AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

NY farmer organizations working together to prepare and retain a skilled farm workforce

MISSION

The Agricultural Workforce Development Council (AWDC) is a cross-functional group of agricultural organizations, dedicated to the proactive promotion of positive on-farm employment practices and resources, to ensure access to productive, well-trained and competitively compensated employees as a critical component of the future of agriculture. Members include: Agri-Mark, Agri-Placement Services, Cayuga Marketing, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Dairy Farmers of America, Farm Credit East, NEDPA, New York Animal Agriculture Coalition, New York Farm Bureau, New York Horticultural Society, New York Vegetable Growers Association, and Upstate Niagara.

ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

AWDC trains farmers in progressive employee management to ensure labor law compliance through events such as the Labor Roadshow. Topics include: employment law compliance, onboarding new employees, sexual harassment prevention, and housing management.

AWDC creates resources to assist farmers in the implementation of human resource best management practices. These resources focus on worker housing, employer-employee relations and communications.

AWDC supports the Agricultural Workforce Development Program at Cornell University, which promotes research and extension education for better employment opportunities and careers in agriculture.

AWDC works proactively with farmers to provide resources to develop and retain a skilled workforce.

Highlighted activities are a snapshot of AWDC's areas of focus, efforts-to-date, and results of the 2016 Cornell University survey of Hispanic dairy workers in New York State.
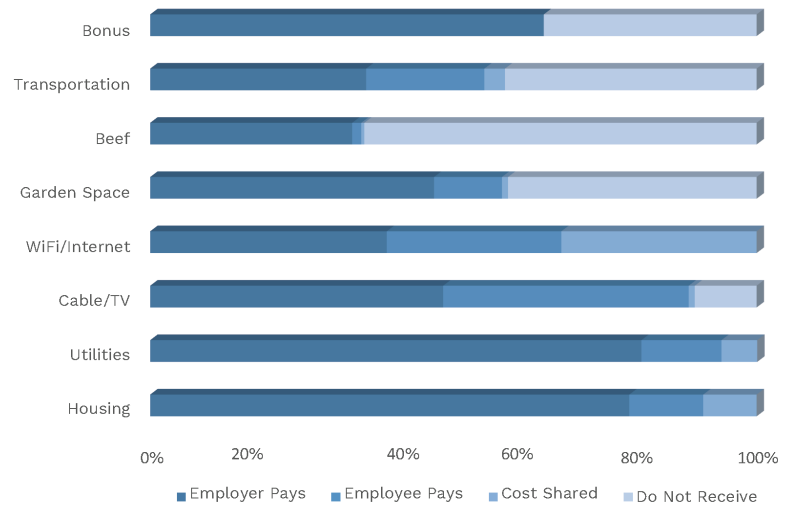
TREATMENT OF WORKERS

In the 2016 Cornell Hispanic Dairy Worker Survey, the farm workers surveyed indicated that:

Their employer is a good person who is attentive and helpful to workers.

Employers take extra steps to show employees respect by doing things such as:

- taking them to church where there is a large Hispanic congregation
- taking them to soccer
- providing them with nice housing
- advocating for their children in their schools

Non Wage Benefits Provided to Worker
(Worker Reported)

Categories (top to bottom): Bonus, Transportation, Beef, Garden Space, WiFi/Internet, Cable/TV, Utilities, Housing

X-axis: 0%, 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, 100%

Legend: ■ Employer Pays ■ Employee Pays ■ Cost Shared ■ Do Not Receive

Employers of Hispanic dairy workers stated that they make an effort to **treat ALL employees with** the same level of **respect**.

Nearly all farm employees receive worker's compensation as required by New York law.
Very small farms with less than one employee may receive an exemption.
Farm employers with 10 or more employees must also provide unemployment insurance.

Dairy employers see immigration reform as the solution to isolation and the lack of community involvement.

They would encourage workers and worker advocates to urge elected officials to **pass immigration reform** that includes some type of **legal status** for those currently employed on dairy farms.

Farm owners would like to see a **streamlined H-2A program** that includes full-time, nonseasonal, workers for farms with dairy and livestock.

