organized groups such as the United Farmworkers and Families United for Justice (Karáni, 2013).

### **Historical and Current Demographic Trends of the US West**

After the European westward expansion of the 17th-19th centuries, and the often violent appropriation of tribal territories by the US government, who relocated Native Americans either in other territories (such as Oklahoma) or on reservations, by the end of 19th century, the US population was relatively dispersed between cities, towns, and rural areas that were adjacent to cities and towns, or very remote. A 2004 report from Montana Fish, Wildlife

and Parks claimed that migration from east to west was “indeed the driving force. From the mid-18th century until the mid-19th century, the migration was more like a bleeding of population from the densely populated eastern core cities into adjacent territory to the west. After 1850, larger numbers of people moved in successive waves, starting with miners and homesteaders, followed by thousands of European immigrants and the native born citizens they were displacing” (p.1). Toward the end of that century, however, a reversal occurred, as agriculture became more mechanized and less labor intensive, and over several decades, rural residents flocked to the cities for better work opportunities and more amenities. This trend continued until 1970 (Johnson, 2006). President Teddy Roosevelt was extremely concerned about this rural depopulation and formed the Country Life Commission in 1909. The Commission noted several rural ‘deficiencies’ of unstable crop prices, lack of farm credit access, land ownership amalgamation, environmental degradation, lack of transportation and communication infrastructure, limited healthcare access, and a paucity of educational facilities. Despite modernization and post-modernization, these deficits still exist today (De Alessi, 2012). Surveys from this Commission indicated that “bad roads, parasitic middlemen, and a discriminatory transportation system” (Koch 2012, p.3) as problems by rural residents noted. The establishment of the national parcel post (1912), as well as the Federal Aid Road Act (1916) aimed to ameliorate some rural ills.

Conservation was another goal of the Teddy Roosevelt’s Administration, because population growth as well as immigrants streaming into new areas had caused a depletion of mineral, range, and timber resources, in addition to mismanaged waterways—federal control of some land resources for conservation resulted in “the creation of national forest reserves, regulation of grazing and logging on public lands, and reclamation of arid lands through large scale irrigation projects” (Koch, 2012, p.3). Farmers were seen as the “salt of the earth,” and it was they who held the rural social and democratic fabric together. Through education, provided by the federal government in the form of the agricultural extension service and research experiment stations of each states’ land grant agricultural college, extension agents encouraged farmers to adopt a scientific viewpoint and new technologies, in order to become more productive to support the food needs of burgeoning future US populations. These institutions helped to educate rural populations, but did not stem the tide of migration to the cities (Koch, 2012).

Yet, since 1970, the urban migration has reversed yet again, as more people head for certain types of rural areas, and for various reasons. The Mountain West and the Pacific

Northwest are two areas where reverse migration has occurred, and an increase in immigration to these areas has concurrently happened. Through the 1980s, an increase in farm employment reduced poverty, but by the 1990s “a 100 person increase in farm employment was associated with an 85 person increase in poverty” (Jensen, 2007, p. 16). This suggests an interrelation between farm employment, immigration, and poverty. Seasonal farmworkers, who have low wages, cannot contribute as much to the economic growth of their communities (Taylor et al., 2006). However, Mexican immigrants who have left the Southwest for other areas of the country reduced their poverty rate. Many more established immigrants have followed the increased migration of the elderly and young adult populations that relocated in tourism-based economies of the Mountain West and West Coast, as well as other gentrified areas of the US. The flux of the aging baby boom generation and rich young adults into areas where natural resource amenities promote tourism and retirement opportunities, has generated employment in recreation services such as the arts, entertainment, lodging, and food services, as well as construction, which drew immigrants to work. Other specialized agricultural crops and food processing job opportunities in Oregon and Washington, such as vegetable, grass, and flower seeds, garlic, mint, sugar beets, apples, green peas, and potatoes, also attracted immigrant workers. The immigrant populations in these areas have greatly increased. Many new immigrants are Mexican Hispanics, and these relatively younger populations with a higher rate of natural increase can invigorate rural communities, although they can also overload community services such as education (Jensen, 2007). Communities that have been insular in the past also have to adapt to a multicultural environment, and schools also must adapt to a bilingual culture.

While rural areas in the US West are still comprised of mostly Caucasian populations, Asians, African Americans, Native Americans in some areas, and especially Hispanics from established, migrant, or immigrant populations—show a higher rate of migration and immigration than whites, with the exception of older Caucasians. Therefore, the US West is now more diverse than ever, and in numerous rural counties, but not all, this is driving richer economic and social growth in areas that were stagnant or losing population. ●



# immigration and IMMIGRATION POLICY in the west

BY JIM PEACH

National policies affect individual states in an uneven fashion. A change in Social Security affects states with older populations (Florida) differently than states with a young population (Utah). A change in environmental policy, such as requiring reduced emissions from coal fired electric generation plants, will impact coal producing states (Wyoming) differently than states that do not produce coal. An increase or decrease in military spending impacts states with a large number of military installations (Virginia) more than states with relatively few military installations (Montana). There are few if any, geographically neutral national policies. Immigration policy is no exception. How changes in immigration law might affect the American West is the central focus of this article.

The West can be defined in a variety of ways. The Census Bureau defines the West region to include the Mountain Division (AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT, and WY) and the Pacific Division (AK, CA, HI, OR, and WA). Here, only the eight states in the Mountain Division will be considered.

US immigration policy is in need of a major overhaul. The current convoluted and complex laws governing immigration are not aligned with economic reality or national policy. This assessment of US immigration policy is widely shared by those who favor more immigration and those who are opposed to more immigration. Pressure on Congress to pass some form of 'comprehensive' immigration reform is intense. No one can predict with certainty whether or not Congress will pass significant immigration legislation in 2013 or 2014 but we can be reasonably confident that any such legislation will not end the immigration debate. Immigration policy in the US has always been controversial.

Whether new legislation is enacted or the nation continues to be guided by current immigration law, the effects of immigration, legal and illegal, vary widely by state and region. Regions and states vary widely in terms of population growth, population density, income

levels, and economic structure. As a result, some regions are more likely destinations for both domestic and international migrants than others. Indeed, there is also considerable variation in demographic and economic conditions within states and these differences also are important determinants of the effects of immigration.

The Senate passed Immigration legislation (Senate Bill 744) on June 27, 2013. Although the House has not passed similar legislation, SB744 provides a useful guide to the type of immigration policies under consideration. First, SB744 would increase the amount of money spent on immigration enforcement by \$46.3 billion over ten years. Most of this money, as well as the economic impacts, would be spent in the four states bordering Mexico (CA, AZ, NM, and TX). Second, SB744 creates a new type of visa (Registered Provisional Immigrant) for those immigrants who entered the US before 2012, were not convicted of a felony, and paid all taxes. The RPI visas are intended to address a portion of the estimated 11-12 million so-called undocumented immigrants currently resident in the US. Obviously, the impact of RPI visas on individual states will depend on where potential RPI eligible people reside. Third, SB 744 places restrictions on access to federal benefit programs for many immigrants. These programs include Social Security, Medicaid, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and some benefits under the Affordable Care Act. These and other federal programs with restricted benefits affect some states more than others. SB744 also requires all employers (large and small) to use the federal electronic verification system (E-Verify). While this provision of SB744 would be phased in over a period of years, strict enforcement of employment eligibility would be a major change in whether or not immigrants could obtain employment.

Nativity and citizenship are powerful influences on income and poverty levels. In 2011, median household income in the US was \$50,054. Among households in which the householder was foreign-born but not a naturalized citizen, median income was \$37,894 – nearly

“No one can predict with certainty whether or not Congress will pass significant immigration legislation in 2013 or 2014 but we can be reasonably confident that any such legislation will not end the immigration debate. Immigration policy in the US has always been controversial.”



25 percent lower than all households. In sharp contrast, the median income of foreign-born households in which the householder was a naturalized citizen was \$51,926 – more than \$1,000 higher than the median income of native-born householders. Poverty data show a similar pattern. For the US population, the poverty rate was 15.0 percent. The foreign-born population's poverty rate was 19.0 percent. Among the foreign-born who had become naturalized citizens the poverty rate was 12.5 percent—a figure lower than that of the native born (14.4 percent) and much lower than for the non-citizen foreign-born population (24.5 percent) [DeNavas-Walt et al., September 2012].

The number of undocumented immigrants in the US is an unknown quantity. The Department of Homeland Security estimates that there were 11.5 million unauthorized immigrants on January 1, 2011. The Pew Foundation estimate for 2010 is 11.2 million with a range of 10.7 and 11.7 million. Given the restrictions in SB744, perhaps half of the estimated undocumented immigrants will qualify for RPI visas.

The Pew Foundation also estimated the number of undocumented persons by state (Figure 1). The uncertainty of the estimates by state is larger than for the nation. According to these estimates, there are about one million undocumented persons in the eight

western states. Three-quarters of those (770,000) reside in Arizona, Colorado, and Nevada. Three states (Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming) account for only five percent of the western states total.

If the state estimates are correct, the percent of undocumented persons in the western states (4.7 percent) is higher than the national average (3.6 percent). As a result, the proposed changes to immigration law such as SB744 would have a greater impact in the West than in the rest of the nation. Among the western states, the impacts would be highly concentrated in Arizona, Colorado, and Nevada.

Estimates of the undocumented population by county are not available, but the Census Bureau provides estimates of the number of foreign-born by county. In Arizona the foreign-born population is 1.75 percent of the total population in Apache County and 24.5 percent in Yuma County. Similar ranges occur in the other western states. The impacts of immigration reform are likely to vary as much from county to county as from state to state.

Some insight into the impact of SB744 or similar legislation can be gained by examining poverty rates, which are often used to determine eligibility for federal benefit programs such as SNAP. The overall poverty

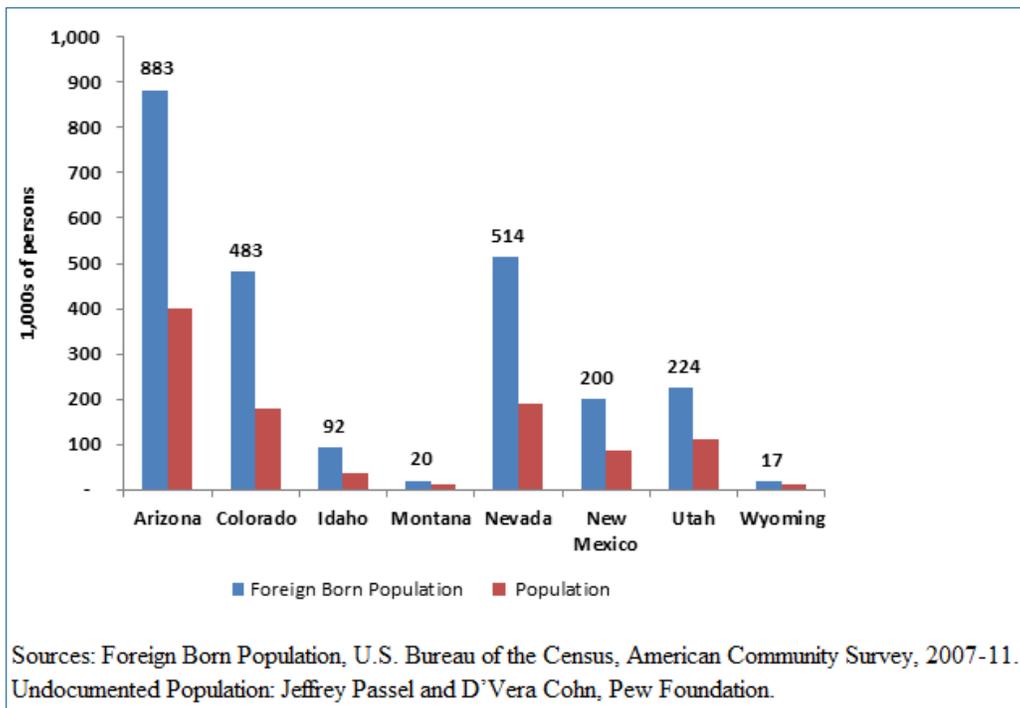


Figure 1. Foreign Born and Undocumented Persons in Eight Western States.

rate in the eight western states is the same as the national rate (14.3 percent). But this statistic hides some important details. The poverty rate among the foreign-born is higher than the poverty rate for the native-born in all western states and the nation. All but one of the western states (Nevada) have a poverty rate for the foreign-born higher than that of the nation. The more important story in terms of immigration is the poverty rate for the foreign-born who have not been naturalized citizens. For the western states as a group, the poverty rate for the foreign-born but not naturalized (27.7 percent) is more than double the rate for the native-born (13.3 percent), while naturalized citizens have the lowest poverty rate (10.8 percent).

