



Rural & Public Health Policy Forum

Policy Implications on Seasonal Farmworkers Access to Healthcare

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Virginia G. Piper Auditorium
Phoenix, Arizona

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<https://www.campesinossinfronteras.org>



Presentation Learning Objectives

- Participants will learn about CSF's service history and long-standing advocacy efforts on behalf of farmworker communities for health and labor policy.
- Participants will learn about key policy efforts impacting farmworker labor rights and health in the past 50 years.
- Participants will learn about some of the personal, cultural, and economic implications of labor rights and health policies on seasonal farmworkers and their families.



Farmworker Health & Advocacy – Historical Context

Farmworkers have been historically excluded from labor and health protections. Many of them face:

- Pesticide exposure
- Low wages
- Lack of access to clean drinking water
- Lack of toilets
- Heat Stress
- Poor/crowded housing
- Limited access to employer-based insurance and public benefits

CSF provides education on:

- Occupational health and safety
- Language and culturally responsive services
- Access to primary care services/ Care Coordination





Engagement in Health Care Advocacy and Policy

Historical Context

- **1984** – Hired by the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program to provide nutrition education to Latina immigrant and farmworker women
- **1985** – Hired as a Community Health Worker/Promotora, helping launch the first Comienzo Sano Perinatal CHW/Promotora Program in Arizona addressing health inequities of farmworker women
- **1992** - The **EPA's Worker Protection Standard (WPS)** was **initiated on August 13, 1992**, when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency promulgated the regulation under 40 CFR Part 170
- **1994** – Selected to serve on the National Advisory Council on Farmworker Health
- **1996**- Initiated the process of establishing CSF to respond to unmet health and human needs of farmworker families in Yuma County.
- **1999**-CSF was officially incorporated, main focused was pesticide safety education, HIV/AIDS education and Housing
- **2003- 2024** - Presidential Appointee to the US/Mexico Border Health Commission representing AZ.
- **2017**-Launched KYMZ 99.9 FM Radio Sin Fronteras Community Radio Station to amplify our reach and voices
- **2020**-CHW became “First Responders” it the plight of the COVID19 Pandemic



Campesinos Sin Fronteras (CSF) Promotora Program



*un Comienzo
Sano*

ESTA USTED EMBARAZADA?

**Estamos Ofreciendo Clases Prenatal
En Espanol Gratis**

APRENDERAS:

- 1. Informacion sobre como conseguir ayuda medica**
 - 2. Nutricion**
 - 3. Ejercicios de relajacion**
 - 4. Cambios fisiologicos durante el embarazo**
 - 5. Cuidados para el recién nacido - vacunas, nutricion, etc.**
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**Empieze un Embarazo Sano
y Aprenda Como Hacerlo**



Dia del Campesino (DDC)

- 1994 – Former farmworkers and community leaders initiated El Día del Campesino / Farmworker Health & Information Fair to provide essential health and human services



HEALTH & TESTING SERVICES

- Glucose (Sugar) Tests
- Blood Pressure
- Cholesterol Tests
- Ear Tests and Cleaning

¡VACCINES TBD!

RESOURCES & INFORMATION:

