

# Food Insecurity Among Farmworkers in Ventura County

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## Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	2
Literature Review	4
Causes of Farmworker Food Insecurity	4
How Farmworker Food Insecurity Varies	5
Health Consequences of Food Insecurity	6
Community Gardens as a Solution	6
Methods	7
Findings	9
How Food Insecurity Varies by Individual Characteristics	9
Indigeneity	9
Age	10
Gender	10
How Food Insecurity Varies by Household Characteristics	11
Presence of Kids	11
Household Size	11
Conclusion	12
Contribution and Limitations	12
Policy Implications	13
References	15
Appendix: Survey Instrument	17

## **Executive Summary**

This community-based research project was a collaboration between Community Roots Garden and Sociology Capstone students. In March 2022, 100 farmworkers in Oxnard responded to survey questions about access to food. These surveys were administered by a group of ten students (Giselle Ambriz, Jose Angelez, Melissa Castro Ibarra, Evelyn Cedillo, Daniela Cortez, Erick Garcia, Janitta Gomez, Celeste Hernandez, Skye Loza, and Ana Rivera). The following semester, a group of five students (Joanna Cortez, Jasmine Garcia, Alexis Rodarte, Fabiola Sanchez, and Molly Velazquez) analyzed results to answer the research question: How does farmworker food insecurity vary by individual and household-level characteristics?

We found that indigenous farmworkers face food insecurity at a significantly higher rate than other farmworkers. Overall, 62% of respondents indicated that they were food insecure. Yet, 78% of indigenous farmworkers in the study were food insecure compared to 48% of non-indigenous farmworkers. In addition, older farmworkers were more food insecure than younger farmworkers, as 75% of farmworkers 50 years old and above faced food insecurity.

Not only do the farmworkers in the study face high rates of food insecurity, they also desire to eat more fruits and vegetables (99%), more organic food (97%), and more locally-grown food (99%) than they currently do. The majority of respondents know how to grow organically (64%), have experience growing for self-consumption (69%), and are interested in growing for self-consumption (73%), yet few currently do (19%). This is related to lack of access to land and underscores the importance of community gardens like Community Roots Garden in providing that access.

## **Introduction**

Farmworkers experience food insecurity at rates three to four times higher than the national average (Weigel et al. 2007; Meierotto, Mares, and Holmes 2020). Scholars who have studied food insecurity among farmworkers have identified root causes of food insecurity, such as low wages and seasonal unemployment, as well as how food insecurity varies by social characteristics like gender and presence of kids in the household (Borre, Ertle, and Graff 2010; Minkoff-Zern 2014; Maxwell et al. 2015; Weigel et al. 2017; Castañeda et. al. 2019). This study focuses on farmworkers in Ventura County and looks at how the rate of food insecurity among farmworkers varies by individual and household-level characteristics. It also examines knowledge, experience, and interest in growing food for self-consumption. This allows for a better understanding of the factors that impact the prevalence of food insecurity in farmworking communities and how to address this social problem.

This community-based research project took place in partnership with Community Roots Garden. This partnership began in Spring 2020, when Sociology Capstone students analyzed farmworker food insecurity surveys that were collected by Community Roots Garden in 2012. Students entered the paper surveys into a spreadsheet, and then conducted univariate and bivariate analysis. That same semester, another group of Sociology Capstone students engaged in participant observation at the garden. Participant observation took place in February 2020, prior to the shutdown. This was a significant period in the organization's history, as it was the first time that the Mixteco Indígena Community Organizing Project (MICOP) held their monthly meeting there. Previously, MICOP held their monthly meeting, wherein food and resources are distributed to the indigenous community in Oxnard, at a local school. In February 2020, they moved their monthly food distribution to Community Roots Garden so that the indigenous community could become more familiar with the garden. This was done alongside an effort to distribute fewer canned goods and more fresh produce to indigenous community members who lived rural agrarian lifestyles and tended their own gardens prior to migration. Migrating to Oxnard to work as agricultural laborers has resulted in decreased consumption of nutritious and culturally appropriate food among indigenous farmworkers from Oaxaca (Soper 2022).