If legislation similar to SB744 were enacted, many immigrants in the West would face a dual threat to their well-being. The likely result of the employment restrictions in SB744 would be an increase in poverty rates among the foreign-born who do not qualify for the new RPI visas. Simultaneously, the new restrictions on access to federally-funded benefit programs would create additional challenges for foreign-born immigrants as well as state and local governments.

The most important issue regarding effects of potential immigration legislation is a high degree of uncertainty. Data, such as that discussed in this brief article, can tell us that the impacts of comprehensive immigration reform will not be uniform across states or regions. The data can also tell us that the West will be impacted differently than the rest of the nation.

What the data can't tell us is equally important. The data do not tell us how many people will be eligible for RPI visas or how many of those who are eligible will apply if SB744 were enacted into law. The estimates of

the number of undocumented immigrants, especially at the state level, have large margins of error. There are indications that the flow of migrants to the US from other nations slowed during the great recession but that during the last year or two the migration flow may have ended. It is also possible that the prospect of immigration reform may itself alter migration flows over the next year or two.

In addition, SB744 is designed to reduce the flow of undocumented migrants by increased enforcement efforts and new employment restrictions while simultaneously increasing the flow of legal migrants, particularly high-skilled workers and those who might invest in the US. The net effect of the proposed legislation on the flow of migrants simply can't be known in advance. Uncertain outcomes should not be a reason for delaying badly needed immigration reform. ●

**“The likely result of the employment restrictions in SB744 would be an increase in poverty rates among the foreign-born who do not qualify for the new RPI visas. Simultaneously, the new restrictions on access to federally-funded benefit programs would create additional challenges for foreign-born immigrants as well as state and local governments.”**



# rural Latinos: adaptations and contributions

BY REFUGIO I. ROCHÍN



"(In this article) I offer a personal account of rural Latinos, partly through the lives of my parents, to explain their adaptations to and contributions in America. Who are rural Latinos, how did they arrive, and what are their experiences and issues?"

## **preface**

Rural Latinos have been a topic of my research and teaching since 1971, starting with my academic appointment to the University of California, Davis. Just before my move to Davis, I was part of a Ford Foundation team of agricultural scientists in Pakistan, assisting Dr. Norman Borlaug, 1969-71. In 1970, Dr. Norman Borlaug received the Nobel Peace Prize for the “Green Revolution” with high-yielding varieties of wheat from México.

At UC Davis until July 1994, I taught, co-founded Chicana/o Studies, consulted, advised and researched Latinos, and also co-founded International Agricultural Development. I covered a range of topics on Latinos, from their farming and employment to the related demographic transformations of small towns. In July 1994, I joined Michigan State University and pursued more research on rural Latinos and communities throughout the Midwest. In July 1998, I joined the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. as the Founding Director of its Latino Center. There I advanced collections, exhibitions, and contributions of Latinos within America.

It wasn't until the deaths of my father in 1994 and my mother in 1999, that I began to factor my family background into my professional experience. As I drafted a family “portrait,” to share with my children and siblings, I noticed that my early life and parents shaped most of my academic pursuits.

Thus, I offer a personal account of rural Latinos, partly through the lives of my parents, to explain their adaptations to and contributions in America. Who are rural Latinos, how did they arrive, and what are their experiences and issues?

## **Heritage**

My father migrated to the United States from Sinaloa's Sierra Madre of northern Mexico. He entered California alone but legally in 1923 at age 15. With a US entry permit that cost him \$8.00 at the US border of San Diego, he established a life of hard work and dedication to family and business. His father was murdered in 1916

and he didn't want to burden his mother who had six other children to feed. Unable to speak English and with practically no formal schooling, he joined a trainload of others like him bound for Wyoming where they labored on the transnational railway. At age 20 he migrated to Riverside, California and worked in citrus groves as an “irrigator and farm hand.” He learned from that experience the value of hard work and developed a skill for buying and selling goods (cooking items, blankets, etc.) to the other workers. In 1928 my father went to a social club called the Alianza Hispana for induction into their community. He “fell in love at first sight” with the pianist-singer at the event and within a few months they eloped and were later married with blessings from her parents in 1929.

My parents learned from my mother's mother how to operate the family tienda (a grocery store called La Esperanza – The Hope). By 1933 my parents established a wholesale-retail grocery store in Coachella, California. In 1936 they “traded” that business for a store in Carlsbad, California. And with two daughters, they moved the family from the desert to the seacoast near San Diego. In 1938, my mom and dad added another establishment, a small café for Mexican food, called El Charro. In 1940 they converted all assets into a bigger restaurant in Carlsbad called El Mejicano. The timing was bad – with the onset of World War II. Carlsbad was a beach town and lights had to be out at sunset – for fear of Japanese submarine attack. Few people ate out during that fateful time. To make ends meet, my father started a farm for fresh tomatoes on rented land. I was the third born (in 1941) and raised in Carlsbad. By 1950 my siblings included two older sisters, a younger sister and a brother.

Carlsbad, known for tourism, flowers, fruit and vegetables had about 2,200 residents in 1940. It was also a bedroom community for the Camp Pendleton Marine Corps base. The town was segmented into neighborhoods, the biggest with paved streets, where Whites or Anglos lived (situated along the beach front) and a “Mexicantown” or barrio, with dirt streets, next to the railroad tracks running between San Diego and Los Angeles. Carlsbad's interior territory included ranches

that were former land grants of Mexican origin.

When I was born my parents took a bold step and bought a home and adjacent property near the beach, within the Anglo part of Carlsbad. My father had the means with income from contracts he garnered to feed Mexicans who harvested avocados for the California Avocado Growers Exchange (Calavo) and oranges and lemons for the Sunkist growers. These workers – called “Braceros” – were employed seasonally under an exchange of diplomatic notes with the United States. They lived in labor camps owned and operated by US farmers and businesses. (SEE: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bracero\\_Program](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bracero_Program)).

I grew up on the “White side” of Carlsbad, literally across the railroad tracks from Mexicantown. My sisters and I remember the way our neighbors watched us, as if to say, “don’t play in our front yard.”

My parents became respected merchants, raising five children in the relatively undeveloped landscape of San Diego County. In 1945, father partnered with Manuel Castorena, also a Mexican immigrant, and established C&R Provisions, to provide wholesale food and Mexican products. Castorena and Rochin were the first Mexicans inducted into the local Rotary Club. (Castorena became a City Councilman and eventually Mayor and did not work directly with my dad.) Between 1945-1964, my father expanded his wholesale business to provide mom & pop stores, tienditas, with masa for corn tortillas, dried chiles, deli-meat, panocha (crude brown sugar) and much more. By 1950, he built the largest restaurant for Mexican food in the county, The Acapulco Gardens, with a seating capacity of 500. His education consisted of four years of elementary school, while my mother had only completed middle school. My dad jokingly called himself the Taco King of San Diego. I am sure he was. And my mother, who ran the cafés and the restaurant, worked equally full time while raising all five of us. She never drove a car, drank liquor, wore a swimsuit or complained. Mis padres were married almost 65 years.

### **family and values**

I was very fortunate to have been reared within a close-knit familia that valued honesty, hard work, respeto, resourcefulness, orgullo (pride), humility, educación, música, y nuestro lenguaje – el español. We were expected to care for each other; to offer hospitality, show graciousness, look clean and respect our elders: abuelitos, tíos, tías, primos, y más. My dad employed family members and trained them in the business. Some returned to Mexico and became wholesalers of agricultural products.

Our parents were strict, especially with my three sisters, but not with me – I was a man. Our parents wanted to keep us in the family business. I chose instead a different path, showing an independent interest that ran against the grain of tradition. Nonetheless, my parents lovingly supported me once they saw me take charge of my own education and responsibilities.

To date, my sisters say that I had a different set of parents. They had to watch what they wore and how they looked and acted in public. I, on the other hand, had lots more freedom. Mis padres (our parents) reminded us that every action we took reflected on our familia’s reputation, honor, and status. Although men and women were expected to have distinct roles, our parents showed pride in being la familia Rochin-Rodriguez.

### **outside the home**

My siblings and I were somewhat sheltered from the community and generally obeyed our parents without asking why or what for? Upon reflection – our familia appeared to act firmly and securely within a context of potential hostility from Anglos. We didn’t plan a strategy for ourselves; we learned to show strength, pride, and business savvy.

What my parents did not share with us kids was the discrimination facing Mexican-Americans, especially from the time of the US Great Depression during the 1930s until the 1960s. Mexicans of California faced these conditions:

- Separate seating in theaters and designated parks for gathering;
- The southern beach front for Mexican families and swimming;
- No representation in local governance;
- Forced English or punishment for speaking Spanish;
- Restricted use of community plunge (swimming pool);
- Roundups by la migra (the Border Patrol) of Mexicans, profiling;
- Separate schools or classrooms – far from equal treatment;
- Residential segregation by limited mortgage lending.

### **learning more**

The Rochin-Rodriguez story is not unique. Victor Villaseñor recounts a story much like that of my parents in *Rain of Gold*, his acclaimed novel. *Rain of*

"THIS GROWTH OF RURAL LATINOS PORTENDS BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE SITUATIONS. THEIR NEWNESS AND GROWTH COMES AMIDST NATIONAL ISSUES OF UNCHECKED IMMIGRATION, RURAL UNEMPLOYMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, THE PROVISION OF SCHOOLING AND SERVICES FOR ENGLISH-CHALLENGED NEWCOMERS, AND A PLETHORA OF CHANGES IN ECONOMIC CONDITIONS."

Gold is mostly about Victor's family, their migration, and settlement in Carlsbad. The Villaseñors - Victor's parents Sal and Lupe - owned a pool hall and bar across the street from my parent's café and grocery store on Roosevelt Street in Carlsbad's Mexicantown, at the time my parents moved there. They became compadres of my parents through Catholic baptism.

Several more novels of Latinos and communities have been published since the mid-1960s, largely in tune to the farm worker movement led by César Chávez. His movement, along with Dolores Huerta and thousands of farm workers, engaged students and families, who in turn, marched and demonstrated for workers and the creation of Chicana/o Studies. The manifestations were for greater recognition, tolerance, understanding, civic-participation, and equal treatment in housing, business and governance. Furthermore, the US Hispanic Chamber of Commerce enrolls hundreds of members from across the United States. Hispanic Business magazine has operated for over two decades, featuring articles and advertisements from Latino-owned companies with remarkable growth.

Today, some school districts are incorporating stories and histories about US Latinos. But some state legislators have decided to list and ban books that feature the "Mexican" culture and activism within the United States. Their laws infer that ethnic-centered literature is unsuitable for youth.

Yet, rural Latinos are found as educators, police and firemen, service providers, owner-operators of all kinds of businesses, local leaders and, without a doubt, the fastest growing population of rural America. They are settling in every state and niche in rural America with various degrees of integration and acculturation.

This growth of rural Latinos portends both positive and negative situations. Their newness and growth comes amidst national issues of unchecked immigration, rural unemployment, environmental health, the provision of schooling and services for English-challenged newcomers, and a plethora of changes in economic conditions.

Now is not the time to limit stories and information about Latinos and their foothold within America.

Americans would benefit from more references, shared perspectives and discussions about the trends and changing face of America.

### ADAPTATIONS - CALO

An interesting phenomenon about US Latinos has to do with their language and communication. By all accounts and studies, Latinos believe that effective comprehension, reading and writing in English is critical for their success in K-12, college and beyond. Opinion surveys of Latinos show with consistency that Latinos value English.

