Vermont Latino Dairy Farmworker Housing: Summary of Research Findings & Recommendations

Presented to the Vermont House
General, Housing and Military Affairs Committee
& Agriculture and Forestry Committee
April 21, 2021

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Currently there is a broad, informal group that meets on farmworker housing in Vermont. I’ve facilitated this group for the past year.

In March 2021, this group included 23 separate organizations & agencies concerned and interested in farmworker housing.

- Broad array of stakeholders

Focus thus far is encouraging information sharing between groups.
Vermont Farmworkers

Different situations and constraints

- Farmworkers who are US Citizens or Residents (often Vermon ters)
  - Some local and permanent
  - Some migrant
  - On or off-farm housing are options
    - Off-farm faces limited affordable housing
- Seasonal H2A Visa holders
  - In Sept 2020, 325, about 200 of which are on apple orchards
  - H2A visa program requires housing be provided
- Undocumented migrant farmworkers
  - How many in Vermont?
    - UVM Extension Migrant Education Program in 2018: 672 Dairy farmworkers + families
    - Milk with Dignity Standards Council – 1300-1500
  - On-farm housing is predominant and is the focus of this presentation

Sources: NASS USDA; Alyson Eastman – VT Agency of Agriculture; Erin Shea: UVM Extension Migrant Education Program; Milk With Dignity Standards Council
My team’s research on Vermont Dairy Farmworkers

### Dairy Farmer Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>73 farms statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>71 farms statewide</td>
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</tbody>
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### Latino Dairy Farmworker Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Farms</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>173 Latino Farmworkers</td>
<td>116 unique farms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018/2019</td>
<td>67 Latino Farmworkers</td>
<td>40 unique farms</td>
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Currently interviewing farmers for a Vermont Dept of Health Covid project in partnership with UVM Medical Center

On-going public opinion polling on opinions on migrant farmworkers
Distribution of Family and Hired Labor on Vermont Dairy Farms
*(dairy farms hiring non-family labor)*

**Farms hiring Latinos:**
In 2010:
- 56% of farms surveyed hired Latino workers

In 2018:
- 94% of farms surveyed hired Latinos workers

Of the 586 non-family full-time farmworkers in 2018, 57% were Latinos

Source: Baker & Chappelle, 2010; Baker & Irwin - 2018 Farmers Survey
US farmworkers remain with the same farm for longer in both surveys between 2010 and 2018. Tenure of hired workers has increased for both US and Foreign workers.

Source: Baker & Chappelle, 2010; Baker & Irwin - 2018 Farmers Survey
Housing is one of the most common non-wage benefits provided to workers on dairy farms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Latino Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing &amp; Utilities</td>
<td>provided by 100% of farms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer estimated</td>
<td>median annual value per worker: $4,367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum: $3,200</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimum: $1,167</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>U.S. Workers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing provided</td>
<td>by 62% of farms; Utilities provided by 53% of farms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer estimated</td>
<td>median annual value per worker: $14,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum: $14,100</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimum: $3,300</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Baker & Irwin, - 2018 Farmers Survey
Out of 173 responses on 116 farms:

15 farms (13%) had at least one worker reporting extreme stress.

43 farms (37%) had at least one worker who reported moderate or extreme housing stress.

Source: Baker and Kades, 2016 Farmworker Survey
Latino Dairy Farmworker Housing Density

Number of people living in workers housing (n=66)
Range: 1-9
Mean: 4.3

Number of bedrooms in workers housing (n=66)
Range: 1-7
Mean: 3.7

"I share my bedroom with..."

Source: Baker and Rosenberg, 2018/19 Farmworker Survey
Housing Density is a significant, current concern for Covid

- Nearly all Latino workers live on-farm
- Alternative housing on farms is extremely limited
- Off-farm housing is challenging for Latino workers

Separate from the current public health risks posed by Covid, housing density should be considered in relation to other issues.
Recommendations

• While most Latino farmworkers report housing to be adequate, for more than 1/3 of Latino dairy workers housing is a major cause of stress

• Need further research to distinguish between the need to whole house replacement and repair
  • More research on the extent and needs of on-farm housing is needed
  • A significant portion of farmworker housing are manufactured homes ("mobile homes")

• Provide funding and incentives for farmers to improve farmworker housing
  • Programs that could assist with housing repair can help in the short term
    • $10,000-$20,000 per repair?
    • Weatherization
    • Assistance with replacing/building new homes

• Formalize a multi-sector farm labor housing working group to expand recommendations and options
  • Stakeholders should include both farmer and farmworker representatives in addition to housing agencies and organizations.
Vermonters believe migrant farmworkers contribute positively to our farms and communities.

Data source: Dan Baker