

<b>TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE</b>	<b>NO.</b> 32-16
	<b>DATE</b> January 17, 2017

**TO:** AFFILIATE AMERICAN JOB CENTER DIRECTORS  
 COMPREHENSIVE AMERICAN JOB CENTER DIRECTORS  
 WORKFORCE INNOVATION OPPORTUNITIES ACT (WIOA) 166 INDIAN  
 AND NATIVE AMERICAN GRANTEEES  
 DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
 ADMINISTRATION REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS  
 STATE GOVERNORS  
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 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD (WDB) LOCAL CHAIRS  
 WDB STATE CHAIRS  
 WDB STATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS  
 WDB LOCAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

**FROM:** PORTIA WU   
 Assistant Secretary  
 Employment and Training Administration

**SUBJECT:** Release and Availability of Employment and Training Administration (ETA)  
 National Agricultural Workers Survey Public Access Data and Reports

**1. Purpose.** To announce the release and availability of the ETA National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) Public Access Data for Fiscal Years 1989-2014 and three NAWS research reports:

- *Findings from the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) 2000-2009: Profiles of Youth, Parents, and Children of Farm Workers in the United States. Research Report No. 10 (Report No. 10);*
- *Findings from the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) 2011-2012: A Demographic and Employment Profile of United States Farm Workers. Research Report No. 11 (Report No. 11); and*
- *Findings from the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) 2013-2014: A Demographic and Employment Profile of United States Farmworkers. Research Report No. 12 (Report No. 12).*

**2. Background.** The Department of Labor has surveyed hired crop workers since 1988 through the NAWS. The survey collects employment, demographic, and health information, and provides an understanding of the workforce resources available to U.S. agriculture. Both public and private service programs use the data for planning, implementing, and evaluating farm worker programs.

**EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION  
 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20210**

The survey is administered three times each year to capture the seasonality of agricultural employment. Crop workers are randomly sampled at work. Depending on the information needs and resources of the various Federal agencies that use NAWS data, between 1,500 and 3,600 workers are interviewed each year.

The new data file, which replaces the 1989-2012 file, contains information from 61,211 interviews that were conducted between October 1, 1988 and September 30, 2014. The file includes 358 variables. Data can be analyzed for six regions of the United States.

### **3. Summary of Findings.**

#### ***Report No. 10: Findings from the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) 2000-2009: Profiles of Youth, Parents, and Children of Farm Workers in the United States***

*Report No. 10* examines the characteristics of three subpopulations: 1) youth crop workers ages 14 to 18; 2) dependent children (under the age of 18) of crop workers, a very small share of whom also work in agriculture; and 3) crop worker parents who have children under the age of 18. The characteristics of each group are presented in the context of assessing the potential for pesticide exposure, either through direct handling of pesticides, or through other exposure routes.

#### **Youth Crop Workers**

Youth ages 14 to 18 comprised 6 percent of hired crop workers in 2004-2009 (this age cohort was 1% of crop workers in 2013-2014). The majority of youth crop workers in 2004-2009 were male (85%) and recent arrivals to the United States (74%).

In 2004-2009, almost all youth crop workers reported that their employer provided water for hand washing (99%) and virtually all indicated that they used the water (100%). Youth crop workers were less likely than adults to handle pesticides or receive training in the safe use of pesticides: 10 percent of youths and 15 percent of adults reported handling pesticides in the 12 months prior to being interviewed, while 75 percent of youths and 83 percent of adults said they received training from their current employer in the safe use of pesticides.

#### **Dependent Children of Crop Workers**

Children of crop workers are young because their parents tend to be young. In 2004-2009, more than three quarters (78%) of the children of crop workers were under the age of 14; one-third were under the age of six. More than half of the children (56%) were born in the United States. Based on information that was collected in 2004-2009, the number of dependent children under the age of 14 who do crop work was estimated to be about 4,000 each year. Most of the children who worked in the fields were 14 or older (76%), and most were male (78%).