This community partnership continued in Spring 2022 when Sociology Capstone students conducted a 10-year follow up study to 2012 farmworker food insecurity data. In consultation with Zuleima Jimenez and Adriana Diego, volunteer coordinators at Community Roots Garden,

students developed a survey instrument. We wanted to collect data that would be relevant to their efforts to expand participation of indigenous farmworkers in their one-acre community garden. To that end, we included questions on indigeneity, food insecurity, interest in community gardening, experience growing their own food for self-consumption, desire to eat more organic food, and knowledge of how to grow organically. A group of ten Sociology Capstone students collected 100 surveys in March 2022, conducted univariate analysis, and presented the results to our community partner. The following semester, a group of five Sociology Capstone students further analyzed results by calculating bivariate crosstabulations to see how farmworker food insecurity varies by individual and household-level characteristics.

In 2012, 58% of farmworker respondents were food insecure. In 2022, 62% were food insecure. In 2012, 64% of indigenous farmworkers were food insecure, compared to 50% of non-indigenous farmworkers. In 2022, 78% of indigenous farmworkers were food insecure, compared to 48% of non-indigenous farmworkers. Thus, while food insecurity remained relatively constant for non-indigenous farmworkers, it increased dramatically for indigenous farmworkers. Moreover, in both 2012 and 2022, over 90% of farmworker respondents indicated that they wish they ate more local and organic fruits and vegetables.

The results of our 2022 survey revealed that while 69% of farmworkers in the sample have experience growing food for self-consumption, only 19% currently grow food for self-consumption. This is likely a result of lack of access to land. Not only were 73% of respondents interested in community gardening, but 64% know how to grow food organically, and 59% were interested in growing food to sell. These findings show that while there is a lot of experience and interest in growing food for self-consumption and sale, few farmworkers currently have the means to do so. This is why spaces like Community Roots Garden are important for providing access to land to grow food.

The following paper will begin by discussing existing literature on the topic of food insecurity among farmworkers. Subsequently, the methods and findings of this study will be explained in detail, followed by a conclusion that examines policy implications that could address the social injustice of farmworker food insecurity.

## Literature Review

### *Causes of Farmworker Food Insecurity*

Food insecurity among farmworkers is prevalent in many areas across the nation. Scholars shed light on how unjust it is that the people who harvest our food do not have enough access to food themselves (Minkoff-Zern 2012). Low wages and seasonal unemployment are big factors that contribute to food insecurity among farmworkers (Castañeda et. al. 2019; Meierotto and Som Castellano 2019). Farmworkers were not able to afford good quality food due to their low and stagnant wages. Lack of adequate income was directly related to food insecurity as it meant that the workers had insufficient funds to be able to feed their families (Castañeda et. al. 2019). Seasonal unemployment is also a large factor. Many seasonal farmworkers were unsure whether they would have a secured job when the season rolled around again (Meierotto and Som Castellano 2019). Lack of job security leads to financial barriers to buy food, causing farmworkers to experience a perpetual lifestyle of food insecurity for themselves and their families.

Transportation, distance, and time also contribute to food insecurity. Guarnaccia et al. (2012) found that lack of reliable transportation and the necessity to travel long distances to buy groceries perpetuated farmworker food insecurity. Mares et al. (2020) found that 95% of farmworkers in Vermont do not drive because of fear of deportation and instead rely on their employers to pick up groceries for them. Because of this, they did not have access to culturally-familiar foods. Quandt et al. (2014) found that families did most of their shopping at discount grocery stores, and Carney (2017) found that mothers sought “specials,” in an attempt to buy higher quality food for a discount price. Long work hours during peak season lead to a lack of time to make home cooked meals (Guarnaccia et al. 2012). Farmworkers thus have limited food choices due to their geographic and economic circumstances (Mares et al. 2020).

Another prominent cause of food insecurity in farmworker families is documentation status. It has been shown that lack of documentation status is associated with a larger risk of experiencing food insecurity. In fact, 55% of undocumented farmworkers experience food insecurity, while only 34% of documented farmworkers are food insecure (Minkoff-Zern 2012). Furthermore, Minkoff-Zern (2012) explains that lack of documentation instills fear within farmworkers, impeding them from fighting for higher wages.

Documentation status also impacts the opportunities that farmworker families have for receiving government aid for the provision of food (Carney 2017; Meierotto and Som Castellano 2019). Meierotto and Som Castellano (2019) found that those who are able to access to these programs can benefit greatly; however, eligibility is based on requirements such as proof of residency or citizenship, proof of income, proof of where one lives, and/or proof of family size (Meierotto and Som Castellano 2019). Many farmworkers become frightened with an agency requiring extensive information so they avoid utilizing assistance programs because of fear of deportation (Minkoff-Zern 2014). Local assistance programs such as food banks serve as a primary source of food aid for farmworkers who are undocumented (Minkoff-Zern 2014). Some local food assistance programs are ineffective because they provide farmworker families with nutritional education rather than directly addressing the structural causes of farmworker food insecurity (Minkoff-Zern 2012).

