Farm Labor and Mexico’s Export Produce Industry
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Highlights

- Mexican ag: 6-7 million employed, including 2.5-3 million hired farm workers
  - Little knowledge of workers employed in export-oriented Mexican agriculture
- US ag: average 750,000 FTE farmers and 1.2 million FTE hired. 70% born in Mexico; 70% of Mex unauth, so half of FWs unauthorized
- Mex-US: trade deficit of $64 billion in 2016, including a $6 billion deficit in ag goods
  - US exports grains, meat & dairy to Mexico
  - US imports fresh fruits & veggies from Mexico
Project goal: Mexican F&V ag & farm workers

• US goal in NAFTA re-negotiations: reduce trade deficit, uncertainty & F&V integration?

• Examples of poor conditions for farm workers employed in Mexican F&V exported to US (LA Times)

• Purpose: obtain reliable top-down data
  – Production & supply chain analysis of tomatoes, bell peppers, cucumbers, berries, & avocados
  – Interview 300 farm workers in each of nine sites (Sinaloa, the Bajio, Jalisco, Michoacán)
  – Conduct focus groups in 9 areas to understand the data & context
1 trafficked worker = 1 too many
How typical is what LAT reported 12/14?
LAT: focus on poor on-farm housing
Peasants from Mexico's indigenous regions are bused to export farms in the west and northwest to pick and process fruits and vegetables. The Huasteca region is a prime source of agricultural labor.
Outcomes: reliable data, stakeholder involvement

• Expected outcomes:
  – Fill data voids
  – Determine correlates of good & bad conditions, recs to stakeholders to minimize conditions that can lead to exploitation and trafficking

• Stakeholder involvement:
  – Goal: improve protections for workers by involving employers, govt agencies, NGOs, & buyers in project design
    – Get recommendations implemented

• Timeline: production analysis, interviews Feb 2018; Fall 2018 progress workshop
Today: Mex & US farm workers, trade

- Panel 1: hired Mexican farm workers & issues that arise during recruitment of workers for export-oriented F&V farms
- Panel 2: hired US farm workers and issues: universal issues with seasonality, contractors, migrants
- Panel 3: Ag trade: Mexican exports of fruits and vegetables to the US
- Panel 4: Protecting farm workers in Mexico & the US: what do we know? What works?