In 2004-2009, 5 percent of children under the age of 14 accompanied their crop worker parent to the fields at some time in the 12 months prior to the parent being interviewed. Based on information that was collected during those years, it was estimated that approximately 28,000 dependent children under the age of 14 accompany their parents to the field each year.

### **Crop Worker Parents**

Nearly all crop worker parents reported that their employer provided water for hand washing every day (98 percent). Almost nine in ten parents reported that they received training in the safe use of pesticides in the last 12 months (87%), but fewer than two in ten reported that they loaded, mixed, or applied pesticides in the last 12 months (18%).

### ***Report No. 11: Findings from the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) 2011-2012: A Demographic and Employment Profile of United States Farm Workers***

*Report No. 11* is similar in content to previous national summary reports of the demographic and employment characteristics of crop workers. It is different in that it includes a new chapter on data trends that span fiscal years 1989 through 2012.

Since the NAWS began in 1989, Mexico-born workers have comprised the majority of the crop labor force. In 1989-1990, 55 percent of crop workers were born in Mexico. By 1999-2000, Mexico-born workers comprised fully 80 percent of the crop labor force. The share of farm workers born in Mexico then dropped and has fluctuated over the past decade, and was most recently estimated at 68 percent of workers in 2011-2012.

An increasing share of workers has come to the United States from the Southern region of Mexico. In fact, the proportion of workers coming from Southern Mexico has tripled over the last two decades. In 1991-1992, only nine percent of Mexico-born workers were from the Southern region. By 2011-2012, the share from Southern Mexico had grown to 28 percent. At the same time, the proportion of Mexico-born workers coming to the United States from the Northern region decreased by 10 percentage points (from 38% in 1991-1992 to 28% in 2011-2012) and the proportion coming from the Western Central region decreased by 7 percentage points (from 51% in 1991-1992 to 44% in 2011-2012).

Newcomers to the United States experienced a sharp decline over the last several years. The share of workers in this group was greatest in 1999-2000, at 23 percent. Newcomers comprised 15 percent of the crop labor force in 2005-2006, and only 2 percent in 2011-2012. There was also a notable decrease in the share of workers who are of indigenous origin. In 2005-2006, 15 percent of NAWS respondents were identified as indigenous. By 2011-2012, only seven percent were identified as indigenous.

Among the 32 percent of crop workers interviewed in 2011-2012 who were born in the United States, fewer than one in five identified as Hispanic (18%). This is a substantial decrease from the more than half of U.S.-born workers who identified as Hispanic in 1997-1998.

Just more than half of the U.S. crop labor force in 2011-2012 had authorization to work in the United States. This contrasts sharply with 1989-1990 and 1991-1992, when more than three-quarters of crop workers were work-authorized. In recent years there has been some fluctuation in the proportion of the crop workers having work authorization, but it has remained at around half for the past decade.

The share of workers who migrate for work has fallen substantially since the late 1990s. The percentage of workers who were migrant was greatest in 1997-1998, at 59 percent, the share then decreased by more than half over the next ten years, to 26 percent in 2007-2008. By 2011-2012, the share of crop workers who were migrant fell to less than one in five (17%).

Although crop workers have traditionally been young, the average age of those interviewed in 2011-2012 was higher than it was for workers interviewed at any other time since 1989-1990. The average age of crop workers was at its lowest between 1995-1996 and 1999-2000, at 31. It then rose steadily over the next decade, to a high of 37 in 2011-2012.

There has been a slight shift in the language profile of crop workers over the last 12 years, with an increase in the share whose primary language is English (from 13% in 1999-2000 to 29 percent in 2011-2012) and a decrease in the share of workers whose primary is Spanish (from 85% in 1999-2000 to 69% in 2011-2012). The proportion of crop workers who speak an indigenous language has decreased as well, from three percent in 2005-2006 to one percent in 2011-2012.