### ***How Farmworker Food Insecurity Varies***

Farmworker food insecurity has been found to vary by factors such as gender and family size. Scholars assert that women are more impacted by food insecurity compared to men due to the roles that are assigned to women in the family (Sano et al. 2011; Carney 2017). Sano et al. (2011) explains that women suffer from greater food deprivation because their main concern is to feed their children and not let them endure hunger. They sacrifice their own nutritional needs to ensure that their children's nutritional needs are met. Women in farmworker families tend to be responsible for cooking, cleaning, taking care of the children, managing the financial budget, and working a full-time job (Carney 2012). Therefore women have additional responsibilities compared to men, having to work long hours and still complete domestic duties when they return home.

Another factor that affects rates of food insecurity is the size and structure of the family (Quandt et al. 2004; Meierotto and Som Castellano 2019). Quandt et al. (2004) found that households with children had a larger risk of enduring food insecurity (41.8%) compared to families who had no children (21.3%). Concurrent with these findings, Meierotto and Som Castellano (2019) explain that farmworker families who have children and other dependents have a greater need to budget their money and stretch their food supply to be able to feed everyone.

### ***Health Consequences of Food Insecurity***

Farmworkers experience higher rates of food insecurity than other groups, and therefore they are more prone to health risks (Weigel et al. 2007; Borre et al. 2010; Carney 2012; Quandt et al. 2014; Castañeda et al. 2019). Weigel et al. (2007) and Quandt et al. (2016) found that households with food insecurity are more prone to chronic diseases as they are more likely to purchase inexpensive, high-calorie foods. Young children of farmworkers are not consuming enough fruits and vegetables; rather, they are exposed to excess sugars in processed foods (Quandt et al. 2016). Eating fast food and processed food from nearby convenience stores can lead to diet-related health issues such as obesity, diabetes, and heart problems (Guarnaccia et al. 2012; Maxwell et al. 2015; Castañeda et al. 2019).

Aside from physical health effects, the mental health of farmworkers can be negatively affected by food insecurity (Pulgar et al. 2016; Mares et al. 2020). Pulgar et al. (2016) found that women in farmworker families with lower food security had a greater prevalence of depressive symptoms. Similarly, Weigel et al. (2007) reports that farmworkers from food insecure households are likely to describe more stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms. Underlying factors such as economic hardship, unequal distribution of household and childcare labor, documentation status, discrimination, and lack of access to healthcare all contribute to the poor mental health outcomes of farmworkers (Weigel et al. 2007; Sano et al. 2011; Carney 2012; Pulgar et al. 2016).

### ***Community Gardens as a Solution***

With the extensive knowledge farmworkers have on how to grow and harvest fruits and vegetables, they possess the skill to cultivate healthy food with which to feed their families (Minkoff-Zern 2012). If farmworkers had access to a plot of land, they could use their knowledge in agriculture to grow and harvest fresh fruits and vegetables. Thus, one of the ways to combat farmworker food insecurity is to create community gardens to sustain access to healthy food that is affordable (Minkoff-Zern 2012; Meierotto and Som Castellano 2019). Minkoff-Zern (2012) found that community gardens allowed farmworkers to practice their traditional agricultural knowledge. Meierotto and Som Castellano (2019) found that few farmworkers currently grow their own food, but many were interested in doing so.



## Methods

This study investigates access to food among farmworkers in Ventura County. It examines how food insecurity varies by individual and household-level characteristics. This community-based research project took place in partnership with Community Roots Garden, a one-acre community garden in North Oxnard. In 2012, they collected 100 surveys from farmworkers in Oxnard as part of a Community Food Project grant funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). In Spring 2022, Sociology Capstone students developed a follow-up survey instrument. Once volunteer coordinators Zuleima Jimenez and Adriana Diaz at Community Roots Garden approved the survey questions, we submitted an IRB application and received permission to conduct our research project.