My experience with my parents related to the question of "required" English. I grew up with parents who spoke Spanish all their lives but decided to use English at home with my siblings and me. That was primarily because our schools banned our use of Spanish. My parents, mis padres, did a good job of talking to us daily in English. But, the reality for us was the desire to communicate with our families in California and Mexico and friends in a wide network of places. For familia, blood and language are inter-connected for life. Latinos know their family trees, cousins and circles of relatives; compadres and we tend to stay in touch. It's part of our culture

I happened to speak Spanish because most of my family did. My grandparents did not speak English. Even my mother's parents, who lived most of their lives in California, spoke to me in Spanish.



PICTURED: Refugio in Baluchistan Pakistan during his work for the Ford Foundation. 1970.

Without knowing it, however, our familia spoke a modified Spanish called caló. We spoke with expressions that were not Spanish, per se, from Spain or Mexico. Moreover, our Mexican/Chicano friends and relatives expressed feelings and sentiments in caló. In family and community, caló expressions built camaraderie, understanding, norms of behavior, and bonds of trust. For example: English speakers might say Pop or Mom. Barrio speakers might say: My Father or My Mother; not Pop or Mom. The form being used really derives from Mi Padre or Mi Madre, clearly a possessive expression of belonging.

Unlike “Spanglish,” a blended language involving Code-Switching and Code-Mixing, caló is more informal and conversational, tied to home, and derived between close friends.

Traditionally, caló is spoken in barrios for socialization and intimacy. Instead of making someone feel awkward for mispronouncing a word in either English or Spanish, an expression in caló is usually accepted communication. You would not correct the word or term so as to avoid personal embarrassment.

Caló is easily adopted for regular communication. It may include Nahuatl (native Aztec) and/or Spanish or English or some antiquated term from a Spanish novel (some dating to 1540) – such as the term “Califas” for California. But there are only a few texts or efforts to strain out the origins or meanings of our language.

Caló words and expressions became cultural symbols of the Chicano Movement during the 1960s and 1970s, when they were used frequently in literature and poetry. Such language was sometimes known as Floricanto.

Caló is rhythmic and in some cases a type of slang similar to African American Jive. For example: (“Al rato, vato,” means “later dude;” “al rato nos vemos” – see you in a while / “vato” = friend or guy).

Caló is loosely spoken with literal translations – considered unacceptable by Spanish-speaking purists. For example, *deme luz* is caló for “give me a light.” To the Spanish purest, this means literally: “to give birth” or “to publish.” “Give me a light,” is best said as “deme lumbre.” Similarly, *café negro* might get you black coffee, but the corrected term is usually *café puro* or *café solo* and *tinto* in Colombia.

It is common to see the word “Barrio” (Neighborhood) spelled as “Varrio,” “Vato” (Dude) spelled as “Bato” or “Güero” (Blonde person) spelled as “Huero” or even “Weddo.” “Baika” for bicycle. [NOTE: phonemes

pronounced similarly in Spanish are: c/s, w/hu/gu, r/d, and b/v.]

Colloquial caló includes words and expressions with origins largely unknown, but popularized primarily by Chicanas/os – Mexican Americans of second, third, etc. generations.

### R-rated CALO

My Father and My Mother, however, looked askance at Pachucos and less educated *pochos*. We avoided their form of caló. Some Pachucos were second and third generation Americans, but they were called Mexican immigrants. Because my father was a Mexican immigrant and my mother a third generation Mexican-American, My Mother and My Father, did not disparage pachucos; they usually discounted them as not *educados*.

Pachucos, sometimes called *cholos* [“la cholera”], were also referred to as “zoot-suiters,” particularly by the US press during the 1940s. They were typecast as gangs that cursed with “*maldiciones*,” like “*cabron*,” “no *chinges*” or “*chingasos*” (go to blows, a beating)]. Expletives such as damn, hell, and ‘stronger’ were blamed on Pachucos. Today the gangs we see are not called pachucos. A term often used is *carnal*, for “blood-brothers” or brotherhood, emanating from those who served time in prison. An offspring of their caló is R-rated.

### Identities

I did not know that my Spanish was flawed or unique until I served in Colombia, South America. I was a young Peace Corps Volunteer (1962-1964). When I spoke to villagers of Nariño, they sometimes looked at me puzzled, wondering what I had said. I understood them, but why that look? They kindly said they didn’t know “English.” I soon learned Spanish the way they spoke and filtered my caló. I also learned that Spanish varied from country to country. Even Spain has numerous dialects.

While learning Colombian Spanish, I recalled friends and classmates in California who spoke caló. I also remember my annoyance with Spanish teachers who corrected others and me. For that reason, I majored in French. Almost all Spanish teachers in the 1950s, viewed barrio talk as stupidity or ignorance. When I joined UC Davis, I became a strong advocate for teaching Chicanas/os: “Spanish for Native-Speakers (Caló).” Today, UC Davis has a strong enrollment in a sequence of courses for Native Spanish-Speakers, taught in the Department of Spanish.

Some may say that I should have known better about my caló. That it's street talk and a sign of poor education at home. Maybe so, but my experience in Colombia and other Spanish-speaking countries, has proved to me that caló helped me to communicate. Today, I take pride in the fact that I can communicate with about 400 million Spanish-speaking people in this world. And another 400 million people who rely on English only.

### THE WHO, WHY, AND WHAT?

My aim has been to illustrate through personal experience some of the features of rural Latinos: their arrival, integration, adaptations as well as their contributions and issues in rural America. The accounts herein are predated by my academic research and publications since 1971.

A majority of rural Latinos are immigrants or the first sons and daughters of immigrants from Mexico. They arrive to survive, earn income, raise and support family, and work hard without burdening public services.

Rural Latinos arrive with determination and often create their own businesses. They are hard working and resourceful, focusing on ways to relate to community.

Rural Latinos move to jobs and usually have assistance from family members. Familia is a common thread for their strength, relocation and resilience.

Rural Latinos can be assertive for equal treatment and civil rights. They will join social organizations and worker groups.

Rural Latinos enjoy extended groups through compadres/compadrazco. When times go bad, some form of support is derived from both compadres and familia.

Rural Latinos adapt to America with pride. They want their children to be educated and successful. The price they pay is sometimes very high – assimilating without their culture and language. Some pay that price and adapt to Americanization. It can be hard but done nonetheless, like my parents addressing me in English.●

### EXAMPLES OF COLLOQUIAL CALO:

Cuate, buddy, bro  
Clecha, classroom  
Centavitos, any amount of money  
Chitear, to cheat  
East Los, East Los Angeles  
El movimiento, the Movement  
Ése, hello, hi, and reference to cool barrio man  
Ficha, money  
Gaba, Gabacho, Anglo-American, white, (derogatory)  
Gachupín, Spaniards in México, (derogatory)  
Huacho like "watcho" or "watchelo", watch it  
Hayte watcho, see you later  
Al rato vato, later dude.  
Al rato nos vemos, see you in a while  
Pushame, instead of empujame, to push or push me  
Lonche, instead of almuerzo, lunch  
Mocoso, tike or mischievous child, snotty (mucous)  
Simón, instead of sí, an emphatic YES.  
Chale, NO or No Way  
Échale – get with it  
Chicana/o, Mexican-American female/male  
Mi familia or mi raza, for friends and/or cuates  
Que suave, how cool  
El mero-mero, the "big guy," top dog, someone high in social circles  
¿Que hubole? What's happening, usually sounds like "Cue'vole"

### EXAMPLES OF F-RATED CALO:

Ganga, the gang, the guys  
Grifa, marijuana [Grifo, user], whereas urban Spanish Grifa usually references water type  
Mi chava, my girlfriend; ol'lady was also used  
Una chavalona is a young good-looking female  
Vatos - friends, dudes, guys  
Cholo, Indio, Indian, mixed blood – (derogatory terms)  
Pendejo, fool  
Lambiche, kiss ass  
Camaradas, homeboys/ and girls  
Hecho tiempo conmigo - Someone did time with me  
Chuco, young punk – "dandy zoot-suitor" 1940s, juvenile delinquent  
Buey, for bro or brother  
Fila, filero, knife  
¡Hijole!, son of a gun!, an exclamation, like darn it!  
La ruca, la loca, reference to females  
Chansa, for "chance."  
Chate, for "house or cell"  
Chapete, for "a stupid or worthless person"  
Raza, persons of similar heritage, perspective and/or tradition

# STRENGTHENING LATINO SMALL BUSINESSES & ENTREPRENEURS IN WASHINGTON

An Overlooked Strategy for  
Community Economic Development

BY JOSÉ L. GARCÍA-PABÓN

*“Lacking in most mainstream media coverage of the economic recovery is the key role played by small business growth. And an all-to-often overlooked factor is the impact of Hispanic entrepreneurs.” -- Poder360°*

*“As the fastest growing business segment in the country, Hispanic business owners are a large indicator to the economic stability of the US. Quite bluntly, if the Hispanic small business community falters, the small business community is weakened. If the overall small business community fails, the US economy fails.” -- M.L. Barrera, “Back to Business: Giving a Small Business a Voice”*



## LATINO DEMOGRAPHICS

Between 2000 and 2010, Washington State experienced a 54.9 percent growth in the Latino/Hispanic population (from 441,500 to 684,000) compared to only 14.2 percent growth for the total population, making Latinos the largest and fastest growing minority in the state. The Latino share of Washington's total population went from 7.5 percent in 2000 to an estimated 11.3 percent in 2011 or 760,272 (US Census, 2011). In the last several decades, every county in Washington has seen an increase of Latinos; however, many are concentrated in eastern rural Washington counties such as Franklin (64 percent of the total population), Adams (58 percent), and Yakima (46 percent).

Despite this growth and their increased visibility and social, cultural, and economic contributions; Latinos (particularly first generation Latino immigrants) face significant and unique challenges such as educational attainment, health issues, small businesses and farms failure, discrimination, poverty, cultural and linguistic barriers, and others.

In this article, I explore the contributions and challenges of Latino entrepreneurs in Washington State and the efforts of the Latino Community Studies and Outreach Program at Washington State University to provide technical assistance and support.

## THE SITUATION OF LATINO IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS

Entrepreneurship is considered the engine of economic growth and job generation. Furthermore, entrepreneurs have been an enormous influence in shaping the current economic system in the US (Moss and Grunkemeyer, 2009; Mendoza, 2008). Latino immigrants tend to be entrepreneurial and risk takers. The fact that many of them leave everything in their home countries to come to the US, sometimes at great risk, indicates they pursue opportunities, no matter what.

In Latino and immigrant communities, members quickly identify niche markets for potential small businesses. Indicative of this, is that in a large number of rural towns and in urban neighborhoods consumers will likely find some kind of Latino-oriented businesses such as restaurants and grocery stores and non-ethnic businesses run by professional Latinos such as family medicine practices and insurance agencies. The Fiscal Policy Institute (2012) identified 15 industries with the largest presence of Latino owned businesses. At the

top of the list are construction, restaurants, real estate, landscaping services, truck transportation, and cleaning services.

Other industries that require a higher education degree and made the top-15 list include physicians, management, scientific and technical consulting, and legal services. Latinos constitute the largest percentage of start-up businesses in Washington with nearly 18,000 businesses operated by Latinos (about 3.2 percent of all businesses) totaling over \$9.7 billion sales receipts and employing over 15,300 individuals (US Census, 2007).

Counting and accurately measuring Latino businesses is particularly difficult due to the informal operations of some of them and the difficulties they face in accessing services. This leads to them not being counted by agencies and formal services (Delgado, 2011). A further complication is that Latino small businesses show the highest failure rates with up to 50 percent failing in the first year of operations and another 35 percent failing by the fifth year (Mendoza, 2008).

These data, my own observations, studies and testimonials suggest that Latino immigrant small businesses face very unique challenges including:

1. Limited access to capital;
2. Inadequate or no information on rules and regulations;
3. Lack of trust in or reluctance to use formal small business assistance programs;
4. Insufficient culturally appropriate and linguistically accessible financial and training services;
5. Inexperience in business planning; and
6. Inadequate knowledge on business management practices, marketing, and financial stewardship.