Crop workers reported greater educational attainment in 2011-2012 than they had in years past. The educational attainment of workers born in the United States increased from an average of tenth grade in 1989-1990 to an average of twelfth grade in 2011-2012. The educational attainment of workers born in Mexico increased from an average of sixth grade in 1989-1990 to an average of seventh grade in 2011-2012. The proportion of workers who completed at least the twelfth grade also increased. In 2011-2012, slightly more than one-third of workers reported completing the twelfth grade or higher, which is nearly three times the share of workers who reported the same in 1999-2000 (12%). The percentage of workers born in the United States who completed at least the twelfth grade increased by thirty-two percentage points between 1999-2000 and 2011-2012 (from 46% to 78%), and among workers born in Mexico it rose 10 percentage points (from 5% in 1999-2000 to 15% in 2011-2012). Crop workers reported attending at least one adult education class in the United States at nearly the same rate in 2011-2012 (34%) as workers did in 1989-1990 (37%), but at a much higher rate than workers in 2001-2002 (20%).

The percentage of crop workers employed by farm labor contractors has been on the decline since the late 1990s. In 1999-2000, more than a quarter of workers were employed by farm labor contractors (27%). By 2011-2012, farm labor contractors employed only 10 percent of the crop labor force. There was a small but steady rise in the number of hours crop workers reported working in the week preceding the NAWS interview, from an average of 38 hours in 1989-1990 to an average of 44 hours in 2011-2012. Finally, a larger share of workers was paid an hourly wage and a smaller share was paid by the piece in recent years. In 1989-1990 and 1991-1992, approximately one-quarter of workers received piece-rate pay (24% and 25% respectively). By 2011-2012, only a fraction of crop workers nationwide were paid by the piece (7%).

***Report No. 12: Findings from the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) 2013-2014: A Demographic and Employment Profile of United States Farmworkers***

### Demographic and Employment Characteristics

A comparison of demographic and employment characteristics for 2010-2012 and 2013-2014 (see Table 1, below) shows important changes between the periods. Compared to 2010-2012, crop workers were, on average, older, had more farm work experience, and were less likely to have migrated in 2013-2014. The share of crop workers who were unauthorized to work in the United States decreased, while the shares of citizens and legal permanent residents increased. Average hourly earnings, number of weeks of farm employment, and personal income increased, while the share of workers with family income below the poverty level decreased slightly.

Table 1. NAWS Findings: 2010-2012 and 2013-2014 Compared

Variable	Fiscal Years		Percent Change
	2010-2012	2013-2014	
Foreign-born	74%	73%	-1.4%
Born in Mexico	67%	68%	+1.5%
Newcomer (less than 1 year in U.S.)	2%	2%	0%
Average Age	37	38	+2.7%
55 or older	11%	14%	+27.3%
Average Number of Farm Work Years	12	14	+16.7%
More Than 10 Years' Experience	45%	53%	+17.8%
Settled (did not migrate previous year)	79%	84%	+6.3%
U.S. Citizen	29%	31%	+6.9%
Legal Permanent Resident	19%	21%	+10.5%
Unauthorized	50%	47%	-6.0%
Average Hourly Farm Earnings	\$9.38	\$10.19	+8.6%
Average Number of Farm Work Weeks	34	35	+2.9%
Average Personal U.S. Income (all sources) <sup>1</sup>	\$16,250	\$18,750	+15.4%
Total Family Income Below Poverty	31%	30%	-3.2%

<sup>1</sup> Respondents identify the range where their income falls. The figures reported here, \$16,250 and \$18,750, are the midpoints of \$15,000-\$17,499 and \$17,500-\$19,999, respectively.

**4. Inquiries.** The data and reports can be downloaded from the NAWS Web page: <http://www.doleta.gov/agworker/naws.cfm>. For questions regarding the data products, contact Daniel Carroll, Office of Policy Development and Research, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Room N5641, Washington, D.C. 20210; e-mail: [carroll.daniel.j@dol.gov](mailto:carroll.daniel.j@dol.gov) ; phone: (202) 693-2795.