

Immigration and Agricultural Labor

Farm labor in the United States is made up of approximately 1.1 million workers and has been relatively stable for at least the past decade. Immigrant labor is an important component of many, if not most, agricultural enterprises. The 2010 Population Survey estimates that 57.2% of the agricultural hired labor force was foreign-born. Approximately 62% of those foreign employees worked in crop production, while the remainder worked in livestock. Moreover during the past decade, approximately half of the farm labor force was made up of undocumented workers. The preponderance of undocumented workers in the farm labor force has made immigration policy a major issue for agriculture.

Presentations will examine whether or not the recent slowdown in Mexico-US migration to fill farm jobs is likely to persist and how U.S. agriculture is responding to the end of farm labor abundance.

- Philip Martin, University of California at Davis, will provide an overview of the current border issues and their implications from labor availability.
- A national survey of U.S. dairy farms will be analyzed by Flynn Adcock, Texas A&M University to determine the importance of hired immigrant labor to U.S. milk production, the effects of immigrant labor losses on U.S. milk production and herd size, and the economic impacts on economic output, income and employment in the U.S. dairy sector and supporting industries.
- The third presentation by Juan Murguia, North Dakota State University, uses laboratory experiments to better understand the causes of agricultural and non-agricultural labor market discrimination in Hispanics job-seekers.

You will not want to miss this track session focusing on an issue of high interest and relevance to our nation's food production systems. This session, co-sponsored by the Latin American and Senior Sections, will be held Monday, July 27, at 4:30 PM in the Sierra K Room at the Marriott Hotel.