Despite the various challenges for these entrepreneurs, they are opening businesses at almost twice the rate of all other groups in the state (Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs, 2011).

## IS THERE A LATINO SMALL BUSINESSES PROFILE?

There is little scholarly work on the characteristics of Latino small business. Nevertheless, a common profile for Latino small businesses is that they are small, have annual revenues of less than \$250,000, have very few employees, and do business locally (Grossman 2007). Such a profile provides only an incomplete picture and may hide important variety and diversity within the Latino business community. Other factors such as geographical location (rural vs. urban), length of residency, and immigration status influence the shape

of a Latino business. Moreover, gender and educational attainment will influence decision towards one or another industry. For instance, college educated Latinos will more likely own technical, engineering, medical and law companies whereas lower educated Latinos will tend towards cleaning and landscaping services. Similarly, female Latinas will be more represented in day care services and male Latinos in construction. On the other side, there are very important motivators and values common among Latino entrepreneurs. Family involvement in running the business is crucial for the success of Latino businesses as is the desire for autonomy. Being one's own boss is an important motivator.

### SUPPORTING AND STRENGTHENING LATINO ENTREPRENEURS

In 2009 Washington State University initiated concerted efforts to reach out and assist Latino small businesses and Latinos interested in becoming small business owners. To do that, as the Latino Community Studies and Outreach specialist, I joined the Microenterprise Assistance Pilot Project (MAPP), funded by the Northwest Area Foundation to reach out to hundreds of small business owners and potential ones in heavily Latino populated counties in rural Washington. After MAPP was completed, we established another project called "Assistance to the Financial Health of Latino and Minority Businesses" (ASFINLA for its acronym in Spanish). Through ASFINLA we taught a series of targeted bilingual workshops, organized weekend entrepreneurship trainings, held local business forums and fairs, and engaged numerous local partners in counties with low self-employment, shortage of small businesses, and a large percentage of Latino immigrants. Further, we provided one-on-one technical assistance and referral services, and conducted diversity training for our partners. The statewide ASFINLA effort evolved from a successful local model of Latino small business assistance pioneered in Skagit County, Washington.

ASFINLA's ingredients of success include:

- Trust. Establishing a trusting relationship with the client before anything else is the foundation to build upon any technical assistance and training
- Cultural sensitivity and appropriateness. No immigrant community, whether Latino or not, will be responsive to services that do not acknowledge their culture and values.
- Empowerment. We approach whatever task with

the attitude of "we are here to learn as much as to teach" as well as meeting them where they are located, not where I am or want them to be.

- Ongoing support. Intense initial individual support is absolutely essential since Latino immigrant entrepreneurs need to navigate a complicated, confusing, foreign, and often unfriendly regulatory small business system.

### IMPACTS

Despite the relative short life of ASFINLA, evaluations indicate that participants greatly increased their understanding of what is required to be a successful small business owner. Across all workshops, 70 to 90 percent of the participants indicated a "high" to "very high" increase in: their understanding of a business plan; ability to handle Department of Revenue audits; understanding of the market; awareness of Department of Labor and Industries regulations; readiness to start a business; skills to manage a business; ability to prepare their taxes; and use of technology for business. As an illustration, 83 percent of respondents (n=105) are better prepared to file their taxes correctly. Participants also indicated they would change their business practices to improve efficiency, increase revenues, and obtain adequate insurance for their businesses. Furthermore, several students said that because of the training they are ready to start their business in less than six months and others stated that they use more scheduling tools, the Web, and business software than before. Still others indicated they look at their accounting and budgeting system more frequently. Anecdotal information from participants and partners suggest that we generated over \$1 million in business cost savings, access to new loans, and avoidance of regulatory fines and penalties. Additionally, three new Latino businesses opened with the assistance of ASFINLA and local partners in the last five months. Participant testimonies of appreciation include: "Keep these programs going. They are very indispensable," "Thank you for caring about [Latino] small businesses," and "I enjoyed it a lot... We hope you continue supporting us."

### CONCLUSIONS

Our experience through ASFINLA suggests we are beginning to address the disconnect between mainstream financial and training services and the Latino small business community. We work in partnership with many organizations, institutions, agencies, and the private financial sector at the local and state level and have provided cultural competency training to some of

them. These partnerships are crucial in our work with Latino small business. Our work with the Latino Business Retention and Expansion Program in Northwest Washington has helped us reach out to the Latino business and connect to other local partners in the financial service arena. My connections in south central Washington have helped me enlist the Tri-Cities Hispanic Chamber of Commerce as an important local partner for the ASFINLA work with Latino entrepreneurs. Further, partnering with the Association of Washington State Hispanic Chambers of Commerce has helped us access funding from regional foundations such as the Northwest Area Foundation. Collaborating with state agencies (Washington Department of Revenue, Department of Labor and Industries) provided us access to experts on regulations who then trained the Latino small business owner in Spanish. Looking for and finding the right partners is of utmost importance for working with underserved communities.

The Latino business contribution to the Washington economy is evident as Latino businesses increase the tax base and generate employment. Unfortunately, as the title and content of this article suggest, the Latino business community is an overlooked and underserved community. Little research can be found on Latino small businesses not to mention the need for Extension services and outreach programs to establish lasting culturally and linguistic appropriate programs. ●

**“The Latino share of Washington’s total population went from 7.5 percent in 2000 to an estimated 11.3 percent in 2011 or 760,272 (US Census, 2011). In the last several decades, every county in Washington has seen an increase of Latinos; however, many are concentrated in eastern rural Washington counties such as Franklin (64 percent of the total population), Adams (58 percent), and Yakima (46 percent).”**



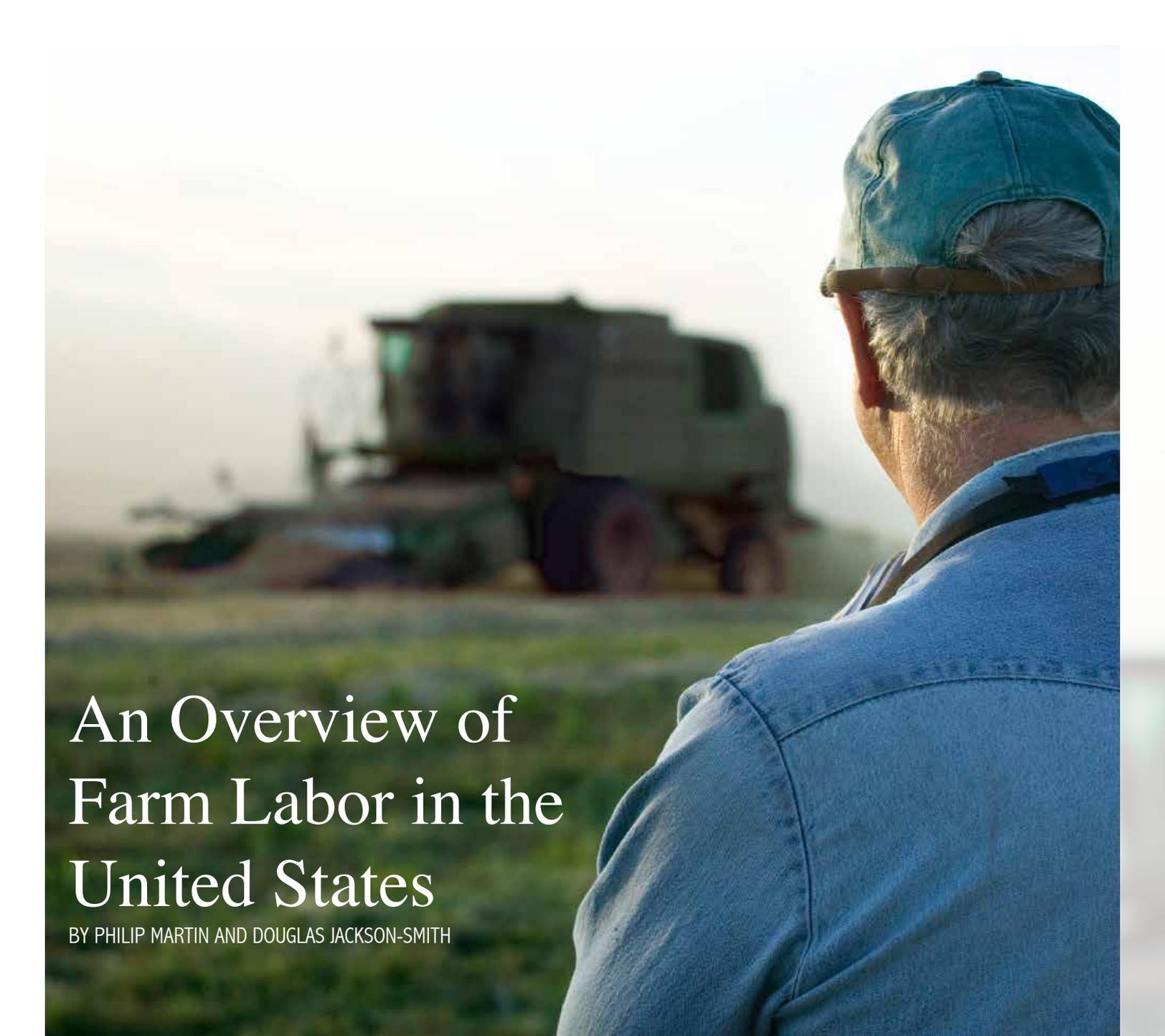
PICTURED: The author leading a Latino Entrepreneur Training.



PICTURED: Cluster of Latino businesses in Eastern Washington.



PICTURED: Latino Entrepreneurs in front of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

A photograph of a man in a blue cap and shirt, seen from the back, looking out over a field. In the background, a large combine harvester is visible, working in the field. The scene is captured in a soft, natural light, possibly during sunrise or sunset.

# An Overview of Farm Labor in the United States

BY PHILIP MARTIN AND DOUGLAS JACKSON-SMITH

*This paper is based on a NARDEP policy brief (Martin and Jackson-Smith, April 2013).*

## **SUMMARY**

Hired workers comprise 33 percent of people employed on farms but do an estimated 60 percent of the work performed on US farms. Most hired farm workers were born abroad, usually in Mexico, and most are believed not to be authorized to work in the US. Changes in Mexico-US migration flows and more restrictive immigration laws and policies have increased the vulnerability of US agriculture to labor supply shocks, which could increase costs and threaten the ability of some farmers to harvest labor-intensive crops.

## FARM EMPLOYMENT AND FARM WORKERS

Three major types of workers provide labor for US farms: farm operators, unpaid family workers, and hired workers. Numerically, hired workers are estimated to make up one-third of the total farm workforce, up from 25 percent in the 1950s (Figure 1; Kandel, 2008). The total number of people working in the farm sector dropped by roughly 70 percent between 1950-1990, but has stayed roughly the same since that time. While farmers and their family members are numerically still the most common source of farm labor in the US (two thirds of all workers), the proportion of hired workers providing labor has increased throughout that period.

More importantly, while farmers and unpaid family members historically provided most of the total labor hours on US farms, today hired workers account for an estimated 60 percent of average full-time equivalent employment on farms, and their share is steadily increasing (Henderson, 2012:66; Sommers and Franklin, 2012:14). This is because hired workers typically devote more hours per year to their work than do unpaid farm family members.

The use of hired farm workers is concentrated by commodity, geography, and farm size. In 2007, about 22 percent of US farms hired a worker, and farm employers spent almost \$22 billion on farm wages and salaries (USDA-NASS, 2009). Most hired labor expenses were paid by large farm employers producing fruit, vegetable, and horticultural commodities in California, Florida, Texas, and Washington (Martin, 2009). The top five percent of US farms generate 74 percent of total farm sales and are responsible for nearly 80 percent of total farm labor expenses. (See Figure 2.)

Between 60 and 80 percent of hired farm workers are employed on crop farms (Kandel, 2008). We know most about workers on crop farms because the US Department of Labor's National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) interviews 2,000 crop

workers a year (but not workers employed on livestock farms or H-2A guest workers employed on crop farms).<sup>1</sup> In recent years, 70 percent of hired crop workers interviewed by the NAWS were born in Mexico, three-fourths were male, and half were unauthorized. Half of hired crop workers were under 35, two-thirds had less than 10 years schooling, and two-thirds spoke little or no English (Rural Migration News).

## SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF HIRED FARMWORKERS

Hired farmworkers are near the bottom of the US job ladder. In 2010, the average earnings of crop workers were about \$9 an hour, and median weekly earnings were only 60 percent of those of workers in comparable private-sector nonfarm jobs. Since hired crop workers work an average of just under 200 days per year, many are underemployed or unemployed for significant periods, reducing annual earnings.

Farm employment often includes exposure to pesticides, poor sanitary conditions, long working hours, and other health risks, but only 18 percent of crop workers have health insurance benefits. Not coincidentally, farm worker households also have twice the poverty rate of nonfarm



FIGURE 1: TOTAL FAMILY AND HIRED FARMWORKERS ON U.S. FARMS, 1950-2010. Notes: Adapted from chart published in Kandel (2008) constructed using data from the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service Farm Labor Surveys. Family farm workers include self-employed farmers and unpaid family members. Hired farmworkers include direct hires and agricultural service workers (who are often hired through labor contractors). Data collection on family farmworkers was discontinued in 2001, so estimates for 2005 and 2010 are based on linear projections NASS surveys 2000-2002.

<sup>1</sup>The NAWS was launched in 1989 to help assess the extent of farm labor shortages in the wake of IRCA in 1986 ([www.doleta.gov/agworker/naws.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/agworker/naws.cfm)).

households and housing conditions among farm workers and their families (particularly for migrant workers) are often substandard. Rural communities with significant farm worker populations often struggle to provide adequate education and social services to address the needs of these residents.

Between 2007 and 2009, the NAWS found that almost 30 percent of crop workers were born in the US and 70 percent were born abroad, almost always in Mexico. Foreign-born and US-born workers were similar in many respects. Their average age was 36-37, and three-fourths were male, and 23 percent of foreign-born and US-born workers had household incomes below the poverty line (Rural Migration News). Foreign-born differ from US-born crop workers in legal status, education, and English. For example, 55 percent of foreign-born workers were unauthorized, only 13 percent completed high school, and only three percent spoke English well. Foreign-born crop workers were more likely to be hired by contractors and other intermediaries (17 versus two percent), more likely to be working in FVH crops, and more likely to be filling harvest jobs. Average wages for foreign-born crop workers are lower than those paid to US-born workers.

Although some farmers have increased worker wages and improved working conditions in recent years to retain hired workers, most have not raised worker compensation because of perceptions it would reduce their ability to compete in a global marketplace.

### WHY ARE MANY FARM WORKERS UNAUTHORIZED?

The composition of the current hired farm workforce reflects changes in farm structure, farm technology, and past immigration policies. Mechanization and productivity increases have allowed the size of the overall farm workforce to decline even as total farm output continues to increase (Gardner, 2002). As US food production consolidated, family labor became insufficient (Kandel, 2008). Since farm work is more physically demanding and less well compensated than nonfarm jobs requiring similar skills, it is increasingly difficult to attract domestic workers willing to take farm jobs. This is one reason why farm employers have increasingly relied on foreign workers.

Immigration reforms enacted in 1986 aimed to give the US a legal farm work force. Prior to the mid-1980s, the best evidence was that a quarter of farm workers in states such as California were unauthorized (Martin et al., 1985). The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 imposed sanctions on employers who knowingly hired unauthorized workers and legalized 2.7 million unauthorized foreigners, including over 1.1 million farm workers (known as Special Agricultural Workers or SAWs). Immigration reform briefly gave agriculture a mostly legal workforce (Martin, 1994). Less than 10 percent of hired crop workers were unauthorized in 1989.

However, as the US economy improved, most of the now-legal immigrant farm workers shifted to better

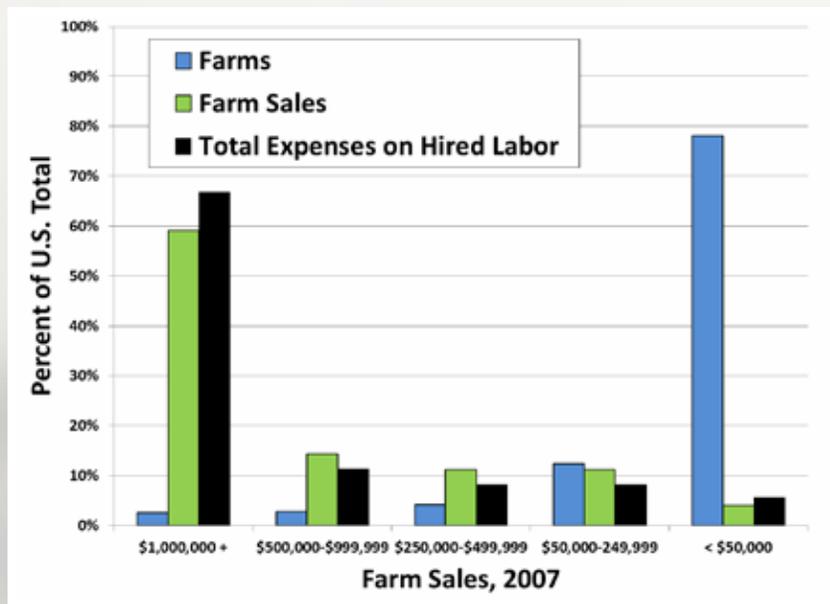


FIGURE 2: RELATIVE USE OF HIRED WORKERS BY FARM SIZE, 2007.

Source: 2007 US Census of Agriculture.

“Since farm work is more physically demanding and less well compensated than nonfarm jobs requiring similar skills, it is increasingly difficult to attract domestic workers willing to take farm jobs. This is one reason why farm employers have increasingly relied on foreign workers.”

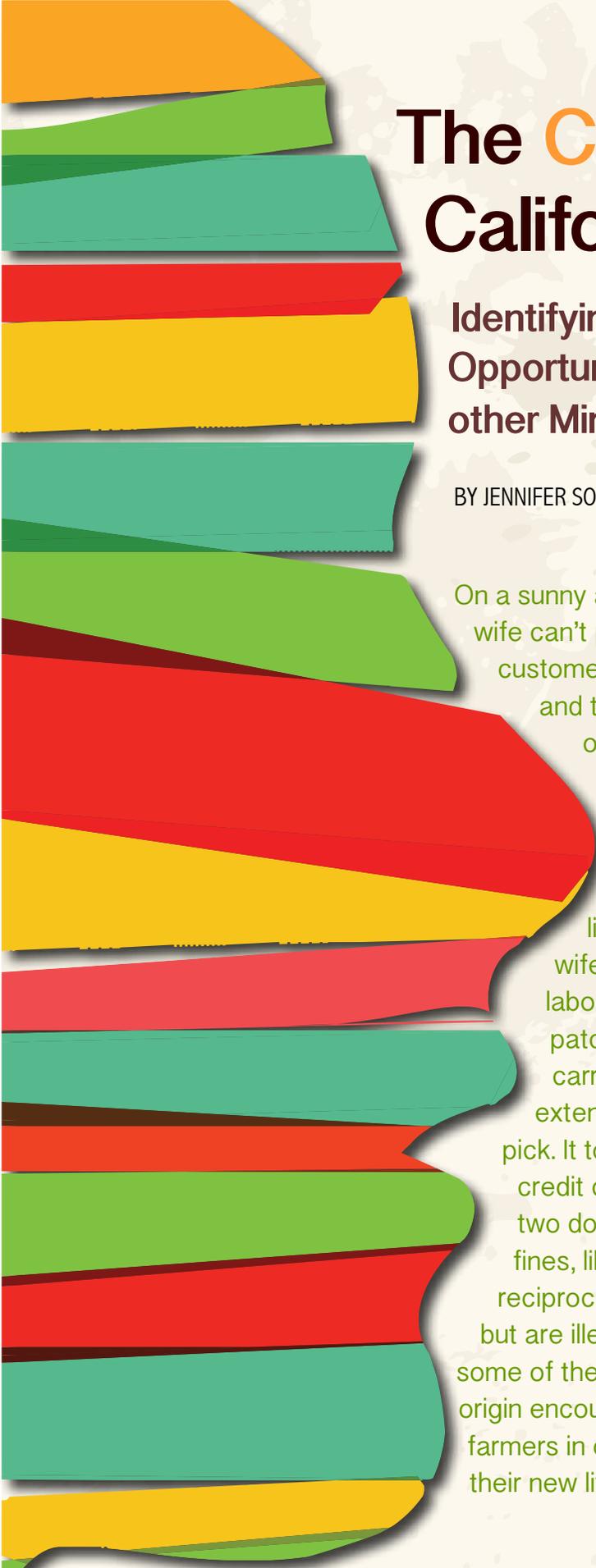
paying nonfarm jobs and were replaced by newly arrived unauthorized workers. Increased border security in the 1990s and 2000s made it more difficult and dangerous to cross the US-Mexico border, but did not reduce the flow of new unauthorized immigrants and created disincentives for unauthorized workers to return to their home country (Massey and Pren, 2012). With farm employers able to secure workers through traditional channels (both legal and unauthorized), utilization of the legal H-2A guest worker program remained low (Martin, 1994 and 2013).

## CONCLUSIONS

Most large commercial farms in the US have become highly dependent on foreign-born (and often unauthorized) workers to care for their livestock and harvest their crops. The availability of a workforce willing to work for relatively low wages and benefits helps keep domestic food prices low and may help some farmers to remain competitive in increasingly global farm commodity markets.

However, the US farm sector is vulnerable to changes in migration policies that might raise farm labor costs. Given the growing level of dependence on foreign born (and often unauthorized) workers on the most commercially-important farms in US agriculture, efforts to slow unauthorized migration from Mexico and to make it harder for farmers to hire unauthorized workers have created significant concerns about the ability of farmers to access enough workers to sustain their operations. The current upswing in manufacturing employment in Mexico, along with rapidly declining family sizes, may also reduce availability of Mexican workers in the US (The Economist, 2012).

Most policy choices involve tradeoffs between competing goods, such as providing farm employers with the workers they need to remain competitive while simultaneously ensuring the well-being of foreign and US workers. Comprehensive immigration reform proposals that deal with farm labor will need to balance three major goals: (1) providing farm employers with sufficient legal workers on terms that keeps US agriculture competitive, (2) providing protections for current and future hired farm workers to ensure they receive adequate wages and safe working conditions, and (3) increasing opportunities for foreign-born farm workers to return with savings to their countries of origin or to stay in the US and move up in the US labor market. Outside of the immigration debate, US policy could work to encourage development of new technologies to reduce use of manual labor in agricultural production. Technical investments could help the sector adjust if the current downturn in Mexican interest in working across the border continues. ●



# The Changing Face of California Agriculture

## Identifying Challenges and Providing Opportunities for Southeast Asian and other Minority Farmers

BY JENNIFER SOWERWINE AND CHRISTY GETZ

On a sunny afternoon in mid-April, Lo Saetern and his wife can't pick their strawberries fast enough to satisfy customer demand. It's the beginning of the season and their regulars have been pining for Saetern's opening day to taste their fresh, sweet Chandler berries. Lo and his wife have been farming a five acre plot for 15 years on the outskirts of Sacramento in an area slated for development, and have managed to build a life based on their meager farm income and his wife's side job. Mae Yang wasn't so lucky. In 2002, labor inspectors descended on her strawberry patch near Fresno and fined her \$11,000 for not carrying workers compensation insurance for her extended family members who were helping her pick. It took her five years to pay off that debt on her credit card, and meanwhile, she lost her farm. At least two dozen farmers in Fresno are facing onerous fines, like Mae, for practicing cultural traditions (labor reciprocity) that were commonplace in highland Laos but are illegal here. This article aims to highlight both some of the challenges that farmers of Southeast Asian origin encounter and the programs that are engaging these farmers in overcoming these challenges as they establish their new lives in California.