- Immigration
- Education
- Housing
- Health
- legal support

Music Food Raffles & MORE

▼ COMPLIMENTARY SERVICES ▼



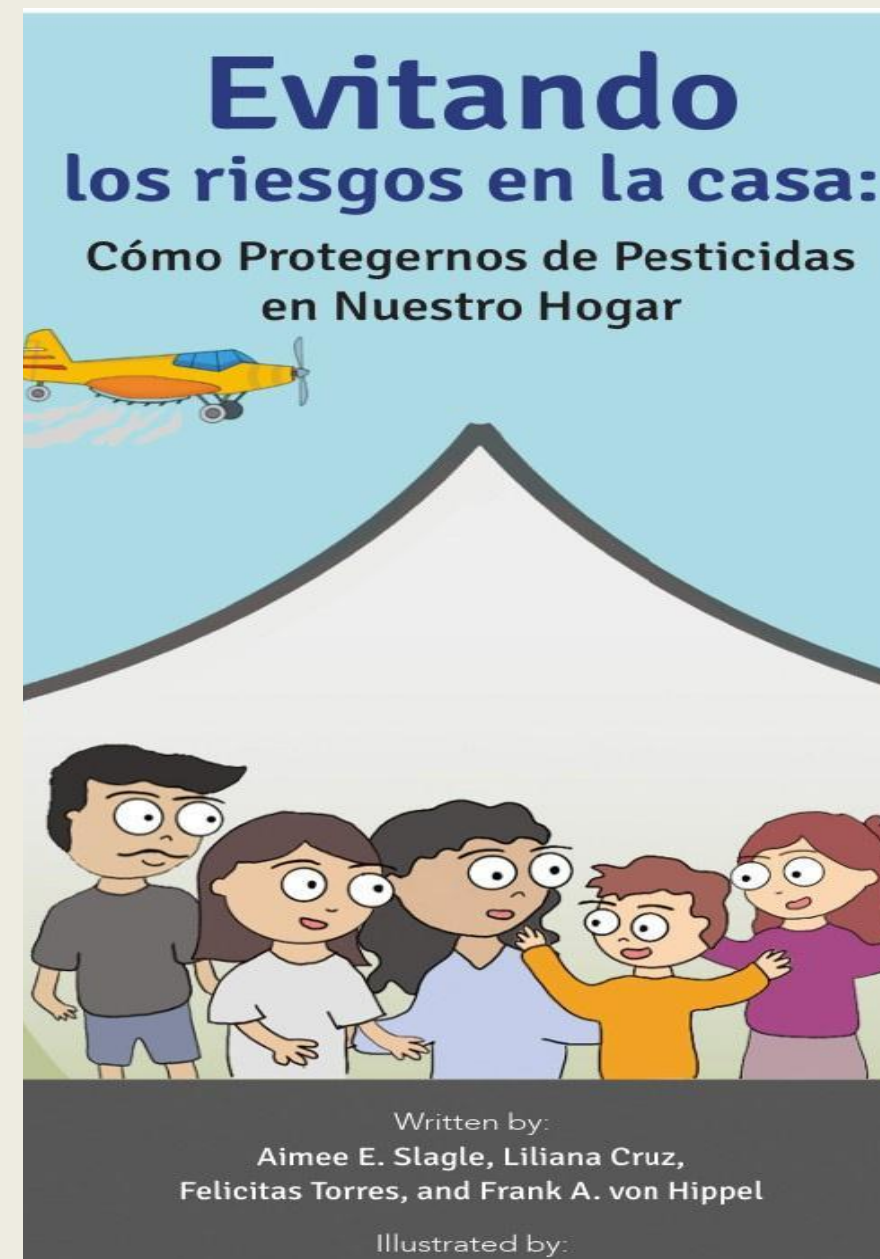
¡Event for all Agricultural workers!



CSF Mission and Vision

Campesinos Sin Fronteras' (CSF) is a Community-based 501(c)(3) established in 1999 with the mission to promote the overall well-being of agricultural families and low—to moderate-income individuals by providing and facilitating access to health, behavioral health, social services, housing rehabilitation, education, and workforce development.

CSF's Vision and strength lie in its creative and effective processes that foster long-term strategies and solutions created by community members' priorities for self advocacy and self-sustainability.



CSF Engagement at the Policy Level

CSF engagement at the policy level is community driven. It elevates farmworker voices into decision making spaces, informs public policy, and influences institutional practices, while grounded in direct service.

- 1994 started EPA/WPS implementation (Worker Protection Standard (WPS) for Agricultural Pesticides was issued by the EPA in 1992 and fully implemented by 1995
- Through decades of Promotora-led engagement we identify and address systemic barriers impacting FW's health





CSF Community and Policy Engagement

CSF plays a leadership role in multiple coalitions that influence public health, workforce, and prevention systems, including:

- Yuma County Farmworker Services Coalition
- South Yuma County Anti-Drug Coalition
- Yuma County Community Health Workers/Promotora Coalition
- Youth Empowerment Network Coalition



CSF Policy Engagement

Institutional engagement and government partnerships: CSF regularly collaborates with federal, state, and local agencies to address existing policy and its enforcement:

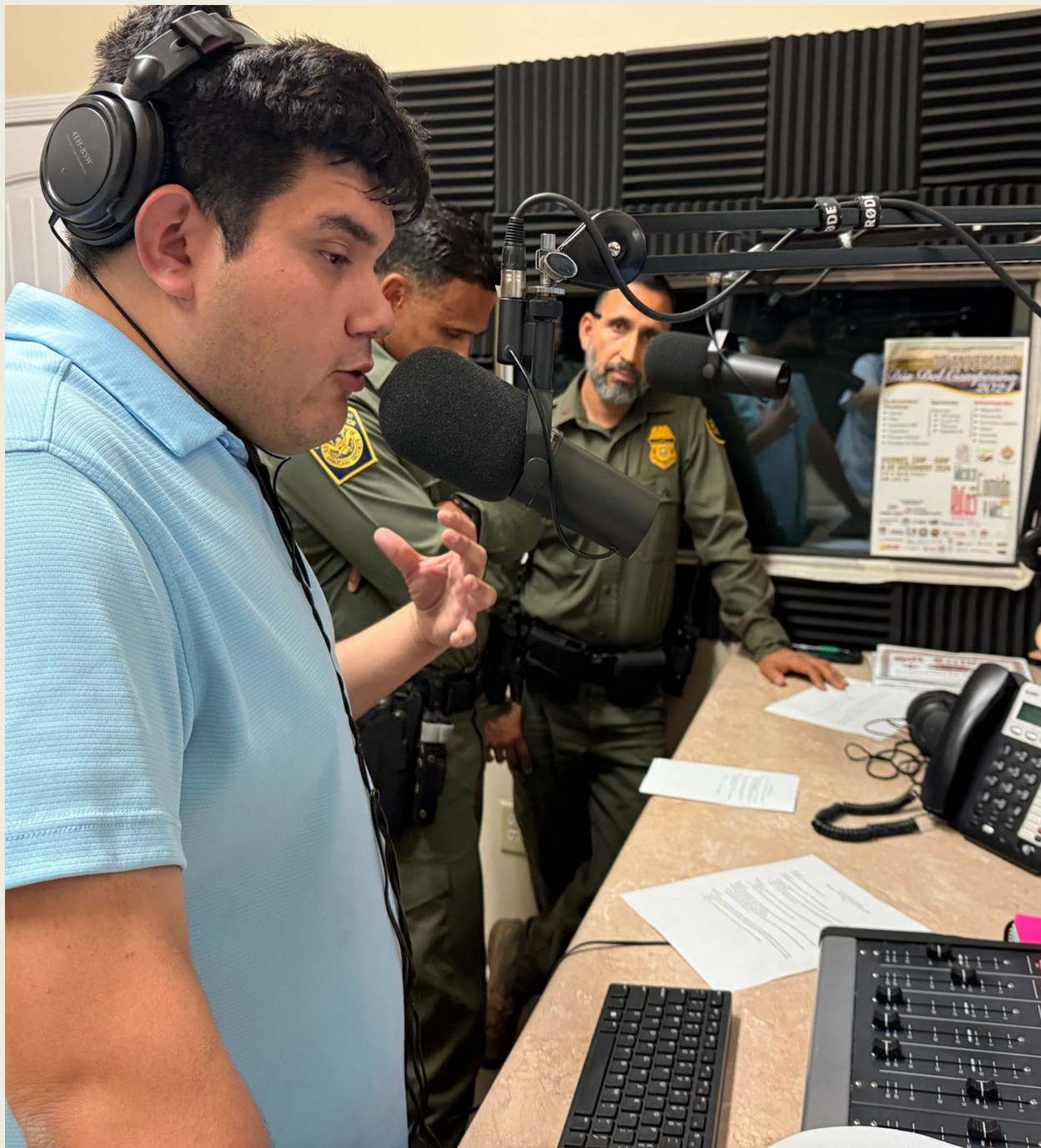
- USDA, OSHA, CDC, EPA, ADHS, NIH, county public health, Universities (UOfA, NAU, UC-DAVIS, ASU) and
- National Advocacy Organizations (NCFH, MCN, Farmworker Justice, The Network for Public Health Law, Alianza Nacional de Campesinas) to:
 - Implement policy-driven educational programs
 - Provide community feedback on program effectiveness
 - Support equitable access to publicly funded services



CSF Policy Engagement

Farmworker Community Education:

CSF uses Radio Sin Fronteras (KYMZ 99.9 FM) and multilingual outreach to disseminate information on environmental health, worker safety, pesticide regulation, and public health.



