Hispanic Workers in the U.S. Dairy Industry: A Management Perspective

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Who currently does the work on U.S. dairies?

- Family Members
- Native Born Workers (local workers)
- Hispanic Workers
## Percent of Family vs. Hired Workers
### 250 New York Dairy Farms 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Under 50</th>
<th>50 - 74</th>
<th>75 - 99</th>
<th>100 - 199</th>
<th>200 - 299</th>
<th>300 - 399</th>
<th>400 - 599</th>
<th>600 &amp; over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cows per worker</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Family Labor</td>
<td>88.7</td>
<td>88.2</td>
<td>72.6</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Hired Labor</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: New York State Dairy Farm Business Summary 2007
Dept. of Applied Economics and Management, Cornell University
Hispanic Worker Contributions Depend on Two Variables

- Size of business
- Region of the country
Number of Spanish-Speaking Employees on Dairy Farms, by Herd Size, Wisconsin, 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Herd Size</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Speak almost no English</th>
<th>Speak some English</th>
<th>Speak English well</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-199</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200-499</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500+</td>
<td>1,920</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,220</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Top Ten Dairy States 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>State</th>
<th># Cows (1,000’s)</th>
<th># Farms</th>
<th>Avg. Herd Size</th>
<th>Milk Produced (in million pounds)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>1,844</td>
<td>1,905</td>
<td>967</td>
<td>41,203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>1,252</td>
<td>13,730</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>24,472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>5,620</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>12,432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>864</td>
<td>12,315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>7,670</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>10,575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>4,865</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>8,782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>8,416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>751</td>
<td>7,865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>2,390</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>7,763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>5,696</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Points

1. Hispanic dairy workers tend to work on the larger more modern dairies – the fastest growing sector of the dairy industry

2. Their influence has been greater in the South and the West and in the last 12 years has grown dramatically in the Midwest and Northeast
How Wisconsin Dairy Farmers View the Labor Component


1/ Each respondent chose up to 3 factors.

### Wage Rates for Farm Laborers on Dairy Farms, Wisconsin, 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of worker</th>
<th>Range of wages 1/</th>
<th>State averages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$ per hour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>7.25-12.50</td>
<td>9.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inexperienced</td>
<td>6.00 - 9.50</td>
<td>7.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General farm laborer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>7.00-13.50</td>
<td>9.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inexperienced</td>
<td>6.00-10.00</td>
<td>7.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relief milker</td>
<td>7.25-20.00</td>
<td>11.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1/Range includes 95 percent of values.

“I have not been able to hire an American citizen since 1997; I have tried. The way I see it if we didn’t have Hispanics to rely on for a workforce, I don’t believe I could continue farming”

Quote from a Wisconsin Dairy Farmer

Source: Harrison, Jill, Sarah Lloyd and Trish O’Kane, Briefing No. 1 Overview of Immigrant Workers on Wisconsin Dairy Farms, Program on Agricultural Technology, University of Wisconsin, Madison 2007
In what unexpected ways has your job changed with Hispanic workers?

• The manager is freed up for more decision making
• Better workforce dependability
• Fear became fun. I am less anxious about a reliable workforce
• I look forward to going to work; less headaches
• I enjoy my job again

Generally speaking dairy farm managers have a special admiration and respect for the work ethic and contributions Hispanic workers bring to the dairy

Hispanic workers have added stability to the dairy workforce
MANAGEMENT SUCCESSES

- More Formalized Training (in Spanish)
- Employers provide transportation, housing, and day-to-day needs
- Substantial efforts made to bridge the language barrier
- Substantial efforts made to bridge the cultural barrier
- Dairy employers are becoming advocates for their workers and for immigration reform
Dairy Wages 2008

New York 2004 $7.52
Wisconsin 2008 $10.71

Average work week NY 2004 62 hrs.

Sources: Maloney and Grusenmeyer, Cornell University 2005
Harrison et al University of Wisconsin, Madison 2007
Housing transportation, and health insurance provided by dairies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Health Ins.</th>
<th>Housing</th>
<th>Transportation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Maloney and Grusenmeyer, Cornell University 2005
          Harrison et al University of Wisconsin, Madison 2007
Greatest Challenges Coming to U.S.

- Crossing the border: 58.1% Top, 5.7% Second, 1.9% Third
- Language: 26.7% Top, 21.9% Second, 15.2% Third
- Lack of freedom: 4.8% Top, 11.4% Second, 19.0% Third
- New culture: 11.4% Top, 4.8% Second, 6.7% Third
- Basic needs: 11.4% Top, 6.7% Second, 3.8% Third
- Medical/Dental: 2.9% Top, 4.8% Second, 4.8% Third
- Prejudice: 1.0% Top, 1.0% Second, 1.0% Third

Source: Maloney and Grusenmeyer, Cornell University 2005
CHALLENGES

1. Unauthorized workers – The dairy industry has become increasingly dependent upon workers who are not legally authorized to live and work in the U.S.

2. Enforcement – Dairy employers and their workers are very concerned about immigration enforcement especially in New York and Vermont.
Respondent's views on national immigration policy: how important are each of the following immigration issues to your business?

- **National immigration reform policy**
  - All farms: 3.20
  - Farms with Hispanic workers: 4.43

- **Path to citizenship**
  - All farms: 2.58
  - Farms with Hispanic workers: 3.34

- **Guest worker program**
  - All farms: 3.21
  - Farms with Hispanic workers: 4.29

CHALLENGES – cont’d

3. Immigration Politics – National Milk Producers Federation and ACIR taking a leadership role

5. Mechanization – More farm managers are considering robotic milking

6. H-2A – Will dairy be included in the H-2A program? Will dairy farmers use it?

7. Overcoming the language barrier – Progress has been made, much more is needed
CHALLENGES – cont’d

7. Assimilation & Community Acceptance – After immigration reform these issues will increase.

8. Employee retention – Will Hispanic immigrants continue to work on dairies once they have achieved legal status?
Future Goals for Dairy

1. Use the Political process to achieve immigration reform

2. Retain Hispanic workers by providing competitive wage benefits and working conditions