## Introduction

Over the past few decades, the farming landscape of California has become more diverse, as increasing numbers of immigrant and minority farmers try their hand at agriculture. For example, there has been nearly a 20 percent increase in Latino farmers from 2002 to 2007 in California and 75 percent of those reported Latino farms are beginning farmers (USDA Agriculture Census, 2007); a reflection of previous farm workers beginning to establish their own small family farms. In addition, since the late 1970s and early '80s, several thousand Southeast Asian refugee farmers, escaping their war-torn countries of Laos and Vietnam, have settled in the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys, growing and marketing more than 100 varieties of Asian produce. In Fresno County alone, almost half of the family farms (4,000) are operated by "minorities," and more than half of those are Asian (54 percent), the majority of which are refugee farmers from Laos (Molinar and Yang, 2001). As recently as 2004, tens of thousands of Hmong and Lu-Mien refugees arrived in California, and many of them turned to farming as their primary livelihood. The total acreage of "oriental vegetables" in Fresno County nearly doubled over the course of ten years (from 1994-2004), and by 2012 Fresno County's production of oriental vegetables totaled more than 12,600 tons and was valued at 9.6 million dollars (Fresno County Crop Report, 1994-2004 and 2012); much of this increase is attributed to the influx of farmers from Laos.

Although the acreage of immigrant and minority farms is relatively small (5 percent), their sheer numbers (nearly a quarter of all California farms have minority operators), their contribution to California's crop diversity, their value in terms of specialty commodities grown, their role in provision of culturally-relevant foods for California's diverse population, and their importance in ensuring food security for their oftentimes economically-disadvantaged communities all render minority farmers an important part of California agriculture. Yet language and cultural barriers often impede their attempt to navigate the laws and regulations related to farming and food safety, to identify markets, and to secure fair land leases. Furthermore, many cultivate very small patches (between 2 to 15 acres in size) in historically important agricultural areas that are being threatened with urban development and sprawl. As a result, there is a real need to provide effective and enduring education and outreach to support the success of these new farmers and conservation of historical agricultural lands.

With funding from the University of California's Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the USDA's National Research Initiative and Beginning Farmer and

Rancher Development Program, a team of researchers from UC Berkeley, UC Cooperative Extension, and non-profit community and regional partners has conducted research and created innovative outreach programs for minority and refugee farmers that are culturally appropriate and linguistically accessible. This article focuses on Southeast Asian farmers in particular, highlighting the challenges they have encountered in adapting their cultural farming practices to an entirely different industrial agricultural landscape in California's Central Valley. We conclude by outlining some key areas that advocates and extension academics might consider when working with Southeast Asian and other underserved limited-English language populations.

Our findings are the result of in-depth semi-structured interviews with farmers, UC Cooperative Extension Advisors, and regulators and individual in-person surveys with a stratified random sample of 83 Southeast Asian farmers. We drew our sample from a compilation of three lists in each county: 1) the Agricultural Commissioner's Certified Producers Certificate holders, 2) Pesticide Permits, and 3) UC Cooperative Extension outreach lists. Of those surveyed 13 percent are strawberry growers and 87 percent are mixed vegetable growers.

## Southeast Asian Farms in California

The majority of farmers surveyed are originally from Laos (93 percent), three percent from Vietnam and four percent from Thailand. 68 percent are Hmong, 15 percent Lu-Mien, 15 percent Lao, and two percent Khmu. We found that the majority had practiced farming in their country of origin (80 percent), and that many turned to farming in the US either as an alternative or supplement to welfare or other low-wage job such as custodial work, meat processing, landscaping, dishwashing, and warehouse work.

The median farm size is 8.8 acres, ranging from 0.5 to 60 acres [only one farmer had 60 acres], with nearly half being five acres or less. Gross revenues from these farming operations are small, ranging primarily between \$5,000 and \$50,000 annually, well below the USDA's definition of a small family farm (\$250,000 gross sales per year or less). More than half of these farmers (51 percent) rely on other sources of off-farm income including income from other household members (such as their spouse and grown children). Farming is what they know best, yet it fails to meet their household financial needs. Indeed, when asked if they could earn enough money from a 9-5 job to support their families, 65 percent said they would stop farming all together.

Also noteworthy is our finding that only 23 percent of the farmers we surveyed indicated that their children plan to continue with the family farming business. Our survey data showed that the top five challenges Southeast farmers face are: 1) access to capital/ financing, 2) low price, 3) conforming to state and federal regulations, 4) language barriers, and 5) access to reliable labor. For an overview of other challenges, see Figure 1. We expand on some of these challenges below.

### Limited Access to Business Planning, Production, Regulatory and Market Information

Even as some minority farmers are able to access land and grow crops, they report difficulty accessing capital/ financing, understanding and navigating environmental and labor regulations such as OSHA, finding quality farmland and securing fair leases, accessing agricultural support programs, and accessing markets. Farmers repeatedly cite low prices, a large surplus of product, and no market. They ask for support to help them find new markets, which requires a solid understanding of crop and business planning, food safety and liability insurance requirements, and invoicing and payment structures. Compounding this situation is a general lack of knowledge about programs ostensibly designed to help them (i.e. NRCS & FSA programs). Many beginning and immigrant farmers are unable to take advantage of agricultural credit, loan and Individual Development Account (IDA) opportunities because they fail to meet basic eligibility requirements: a signed three-year lease, demonstrated record keeping and sales records. Few farmers we work with know if their enterprise is breaking even, let alone making a profit, as they are not accustomed to keeping track of expenses and revenues.

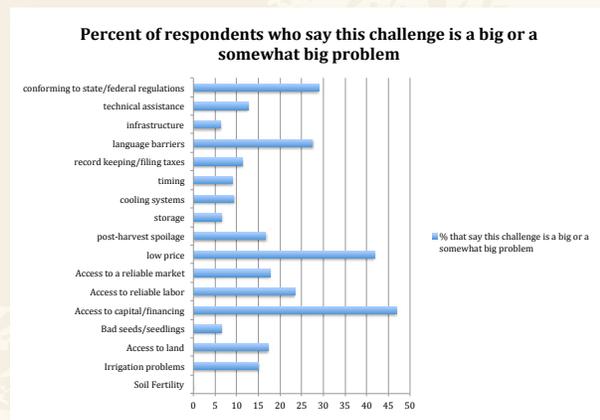


Figure 1. Challenges facing Southeast Asian farmers in California's Central Valley.

### Clash of Cultures in Labor Regulations

Laws designed to regulate exploitative labor practices on large industrial farms are threatening to undermine Hmong and other small Southeast Asian family farms, which rely on an age-old cultural practice of labor exchange. Customary arrangements in which families help each other out during times of need in exchange for a portion of the crop or a promise of reciprocity are illegal in this country. Since 2004, dozens of multi-agency sweeps have been carried out on farms in Fresno County, California. Hmong and Lu-Mien farmers have been prosecuted for a variety of infractions including their failure to carry workers' compensation insurance for anyone working on their farms (including wives, sons, and parents), and for violations of other Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) laws (such as not having gender-segregated toilets) and failure to pay extended family members and friends minimum wage. Although the sweeps were purportedly aimed at large, industrial growers, at least 26 Southeast Asian family farmers in Fresno were cited between 2004-2012, and our evidence suggests their citations have been disproportionately deleterious. These citations require poor farmers to pay onerous fines, sometimes equivalent to half a year's gross revenue. Many of these farmers believe they have been unfairly targeted, and some 50 farmers have reportedly left farming completely for fear of being fined. Richard Molinar, a University of California Cooperative Extension Advisor in Fresno, explained in 2011 that he spent a full three-quarters of his time educating Hmong growers about California agricultural laws, advocating for their support at the state level, and helping them appeal their numerous citations in court, mostly to no avail.

### Linguistic and Cultural Barriers

Language and cultural barriers often limit farmers' abilities to access, learn about, and implement sustainable and safe farming practices. These challenges also pose great risk and difficulty in accessing fair and reliable markets and negotiating a fair price. Organizations that provide outreach to minority farmers have expressed difficulty locating and communicating with these grower populations. As one advisor put it, "we have the capacity to invite farmers to the table, but don't always get them to the table." Farmers that do come to the table oftentimes have difficulty understanding technical language, as many translators are not farmers themselves. Others avoid services entirely, sometimes out of historical mistrust of the government. As such, many new farmers rely on their friends and relatives for support in establishing their farms and learning new techniques. Our program

has worked to expand the network of support for these growers, building the capacity of both existing farmer networks and the organizations that serve them. We have developed and implemented workshops and training materials that utilize graphic and photo-heavy educational hand-outs and videos with translations into languages when possible (not all Southeast Asian languages have written scripts, and even some that do, many farmers are not literate). For sample videos, please see the following link: <http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXVznDyivQ32GFvKi2UOX8EM0ch-ktDHW>

### Food Safety Barriers

Our research has found that buyers (including school districts, retailers and increasingly wholesalers) now require farmers to supply documented evidence of a food safety program. Small farmers across the country are struggling to develop food safety programs in anticipation of new regulations and market demand, yet they often have limited time and resources. Minority and limited-English farmers are at an added disadvantage due to the complexity and inaccessibility of most online food safety training materials. To make such training more accessible and culturally-relevant, our team piloted a Food Safety for Small Farms program in Sacramento and Fresno that enabled 10 farmers to sell to school districts, garnering an additional \$50,000 annually among all farms. Many buyers are now beginning to require expensive third party audits. Despite extensive outreach to support Hmong farmers to learn about and comply with Good Agriculture Practices (GAPs) required by their buyers, many are still unable to afford the \$550 annual fee to become third-party certified and have had to find alternative markets or stop farming altogether.

### Food and Livelihood Insecurity

While California is touted as the breadbasket of the world, food insecurity is reaching record highs in California (California Watch, 16 Nov. 2010). Many Hmong and Lu-Mien live below the poverty line and have relied on welfare to make ends meet. Despite the many barriers facing beginning minority and immigrant farmers, some have managed to lease land and grow a spectacular assortment of both traditional and conventional crops. These plots are critical to their livelihoods. For those that have scaled up, some successfully market their produce through farmers' markets, farm stands and to packinghouses; however, many watch their crop rot, or plow it under, due to lack of markets or low prices. Incomes remain low and unstable. Many of these small farms play dual roles of feeding their families and sales for the market – a kind of semi-subsistence farming lifestyle.

### Extension Strategies for Success

To be able to effectively reach immigrant and minority groups requires time to build relationships of trust. Hiring staff that speak the farmers' languages has proven particularly effective in the case of UCCE Fresno. Michael Yang, a Hmong small farm and specialty crop assistant, who works with Richard Molinar, a small farm advisor, has played a central role in recruitment, translation, and extension follow up. Chuck Ingels, UCCE Horticultural Advisor in Sacramento has also built up a tremendous extension program, hosting annual strawberry meetings drawing more Asian farmers than are counted in the agricultural census. Farmers eagerly anticipate the annual meetings as an opportunity not only to renew their pesticide permits and learn about new market opportunities and food safety, but more importantly to exchange information with one another. Our program utilizes an outreach model that is farmer-directed, moving beyond workshops and field days alone, to provide one-on-one follow up, what we are calling a "workshop-coach connection." This starts with assessing farmer needs through focus groups, followed by hands-on workshops on farmer-selected topics, combined with in-depth on-farm training with a few locally identified community grower-leaders. Grower-leaders are trained and are linked with each other and with the organizations providing outreach. UCCE and local non-profit partners then provide ongoing on-farm "coaching" to grower-leaders to support adoption of recommended practices. Grower-leaders then host "learning circles" or field days at their farms to share their acquired knowledge and practices and can provide ongoing advice to farmers in their communities with continued support from dedicated CBOs and UCCE advisors. This kind of farmer-to-farmer training has been proven an effective strategy for knowledge and technical transference around the world (Warner, 2006; Swezey and Broome, 2000).