HISPANIC WORKERS ARE OFTEN UNDOCUMENTED, WHICH LEADS TO WORKERS FEELING ISOLATED FROM THE COMMUNITY

Worker isolation on farms is largely a function of their unauthorized status, yet many employers work hard to encourage participation in events by providing transportation. Many workers choose to stay on the farm to avoid scrutiny by community residents and interactions with law enforcement.

SAFETY TRAINING IS A HIGH PRIORITY ON NEW YORK FARMS

Many farms across New York State work with the New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health (NYCAMH). Since its inception in the late 1980's NYCAMH has been involved in agricultural safety research, education and training.

Between January 2009 and December 2016 NYCAMH provided educational safety training to **26,566** farm workers on NY farms.

	SESSIONS	TRAININGS	PARTICIPANTS	
!	714	English - Safety	8,642	EN
⚠	1,654	Spanish - Safety	12,421	ES
✚	179	First Aid, Fire, CPR	1,712	EN
✚	195	First Air, Fire, CPR	1,634	ES
🚶	552	Survey/Walkthroughs	1,282	🚶
😷	176	Respirator Fit Testing	875	😷

These numbers represent only a small portion of the training that takes place on farms of all sizes. In addition, 4,204 youth were trained.

Dairy employers also provide ongoing safety education to their employees, taught by members of their farm staff, local dairy consultants and Cooperative Extension educators. Some of the most commonly taught safety topics are skid steer, tractor and machinery operation; animal handling; and hazard communication.

When the NY OSHA Dairy Local Emphasis Program (LEP) was established in 2013, a group of industry organizations formed the NY Dairy OSHA Work Group to enhance safety programs on dairies.

The Work Group engages with farmers and OSHA to show its commitment to farm safety and ongoing education. This group, along with NYCAMH, developed checklists for farmers to implement on their farms. These documents help farmers navigate the complex OSHA regulations and ensure that they comply with all required regulatory safety training.

"We want to thank the NY Dairy OSHA Workgroup for all that you have done for safety on Dairy Farms in NY. The farms have come a long way since we started our journey so many years ago and I know with our partnership and cooperation, conditions will continue to improve."

- Chris Adams, former OSHA Area Director of Syracuse

FARM WORKERS OFTEN WANT TO WORK MORE HOURS

In most cases, Hispanic employees request a minimum of 60 hours a week or more, and will often leave a farm that doesn't provide this opportunity, so they can earn as much money as possible to support family members.

1 out of 10 surveyed farm workers said they left their last job because they were not getting enough hours to work.

Hispanic dairy employees often do not work seven days a week. In fact, most Hispanic workers on New York dairies work six days a week or less.

At the request of workers who want more hours, work schedules on farms have changed to 12-hour shifts, according to those surveyed.

56% WORK 12 HOURS A DAY

40 percent work less than 12 hours a day and the remaining 4 percent work over 12 hours a day.

DAIRY FARM EMPLOYERS PAY COMPETITIVELY AND COMPLY WITH APPLICABLE MINIMUM WAGE AND PAYROLL REGULATIONS

According to a Cornell benchmark study of 2017 farm employee compensation:

Full-time frontline workers on average:

- Had 7.2 years of tenure with their current employer.
- Worked 2,787 hours per year or 54 hours per week.
- Received total compensation (including bonus and benefits) of **$16.90** per hour.

Full-time managers on average:

- Had 11 years of tenure with their current employer.
- Worked 2,696 hours per year or 52 hours per week.
- Received total compensation (including bonus and benefits) of **$22.48** per hour.

Both immigrant and domestic farm employees are included in the groups of frontline workers and hired farm managers. A rapidly growing number of immigrant employees are moving into management jobs.

New York dairy farmers continue to increase their wage rates to keep up with labor market competition and to retain their talented workers.

REFERENCES:

Survey of Hispanic Dairy Workers in New York State 2016: publications.dyson.cornell.edu/outreach/extensionpdf/2016/Cornell-Dyson-eb1612.pdf

Workforce Issues and the New York Dairy Industry: dyson.cornell.edu/outreach/extension-bulletins/documents/Cornell-Dyson-eb1703.pdf

NYCAMH: nycamh.org

2017 Farm Employee Compensation Benchmark: cpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/blogs.cornell.edu/dist/7/8192/files/2019/02/2017-Farm-Employee-Compensation-Report-1uksiuz.pdf

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