Surveys were collected in March 2022 from a sample of 100 Latino/a farmworkers in Oxnard, California. Ten Sociology Capstone students conducted face-to-face surveys over a three-week period. Oral questionnaires were administered in three neighborhoods in Oxnard – La Colonia, Lemonwood, and Southwinds – as well as at the Sunday Swap Meet at Oxnard College. Students approached passersby in these locations, explained the purpose of the survey, and asked if they were farmworkers and wanted to participate. After receiving verbal informed consent, the student researchers ensured the respondents were 18 years or older, currently resided in Oxnard, and worked in agriculture within the past 12 months. They paired up, with one student asking the questions, and the other student marking the answers on paper surveys. The survey questions were all asked in Spanish. In some cases, where the respondents were monolingual Mixteco speakers, their child translated for them. Thanks to a mini-grant awarded by the Center for Integrative Studies, farmworker respondents received a bag of rice, beans, and cooking oil in appreciation for participating in the study.

The survey instrument contained 18 closed-ended questions regarding demographic information, experience and interest growing food for self-consumption, and food insecurity. Background information included age, gender, indigeneity, marital status, the number of people who share food in the household, and presence of children in the household. Indigeneity was measured via a question about language: “Do you speak another language, like Mixteco, Zapoteco, or Triqui?” If they indicated Yes, they were coded as indigenous. If they indicated No, they were coded as mestizo, meaning of mixed Spanish and indigenous heritage. Our sample is roughly half indigenous (46%) and half mestizo (54%). Similarly, it is half male (53%) and half

female (47%). Three-quarters of respondents live with children in the household (73%), while one-quarter (27%) do not. The age of respondents ranged from 18 to 74, with an average age of 39. The number of people who share food in the household ranged from 1 to 9, with an average household size of 5. When grouped into categories, 28% of respondents were age 18-29, 29% were 30-39, 23% were 40-49, and 20% were 50 years of age and above. In addition, 14% shared food with 1-3 people, 61% shared food with 4-6 people, and 25% shared food with 7-9 people.

Five survey questions asked about growing food oneself. Respondents were asked if they currently cultivate food for self-consumption, if they have experience cultivating food for self-consumption, if they are interested in growing food for self-consumption, if they are interested in growing food to sell, and if they know how to grow food organically. While only 19% currently grow food for self-consumption, 69% have experience growing food for self-consumption. About one quarter (27%) were not interested in growing their own food, one quarter (26%) were somewhat interested, and nearly half (47%) were very interested in growing their own food. Regarding knowledge of how to grow organically, 64% said they know how to grow food without chemical fertilizers or pesticides. Lastly, 59% were interested in growing food to sell. This indicates that while there is a lot of experience and interest in growing food for self-consumption and even sale, few farmworkers in Oxnard currently have the means to grow their own food.

Food insecurity was measured by asking “In the past 12 months, did you eat less than you thought you should because there was not enough money to buy food?” as well as “In the past 12 months, did you experience hunger because there was not enough money to buy food?” Their answer options for both questions were: Yes, almost every month; Yes, some months; Yes, only one or two months a year; and No. Initially, food insecurity was divided into seven categories: 38% experienced no food insecurity, 13% experienced food insecurity one or two months of the year, 9% experienced food insecurity several months of the year, 7% experienced food insecurity almost every month, 13% experienced hunger one or two months of the year, 14% experienced hunger several months of the year, and 6% experienced hunger almost every month. We then narrowed it down to a dichotomous variable, with 38% of respondents experiencing no insecurity, and 62% of respondents experiencing food insecurity.

Additional questions were asked about access to food. Almost all respondents said they wish they ate more fruits and vegetables than they currently do (99%), wish they ate more food

grown locally within Ventura County (99%), and wish they ate more food grown organically without chemical fertilizers or pesticides (97%). A mark-all-that-apply question asked about what barriers impede them from eating more fruits and vegetables. Half of respondents (48%) indicated that money was a barrier, 35% indicated that time was a barrier, 18% indicated that not knowing how to cook fruits and vegetables was a barrier, and 10% indicated that transportation was a barrier. Lastly, farmworkers were asked how often in the past 12 months they were allowed to bring fruits and vegetables home from the field. Few respondents (8%) indicated they were always allowed to bring fruits and vegetables home, 12% were almost always allowed, 42% were sometimes allowed, 13% were hardly ever allowed, and 25% were never allowed to bring fruits and vegetables home from the field where they work.

All of the above descriptive statistics and univariate analysis were calculated by Spring 2022 students. Fall 2022 students calculated bivariate crosstabulations using food insecurity as their dependent variable and age, gender, indigeneity, number of people who share food in the household, and presence of children in the household as their independent variables.