### Conclusion

Our research and extension model has led to greater levels of understanding, trust, and adoption of recommended practices, and has fostered networks of mentor farmers who share knowledge with other farmers. We expect that by increasing grower-leader knowledge and adoption of sustainable agriculture, food safety, and business planning and marketing skills, we will see increases in farm productivity, safer food, and greater income opportunities on Southeast Asian farms throughout the region. ●

*Research and outreach for this work was supported by the UC Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources competitive grants program and by the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA, Grant # 2011-49400-30497.*

# Local Immigrant Farmer Education in Hawaii

BY J. SUGANO, S. FUKUDA, S. SWIFT, S. NAKAMOTO, A. KAWABATA, R. HAMASAKI, M. DIAZ-LYKE, J. UYEDA, R. SHIMABUKU, K. SEWAKE, A. KAWABATA, S. MOTOMURA, R. TSUTSUI, A. ARAKAKI, B. BUSHE, C. TAMARU, T. RADOVICH, K. WANG, M. KAWATE, J. UCHIDA, AND B. FOX

An increasing number of socially disadvantaged farmers are entering Hawaii's agriculture industry with little to no experience in commercial agriculture. They operate in rural and remote areas of Hawaii. They cultivate diverse and culturally important crops primarily for local food production. Ongoing educational support from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UH CTAHR), Cooperative Extension Service is essential for the sustainability of these underrepresented, developing agricultural areas due to their small acreage, remote locations, lack of access to farm resources, and limited English literacy.

This change in Hawaii's agriculture industry prompted a need for an educational program involving responsible and sustainable farming, business and risk management, and environmental protection stewardship. UH CTAHR developed a grassroots oriented program, Local and Immigrant Farmer Education Program (LIFE) in underserved farming communities to assist these producers in dealing with the many facets of crop production. The LIFE program is a team of Cooperative Extension Service agents and specialists with an established network of government and industry partners.

LIFE has established a solid reputation for delivering timely, useful, hands-on, quality extension education to Hawaii's underserved and socially disadvantaged producers. These producers include limited resource growers, women, native Hawaiians, and farm workers. The LIFE Program is using the traditional extension

model of "taking the university out to the people." The goal of the LIFE program is to: 1) increase the viability and sustainability of commercial farms in Hawaii, 2) integrate more farmers into mainstream agriculture, and 3) help drive Hawaii's diversified industry forward.

Committed to the mission of the land grant university, LIFE strives to provide quality educational programs to ensure farmers in the targeted areas are sufficiently informed, have access to existing and emerging research-based management tools, have ample opportunities to advance their knowledgebase and competencies so they can correctly choose and utilize specific technology and practices best suited to meet their diverse educational needs.

LIFE's extension educational programs are responsive to their clientele's identified, immediate and long-term educational needs. A needs assessment study was utilized to identify the present and future needs of LIFE's client base. LIFE continues to discover new ways in attracting, promoting, and educating growers to attend extension



PICTURED: Engaging the Community 2013 Waimanalo Kalo (Taro) Field Day.

educational events; advance timeliness and delivery of relevant, research-based information; and enhance clients' relationships and satisfaction with UH CTAHR and other government programs through identification of high priority areas.

*The top four areas of priority for statewide LIFE cooperators were: 1) suppression and management of insect and disease pests; 2) crop nutrition and fertilization; 3) marketing and adding value; and 4) new varieties, crops, and products.* Growers reinforced their preference for face-to-face interaction and indicated they would like to see more field day opportunities.

LIFE understands that the economic success of agricultural producers relies on the growers' ability to adapt farming principles and practices to integrate the latest technology and research developments. LIFE establishes critical on-farm field experiments and workshops in conjunction with growers to tackle pressing crop production issues that strive to improve productivity and profitability. A few examples would include: pesticide safety, spray calibration, crop protection rotational programs, risk management, food safety, spray coverage, perpetuation of taro, integrated pest management, sustainable and organic farming, and variety trials to overcome new and challenging pests, organic cultivation, marketing, and adding value.



PICTURED: Outdoor Classroom: Korean Natural Farming Workshop and Demonstration.

Field day activities using the hands-on teaching demonstration method enables growers to see the impact of LIFE's recommendations first hand. We also believe repetition and continuous reinforcement of previous topics is important because of language difficulty and for information retention. *Based on mean workshop evaluation scores from educational programs in 2011-2012, growers felt educational programs conducted by LIFE were excellent (3.5) based on a mean score of 1=poor and 4=excellent. LIFE anticipates continuing its delivery of high quality –'excellent' educational programs and advancing awareness, adoption, and evaluation of best management strategies and recommendations brought forth by the LIFE training team members.*

Many of our farmers prefer a one-on-one or close-knit small group-learning environment because they are easily intimidated by government agencies and shy to discuss their problems in front of others. Establishment of a non-threatening environment is very critical to farmers with limited English proficiency.

For many new immigrant farmers in Hawaii, the agriculture business is a family business. First generation farmers appreciate the value of education and often have children (second generation children) who are educated and involved with the family business. In Hawaii, these children have a strong influence on decisions made on the farm and effectively communicate with extension personnel. LIFE works with multi-generational agricultural families and agricultural businesses that employ immigrant farmers to increase the advancement and adoption of new technology and best management practices.

The Farm Doctor program is LIFE's core program. Field visitations to commercial agricultural operations are conducted on an ongoing basis to provide crop production consultation support. Through farm visitations, we work with growers in conducting a 'farm checkup' to ensure farms are in good diagnostic order. We strive to develop a strong, trusting working relationship with growers to address priority issues and develop appropriate solutions to meet their needs. Bilingual material filled with color photographs and terminologies in lay-terms are used in conjunction with translators to support field visitations and educational events.

A common performance indicator used to assess program effectiveness of the LIFE program is the adoption or application of research based technologies. As agricultural Extension professionals, we continuously look for new methodology to increase the application and adoption of research-based technologies. *Based on the mean of workshop evaluation survey responses in 2011-2012, growers indicated learning 5-9 new things with potential on farm application, based on a mean score of 2.6 with zero=nothing applicable, 1=1-2 things that could be applicable, 2=3-4 new things that could be applicable, 3 =5-9 new things that could be applicable, 4=10 or more new things could be applicable.*

Our ability to provide service to rural, socially disadvantaged, underserved, and limited resource producers of Hawaii is largely due to a team-based and grass-roots approach to providing extension education through collaborative partnerships with statewide agricultural agencies such as UH CTAHR, Hawaii State Department of Agriculture, USDA, Hawaii State Department of Health, agricultural field agents, county agencies, Hawaii Farm Bureau, industry collaborators, and other essential public and private organizations. These partnerships enable LIFE to educate growers about a wide spectrum of priority agricultural topics while providing opportunities for growers to meet and take advantage of available government programs in a safe and conducive learning environment.

Our long term goal is to assist growers in becoming self-directed, active information seekers and adopters of new research-based agricultural advances. LIFE is a year-to-year, grant funded collaborative project between the UH College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) and the USDA, Risk Management Agency. ●



PICTURED: Award Winning Ka'u Coffee Farmers Getting an Early Start on Coffee Berry Borer Prevention.

“LIFE understands that the economic success of agricultural producers relies on the growers’ ability to adapt farming principles and practices to integrate the latest technology and research developments.”



# Immigration and Agriculture: What Next?

BY PHILIP MARTIN

Over half of the workers employed on US farms are unauthorized, and federal and state governments are debating how to crack down on unauthorized migration and how to deal with unauthorized foreigners in the US. The status quo makes farmers uncertain that they will not have sufficient labor, workers uncertain if they can continue to live and work in the US, and communities unsure how to deal with mixed families of unauthorized parents and US citizen children.

## IMMIGRATION REFORM

There were over 40 million foreign-born US residents in 2011, including 11 million or over a quarter that were not authorized to be in the US. The number of immigrants or persons born outside the US continues to increase, but the number of unauthorized residents has fallen since peaking at 12 million in 2007 (Figure 1).

The US has been debating what to do about these unauthorized foreigners for the past decade. In April 2013, a bipartisan group of eight senators introduced the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act (S 744), which was approved on a 68-32 vote in June 2013. President Obama called S 744 “largely consistent with the principles of common-sense reform I have proposed,” and the White House released several reports highlighting the benefits of comprehensive immigration reform urging Congressional action.

Many House Republicans said they would not support S 744 because they did not trust the Obama administration to secure the border and prevent unauthorized migration. Instead, they endorsed a piecemeal or step-by-step approach to immigration reform, and the House Judiciary Committee approved four bills in June 2013, two dealing with enforcement and two dealing with guest workers.

## SENATE: ENFORCEMENT AND LEGALIZATION

S 744 calls for more border and interior enforcement to deter illegal migration, legalization for most unauthorized foreigners in the US, and new guest programs to make it easier for employers to hire legal foreign workers. S 744 authorizes up to \$46 billion in additional spending for a “border surge” to secure the 2,000 mile Mexico-US border.

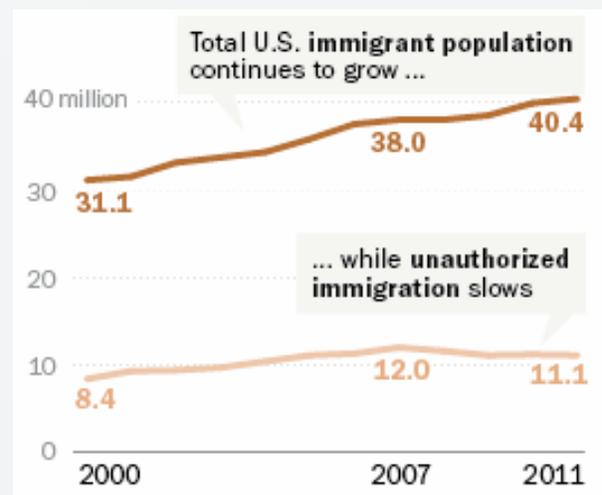


Figure 1. Total and Unauthorized Immigrants, 2000-2011.

Currently, only employers in some states and those with federal contracts must use E-Verify, the internet-based system to which employers submit data on newly hired workers to determine if they are legally authorized to work in the US. S 744 assumes that foreigners will be discouraged from coming to the US if employers will hire them, so it requires all employers to check new hires using the E-Verify system within four years. When hired, non-US citizens would have to show employers a “biometric work authorization card” or immigrant visa that includes a photo stored in the E-Verify system and can be seen over the internet by the employer.

After DHS submits a plan to secure the Mexico-US border, unauthorized foreigners who were in the US before December 31, 2011 could pay \$500, back taxes, and application fees to become “Registered Provisional Immigrants” for six years. This RPI status could be renewed after six years for another \$500 fee. After a decade, RPIs could apply for regular immigrant status by showing they have worked (or were enrolled in school) and lived in the US since registering. After three years as regular immigrants they could apply for US citizenship.

Unauthorized farm workers have a faster path to immigrant status. Those who did at least 100 days or 575 hours of US farm work in the 24 months ending December 31, 2012 could become RPIs and receive “blue cards” by paying an application fee and a \$100 fine. Agricultural RPIs could become regular immigrants by doing at least 150 days of farm work a year for three years or 100 days of farm work a year in five years. The family members of RPIs could apply for immigrant visas when the farm worker does.

The US now has three major guest worker programs (Figure 2). The H-1B program admits about 100,000 foreigners a year with a college degree who enter the US to fill jobs that require a college degree; about half of H-1B visa holders are Indians employed in IT-services. The H-2A program admits 60,000 foreign farm workers to fill seasonal farm jobs after DOL certifies farm employers as needing foreign workers; a sixth are in North Carolina. The H-2B program admits up to 66,000 foreign workers a year to fill seasonal nonfarm jobs in landscaping, resort, hotels, and reforestry; a sixth are in Texas.

Under S 744, the number of H-1B visas would double and there would be new guest worker programs for farm and nonfarm workers. The number of regular H-1B visas would increase from the current 65,000 a year to

110,000, and the number of visas for foreigners who have earned advanced degrees from US universities would increase from 20,000 to 25,000.