Heat stress and pesticide safety trainings enforces worker safety policy through education



COVID-19 – First Responders - Public Health in Practice





Policy Engagement Through Community-driven research

For more than 20 years, CSF has been a community leader in community led participatory research explicitly designed to inform policy and structural interventions addressing farmworkers health. Executive Director's participation on the most recent projects:

- 2014 - Stress and sociocultural factors related to health status among US-Mexico border farmworkers
- 2021- A Community-Engaged Approach to Environmental Health Research: Process and Lessons Learned
- 2021- Health Impacts of Perchlorate and Pesticide Exposure: Protocol for Community-Engaged Research to Evaluate Environmental Toxicants in a US Border Community.
- 2022- “Es Muy Tranquilo Aquí”: Perceptions of Safety and Calm among Binationally Mobile Mexican Immigrants in a Rural Border Community.
- 2022-La vida en la Frontera: Protocol for a prospective study exploring stress and health resiliencies among Mexican-origin individuals living in a US-Mexico border community. BMC Public Health.
- 2023-NIH ComPASS: A research project to address the intersection of farmworkers' Labor, Housing, and Health Barriers. Through community involvement, completed a Community Needs Assessment.
- 2025- RWJ Raíces de Bienestar Campesinos

Raíces de Bienestar Campesino

This is CSF most recent research project funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

- **Focused on addressing heat stress** through community-led research, policy, and action.
- **Community involvement:** community dialogues, surveys, and forums
- **Forming a community Policy Stakeholder Group** addressing Heat Stress~25 community leaders engage in quarterly meetings to assess existing policies and recommend farmworkers health interventions.

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT DATA/ FINDINGS

Participatory Engagement Activities



FARMWORKER PRIORITIES AND QUOTES

Fair Labor Practices

Unpaid Time

- “They schedule us to be at 3:00 am, and they don't pay us until we enter the work site.” (Intercept survey)
- “These are working hours you are not getting paid for and time you are not spending with your family.” (Community forum)



Job Insecurity

- “It’s difficult...I have a job for 6 months in the irrigation, then I [apply] for unemployment, but when working on the irrigation, if it rains, there is no work, and thus the payment days are reduced...”(Community dialogue)
- "There’s less and less work...we used to get 9 or 10 hours, now it’s 5 or 6 hours. Having a car, a house, is very hard because the income is not enough." (Community dialogue)



22.55% of South Yuma residents live in poverty (US Census, 2023), and 30.7% experience elevated food insecurity (BRFSS, 2023).

Working Conditions

- "Contradictory and abusive behavior from the foremen and supervisors. They break their own rules. They need to stop harassing us." (Intercept survey)
- "The heat is very intense. They demand what we can't give in this heat, and that's when fainting and illnesses happen." (Community forum)



Work-related Injuries

- "A person got trapped under the tractor. They took him to the clinic... the doctor told him to stand up, but he couldn't. At the doctor's insistence, he did so painfully. The doctor told him that he could go back to work because he wouldn't be able to stand up if he was actually injured." (Community dialogue)





Implications for Policy Enforcement & Systems Change Challenges

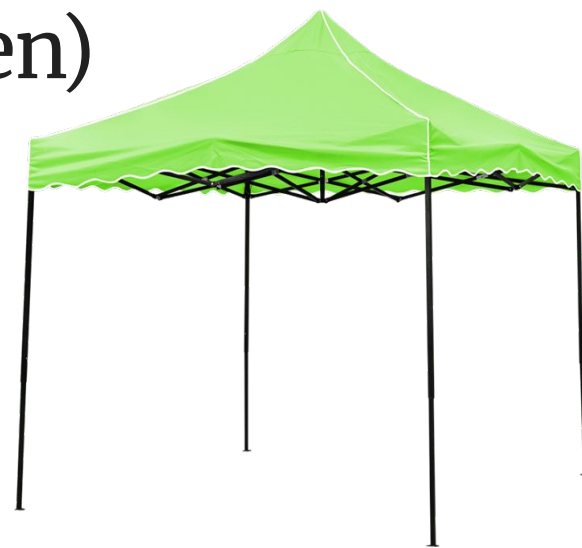
- Stress and sociocultural determinants affecting farmworker health in the U.S.–Mexico border region
- Cultural norms that discourage questioning authority further limit policy implementation
- Fear of retaliation, job loss, and being “blackballed” prevents workers from exercising their rights
- Power imbalances that silence worker voices
- Lack of information increases vulnerability

Recommendations

Input from farmworkers, the Governor's Heat Stress Task Force, and partners like NCFH aligns on the following recommendations:

- **Administrative Controls:** Ensure breaks are implemented, have water/electrolytes access, and shade access
- **Employee Participation and Emergency Planning:** Farmworkers end up waiting on buses when feeling sick, waiting to be picked up by family members
- **Training and Education:** All agriculture workforce needs to be aware of the importance of hydration, breaks, nutrition, and using personal protective equipment (hat, long sleeve shirts, sunscreen)

- **Enforcement**



Recommendations

Recognize the importance of the hands that feed our country (Agricultural Workforce) and its contributions to this country's food supply to address their inadequate living and working conditions.



Questions



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