## Findings

### *How Food Insecurity Varies By Individual Characteristics*

*Indigeneity.* Our data shows that indigenous farmworkers face food insecurity at higher rates than mestizo farmworkers. More than three quarters (78%) of indigenous respondents indicated that they experienced food insecurity within the past year, while half (48%) of mestizo respondents experienced food insecurity. According to a chi-square test, this variation is statistically significant at a  $p < .01$  level. Therefore, food insecurity varies significantly by indigeneity. Indigenous farmworkers likely suffer more from food insecurity due to documentation status, because as more recent arrivals, indigenous migrants tend to be undocumented at higher rates than mestizo migrants. In addition, they face language barriers and discrimination at work, leading to wage theft.

<b>Table 1: Food Insecurity by Indigeneity (n=100)</b>			
	<b>Food Insecure</b>	<b>Not Food Insecure</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Indigenous</b>	78%	22%	100%

<b>Mestizo</b>	48%	52%	100%
<b>Total</b>	62%	38%	100%

*Age.* When comparing food insecurity by age, we found that older farmworkers face food insecurity at higher rates than younger farmworkers. In the youngest age group, 43% of respondents age 18-29 indicated that they experienced food insecurity within the past year. This was the least food insecure out of all age groups. In the following age group, 66% of respondents age 30-39 indicated facing food insecurity. Of the age group 40-49, 70% were food insecure. The oldest age group of 50+ faced the most food insecurity. Three quarters (75%) of respondents in the oldest age category experienced food insecurity in the past year. Our crosstabulation shows that the rate of food insecurity steadily increases as age increases. However, according to the chi-square test, this finding is not statistically significant. Nevertheless, the older the farmworker, the more food insecure they were. The reason for a higher rate of food insecurity among older farmworkers likely has to do with working fewer hours because of illness or injury.

	<b>Food Insecure</b>	<b>Not Food Insecure</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>18-29</b>	43%	57%	100%
<b>30-39</b>	66%	34%	100%
<b>40-49</b>	70%	30%	100%
<b>50+</b>	75%	25%	100%
<b>Total</b>	62%	38%	100%

*Gender.* Our data shows that food insecurity does not vary by gender. Among female respondents, 60% experienced food insecurity. Among male respondents, 63% experienced food insecurity. This difference is not statistically significant according to our chi-square test. Based on previous literature, it would have been expected for women to experience more food insecurity than men, but our findings show that food insecurity did not vary by gender. One explanation for this might be that women work in agriculture more on the Central Coast than in other parts of the country where they rely on their husbands to bring income into the household.

**Table 3: Food Insecurity by Gender (n=99)**

	<b>Food Insecure</b>	<b>Not Food Insecure</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Female</b>	60%	40%	100%
<b>Male</b>	63%	37%	100%
<b>Total:</b>	62%	38%	100%

***How Food Insecurity Varies By Household Characteristics***

*Presence of Kids in Household.* Similarly, while previous scholarship has found that farmworkers who live in a household where kids are present face food insecurity at higher rates than households without kids, this trend was not reflected in our sample. Our data shows that farmworker food insecurity does not vary by presence or absence of kids in the household. Out of the respondents who reported having kids in the household, 63% were food insecure. Out of the respondents who reported not having any kids in the household, 59% were food insecure. This variation is not statistically significant according to the chi-square test. Previous research found that farmworker households with kids were more food insecure than households without kids. One explanation for why we found that food insecurity does not vary by kids in the household could be because respondents without kids were more likely to be older and therefore work less.

**Table 4: Food Insecurity by Presence of Kids in Household (n=100)**

	<b>Food Insecure</b>	<b>Not Food Insecure</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Kids in Household</b>	63%	37%	100%
<b>No Kids in Household</b>	59%	41%	100%
<b>Total</b>	62%	38%	100%

*Household Size.* Our data shows that farmworker food insecurity does vary by the number of people who share food in the household. We divided household size into three categories: 1-3 people share food, 4-6 people share food, and 7-9 people shared food. Of those who shared food with 1-3 people in their household, 71% experienced food insecurity. Of those who shared food with 4-6 people in their household, 59% experienced food insecurity. Among

respondents who shared food with 7-9 people, 64% experienced food insecurity. While one might assume that the larger the household size, the greater the rate of food insecurity, we found that food insecurity rates were highest in households with fewer people. This might be because there are fewer working age adults in smaller households. While this variation is not statistically significant according to a chi-square test, our results show that farmworker households where food is shared among 1-3 people had the highest percentage of food insecurity, compared to those where food was shared with 4 or more people. Larger households might contain adult siblings and cousins who bring in income as opposed to smaller households consisting of one working age adult, one child, and one caretaking parent.