The current H-2A program for farm workers would be replaced by new W-3 and W-4 guest worker programs administered by USDA. The W-3 program would be like the current H-2A program and tie a foreign farm worker to a particular US farm employer and job for up to three years. However, W-3 farm workers could work for another farmer, known as a Designated Agricultural Employer (DAE), after they completed their initial contracts. W-4 visa holders would need an initial job offer from a DAE to enter the US, but could “float” from one

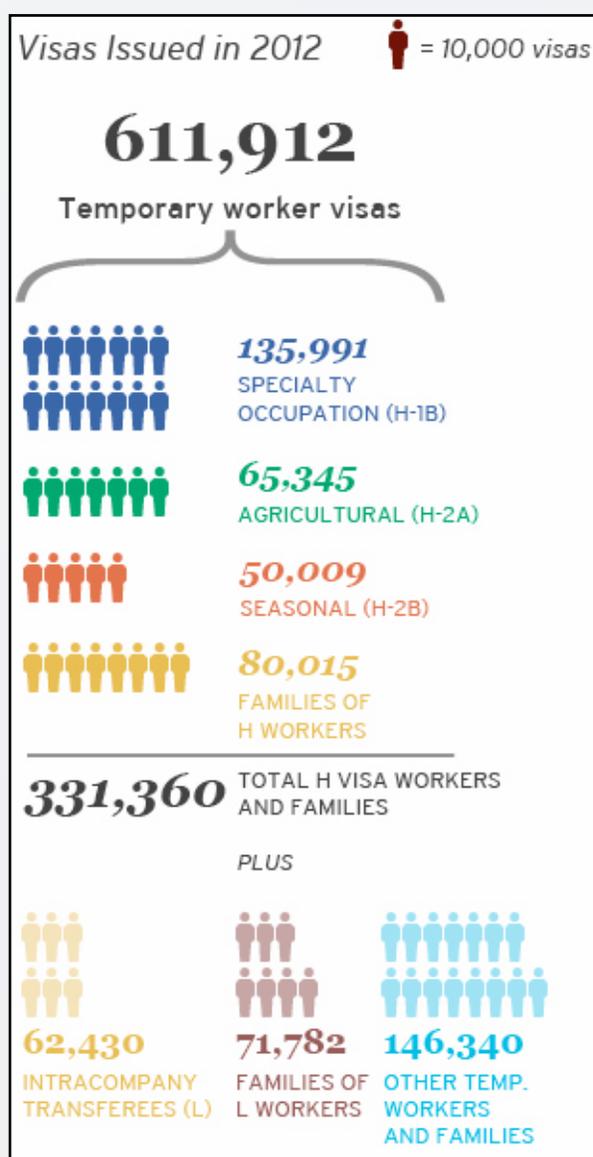


Figure 2. Work Visas issued to Foreigners in FY12.

DAE to another during the three years that their W-4 visas were valid.

The number of W-3 and W-4 visas would initially be capped at 112,333 a year, so that a maximum of 337,000 new guest workers could be in the US at any one time. The minimum hourly wage for W-3 and W-4 crop workers is \$9.64 an hour across the US, and this wage can be raised each year by 1.5 to 2.5 percent. S 744 requires farm employers to provide housing or a housing allowance of \$1 to \$2 an hour in most counties to both W-3 and W-4 visa holders, but not to any US workers they employ.

A new W-2 visa program would admit more low-skilled nonfarm workers up to 20,000 in the first year, 35,000 in the second year, 55,000 in the third year, and 75,000 in the fourth year. No more than a third of W-2 visa holders could be employed in construction.

Where will US employers get low-skilled W-visa workers? Mexico-US migration has been declining, and more Mexicans returned to Mexico than were admitted in recent years. A century ago, many farm workers in western states were Chinese and Japanese. A combination of longer periods of US employment and the opportunity to bring family members may bring more Asians to the US as guest workers.

#### **HOUSE: ENFORCEMENT AND GUEST WORKERS**

The House Judiciary Committee approved four bills in June 2013 to increase enforcement and to modify guest worker programs for agriculture and IT. The Legal Workforce Act (HR 1772) would require all employers to use E-Verify to check the immigration status of employees within two years, sooner than the four years allowed by the Senate bill. HR 1772 would allow employers to use E-Verify to check their current workforce if the employer's entire workforce is checked.

The Strengthen and Fortify Enforcement Act or SAFE Act (HR 2278) would criminalize more activities by foreigners in the US to expedite their removal, increase the number of interior Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents by 5,000, and allow states and

localities to enact and enforce immigration laws as long as penalties do not exceed federal penalties for the same offense. Foreigners convicted of criminal gang membership, drunk driving, manslaughter, rape, and failure to register as a sex offender could be removed more easily.

The Agricultural Guestworker or AG Act (HR 1773) would replace the current H-2A program with a new H-2C program administered by USDA. Any farm employer, including dairy and food processing employers, could register with USDA to be designated as a registered agricultural employer (RAE) and petition USDA for permission to hire H-2C guest workers, including unauthorized workers currently in the US. However, H-2C visas would be issued only outside the US, where workers would receive 18-month visas if they filled seasonal US jobs and 36-month visas if they filled non-seasonal jobs. If their visas were still valid when the first job ended, H-2C workers could switch to another RAE, provided they were not unemployed in the US more than 30 days. Farmers would not have to pay the in-bound transportation expenses of H-2C workers or provide them with housing

H-2C workers would have to be out of the US at least a sixth of the time they were in the US, that is, at least three months after being in the US 18 months. To encourage guest workers to depart, 10 percent of the wages paid to H-2C workers would be held in an escrow account and paid with interest if claimed by returned workers at a US embassy or consulate in their home countries.

The Supplying Knowledge-based Immigrants and Lifting Levels of STEM Visas (SKILLS) Act (HR 2131) would eliminate the 55,000 diversity immigrant visas and make them available to foreigners who earn advanced degrees from US universities in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). SKILLS would raise the number of regular H-1B visas from 65,000 a year to 155,000, and double the number of H-1B visas for foreigners with advanced degrees from US universities to 40,000.

**“The most likely outcome of the immigration reform debate is the status quo that has prevailed for the past decade. This broken immigration system is not the first preference of any major party in the debate, but it is the second-best solution for advocates who cannot get what they want.”**

## WHAT NEXT?

About three-fourths of the hired workers on US crop farms were born abroad and over half of all crop workers are not authorized to work in the US (Figure 3). Although most of the estimated eight million unauthorized workers are employed in nonfarm jobs, farmers are nervous that the million unauthorized foreigners employed in agriculture sometime during a typical year may become unavailable if enforcement precedes legalization.

Both the Senate and House bills are likely to give agriculture a legal workforce comprised first of currently unauthorized workers and later legal guest workers. Second, immigration reform should stabilize farm labor costs because average hourly farm worker earnings are already more than the minimum wage that must be paid to guest workers. Even if farm employers have to pay a housing allowance of \$1 to \$2 an hour, as under the Senate bill, the \$9.64 that must be paid to guest workers in 2016 plus the housing allowance is less the average hourly earnings of hired farm workers, \$11.91 an hour in April 2013 according to USDA.

Third, both bills should provide farm labor certainty. However, the Senate bill may give farmers in high-wage states such as California and Washington a competitive edge over farmers in lower-wage areas such as the southeast. Under the Senate bill, all farmers in 2016 can hire guest workers at \$9.64 an hour, which is less than average hourly earnings of \$11 in California in 2013, but more than the \$9.50 reported for some southeastern states.

The agricultural provisions of the Senate bill were negotiated by farm worker advocates and farm employers who have pledged to “strongly resist” efforts to change what they describe as a “delicately balanced compromise.” The House guest worker bill, on the other hand, is supported by some farm employers but opposed by farm worker advocates. The Senate bill may stall due to opposition to legalization, but the House bill is unlikely to be enacted unless there is a severe farm labor shortage that threatens widespread crop losses and consumer price increases.

The most likely outcome of the immigration reform debate is the status quo that has prevailed for the past decade. This broken immigration system is not the first preference of any major party in the debate, but it is the second-best solution for advocates who cannot get what they want. ●

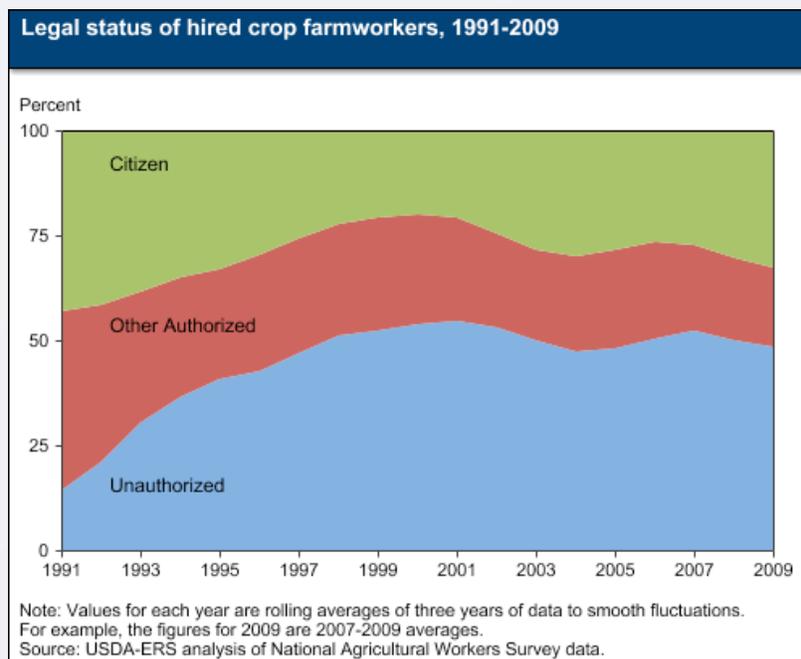


Figure 3. Legal Status of Crop Workers, 1991-2009.

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## STRENGTHENING LATINO SMALL BUSINESSES AND ENTREPRENEURS IN WASHINGTON: AN OVERLOOKED STRATEGY FOR COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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“No one can predict with certainty whether or not Congress will pass significant immigration legislation in 2013 or 2014 but we can be reasonably confident that any such legislation will not end the immigration debate. Immigration policy in the US has always been controversial.”

- From “Immigration and Immigration Policy in the West,” page 7.



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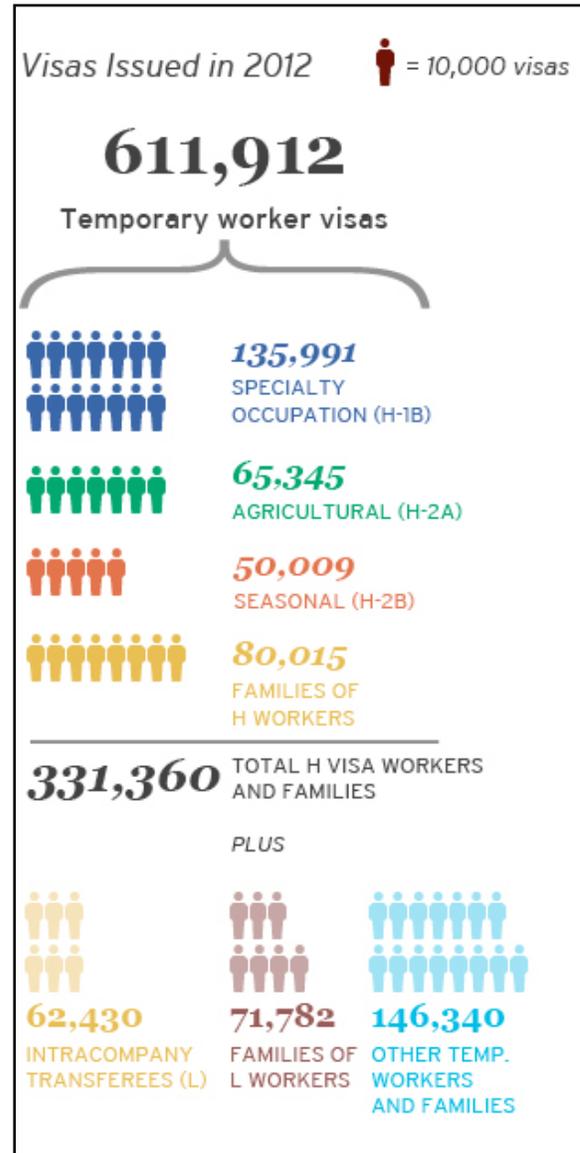
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From "Immigration and Agriculture: What Next?"  
 Page 33.

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