<b>Table 5: Food Insecurity by Household Size (n=100)</b>			
	<b>Food Insecure</b>	<b>Not Food Insecure</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1-3</b>	71%	29%	100%
<b>4-6</b>	59%	41%	100%
<b>7-9</b>	64%	36%	100%
<b>Total</b>	62%	38%	100%

**Conclusion**

***Contribution and Limitations***

Rates of food insecurity among farmworkers in Oxnard are higher than other studies on farmworker food insecurity. Previous studies have found that 40-50% of farmworkers are food insecure, whereas our study found that 62% of respondents faced food insecurity. The rate is even higher among indigenous farmworkers and older farmworkers. Among farmworker respondents who speak an indigenous language, 78% faced food insecurity. For farmworker respondents 50 years or older, 75% were food insecure. These findings inform us that efforts to combat food insecurity locally should be targeted towards indigenous farmworkers as well as older farmworkers.

The findings of this study contribute to existing research because previous scholarship has not examined how farmworker food insecurity varies by indigeneity. Previous studies have

found that food insecurity varies by gender and presence of kids in the household. For example, Quandt et al. (2004) found that households with children experience food insecurity at a rate of 41.8% compared to 21.3% among respondents who had no children. However, our study found that the rate of food insecurity does not vary by the presence of children in the household, as 63% of respondents with kids experienced food insecurity compared to 59% of respondents without kids. Similarly, food insecurity did not vary by gender, as 60% of female respondents experienced food insecurity compared to 63% of male respondents. It is possible that female respondents underreported their food insecurity, especially if their children were present when they answered the survey questions.

A limitation of this study is asking only about presence or absence of children in the household rather than number of children. Understanding the ratio of children to adults in the household would better inform us as to how and why food insecurity varies by household characteristics. Another limitation is not asking about H-2A status since temporary guest workers are housed and fed by their employer. This could have skewed our findings if H-2A workers were included in the sample. Future research on farmworker food insecurity should ask about H-2A temporary guest worker status as well as ages of members of the household.

### ***Policy Implications***

Our finding that indigenous farmworkers face the highest rate of food insecurity is relevant to local non-profit organizations. One local initiative already provides fresh, local, organic fruits and vegetables to indigenous farmworkers. Abundant Table, a non-profit organization located in Ventura County, offers harvest boxes to indigenous farmworker families free of cost. These ‘solidarity shares’ contain 7-9 items of produce distributed bi-weekly to 40 families. This is a great step in the right direction towards addressing the high rates of food insecurity that indigenous farmworkers face. Fall 2022 Sociology Capstone students shared their results with Abundant Table, in the hope that they could use the findings to apply for more funding to support their solidarity shares. Unfortunately, in early 2023, Abundant Table closed down. This initiative should be replicated by another non-profit organization or county agency.

Providing farmworkers with local, organic, fresh fruits and vegetables is especially important given their responses to the survey. Overall, 99% wish they ate more fruits and vegetables, 99% wish they ate more locally-grown food, and 97% wish they ate more organic

food. Not only do farmworkers in Oxnard desire to eat more fresh and nutritious food than they currently do, they also have experience growing organic food for self-consumption. While 69% of respondents have experience growing their own food and 64% know how to grow organically, only 19% of farmworkers in the study currently grow food for self-consumption. The knowledge, experience, and desire is there – what is lacking is access to land.

Community Roots Garden is an essential resource for these farmworkers, as it provides access to land to grow fresh, nutritious, culturally appropriate food. Growing up in the Mexican countryside, prior to migrating to find work, farmworkers likely tended home gardens, or milpas. Living in an apartment complex in Oxnard, there is no space to grow one's own food. For this reason, community gardens like Community Roots Garden are an important resource for farmworkers seeking a space to grow food for oneself and one's family. Not only are 73% of farmworkers respondents somewhat or very interested in growing food for self-consumption, but 59% are interested in growing food for sale. Community gardens are thus important not only for household food security but also to propel social mobility among farmworkers as they transition from laborers to farmers.

In addition to expanding community gardens in Oxnard, it is also important to expand access to fresh, local, and organic fruits and vegetables among farmworkers who do not have the time or energy to grow food for themselves on top of harvesting food for their employers. While there is a substantial interest among farmworkers to tend to their own gardens, not all farmworkers desire to grow their own food on top of working in the fields all day. Thus, increased wages, benefits, a social safety net, and affordable housing are also needed.

Locally, there are initiatives to improve the economic hardships faced by farmworkers, led by MICOP, CAUSE (Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy), and House Farm Workers. House Farm Workers fights for affordable housing to be built for farmworkers and CAUSE and MICOP have formed an alliance called Alianza Campesina de la Costa to fight for a Living Wage Campaign.

On a state level, programs such as SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and CalFresh could extend their eligibility to undocumented individuals. Federally, the government could provide agricultural workers with a pathway to citizenship that would allow them to receive access to the social security benefits that they pay into. Structural policy change at the local, state, and federal level could help alleviate food insecurity among farmworkers.



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## Appendix

### Encuesta de Seguridad Alimentaria para los Trabajadores Agrícolas 2022

#### Cualificación Participar

A. Usted tiene 18 años o más?

- Si
- No

B. Ha trabajado usted, o algún familiar que vive con usted, en los files durante los últimos 12 meses?

- Si
- No

C. Vive o trabaja usted aquí en Oxnard?

Si

Donde vive?

- La Colonia
- El Rio
- Sur de Oxnard
- Otro parte de Oxnard: \_\_\_\_\_
- Trabajo en los files de Oxnard, pero no vivo en Oxnard: \_\_\_\_\_

No

#### Familia

1. Es casado/a usted?

Si

Vive su esposa/o aquí?

- Si
- No

No

2. Tiene hijos menores de 18 años que viven con usted, sean suyos o de su pareja/o?

- Si
- No

3. Con cuántas personas comparte la comida?

Ninguna. Yo solo/a  
Numero: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Cultivar Comida

4. Siembra usted o su familia frutas y/o verduras para su propio consumo?

Si

Donde las cultivan? \_\_\_\_\_

No

5. Qué tan interesado/a está en tener un jardín para cultivar comida para su propio consumo?

Muy interesado/a

Algo interesado/a

Poco interesado/a

6. Tiene usted experiencia en plantando sus propias frutas y/o verduras?

Si

No

7. Le interesaría plantar frutas y/o verduras para vender?

Si

No

8. Sabe usted como cultivar comida sin usar fertilizante químicas o pesticidas?

Si

No

#### Acceso de Comida

9. Preferiría usted comer más comida orgánica, o sea, natural, sin pesticidas, si fuera más accesible?

Si

No

10. Preferiría usted comer más comida que es cultivada en el condado de Ventura?

Si

No

11. Le gustaría comer más frutas y verduras de lo que come actualmente?

Si

No

12. Qué le impide consumir más frutas y verduras? Marque todo lo que aplica

No tengo suficiente tiempo para cocinar y preparar frutas y verduras

No tengo suficiente dinero para comprar más frutas y verduras

No tengo transportación para ir al mercado para comprar frutas y verduras

No sé como cocinar o preparar frutas y verduras

13. En los últimos 12 meses, que tan seguido le permitieron llevar frutas y verduras del fil a su casa?

Siempre

Casi Siempre

A veces

Muy Poco  
Nunca

### Seguridad Alimentaria

14. En los últimos 12 meses, comió usted menos de lo que pensaba que debía porque no hubo suficiente dinero para comida?

Si

Con qué frecuencia sucedió esto?

Casi cada mes

Algunos meses

Solo en uno o dos meses

No

15. En los últimos 12 meses, alguna vez tuvo hambre pero no comió porque no tuvo suficiente dinero para comida?

Si

Con qué frecuencia sucedió esto?

Casi cada mes

Algunos meses

Solo en uno o dos meses

No

### Información Demográfica

16. Qué edad tiene? \_\_\_\_\_

17. Habla usted alguna otra lengua, como Mixteco, Zapoteco, Triqui?

Si

Idioma que habla: \_\_\_\_\_

No

18. Indique si el entrevistado es hombre o mujer

Hombre

Mujer

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Gracias por participar. Tiene algún comentario o sugerencias para poder mejorar la salud y bienestar de los campesinos en Oxnard? \_\_\_\_\_