

A photograph of farmworkers in a field at sunset. In the foreground, several people are standing and talking. In the background, there are green tractors and a large building. The sky is orange and yellow from the setting sun.

# PPDC Farmworker Workgroup Update

November 14, 2024

Photo courtesy of Emma Torres,  
Campesinos Sin Fronteras

# Summary of Workgroup Actions

- The formation of a new PPDC Farmworker Workgroup was discussed and approved at the November 2023 PPDC meeting.
- The workgroup began meeting in March 2024.
- Charge questions were presented and discussed at the June 2024 PPDC meeting.
- Discussion on charge questions began in late June 2024.

Name	Organization
<b>Walter Alarcon</b>	National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<b>Alanna Bares</b>	Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, California Environmental Protection Agency
<b>Becca Berkey</b>	Northeastern University
<b>Nathan Donley</b>	Center for Biological Diversity
<b>Alexis Guild</b>	Farmworker Justice
<b>Joseph G. Grzywacz</b>	San José State University
<b>Kaitlin Picone, EPA Co-Chair</b>	EPA Office of Pesticide Programs
<b>Michelle Ranville</b>	USDA Office of Pest Management Policy
<b>Alexis Temkin</b>	Environmental Working Group
<b>Emma Torres</b>	Campesinos Sin Fronteras
<b>Mily Treviño-Sauceda, Co-Chair</b>	Alianza Nacional de Campesinas, Inc.
<b>Brian Verhougstraete</b>	Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

# PPDC Farmworker Workgroup Members



# PPDC Farmworker Workgroup Charge Questions

- How can EPA better collaborate with farmworker organizations to seek input and relevant data from farmworkers to help ensure the feasibility of risk mitigation strategies for agricultural pesticides? What are the best strategies for documenting and evaluating growth/maturation in that essential collaboration?
  - How does EPA use information from farmworker organizations about real world scenarios of agricultural pesticide use in shaping policies and strategies to meet its legal mandate?
  - How is EPA acknowledging and acting upon the recommendations from previous workgroups, such as the previous PPDC Farmworkers & Clinicians Workgroup and the NEJAC Farmworker Workgroup? What improvements could enhance EPA's responsiveness to these recommendations, including transparency in discussing recommendations that may not be acted upon?
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# PPDC Farmworker Workgroup: Progress to Date

- Meetings since PPDC Approval of Charge Questions
    - June 17, 2024
    - July 10, 2024
    - July 23, 2024
    - August 19, 2024—Worker Protection Standard presentation from EPA staff
    - September 11, 2024
    - September 25, 2024
    - October 8, 2024— Incident data presentation from EPA staff
    - November 1, 2024
    - November 12, 2024
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# Who are Farmworkers?

- Farmworkers, migrant or seasonal, are individuals involved in agricultural production including planting, cultivating, harvesting, and processing crops for sale, and caring for animals (Arcury & Quandt, 2009)
- National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS)\*\*:
  - Average age of farmworker: ~39
  - ~2/3 of farmworkers are foreign born (60.7% of all farmworkers born in Mexico)
  - 42% of all farmworkers are unauthorized to work in the United States
- 2022 Census of Agriculture\*:
  - 2.18 million+ hired farmworkers (on 23% of all farms) → 13.8% migrant/contract laborers
  - 1.5 million+ unpaid laborers on U.S. farms (on 33.3% of all farms)

\*[https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/Full\\_Report/Volume\\_1\\_Chapter\\_2\\_US\\_State\\_Level/st99\\_2\\_007\\_007.pdf](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/Full_Report/Volume_1_Chapter_2_US_State_Level/st99_2_007_007.pdf)

\*\*Limitations: 1) only crop workers, 2) doesn't account for H-2A workers, 3) survey conducted on farm:

[https://www.doleta.gov/news/research/docs/NAWS\\_Research\\_Report\\_13.pdf](https://www.doleta.gov/news/research/docs/NAWS_Research_Report_13.pdf)



Photo courtesy of Joe Grzywacz, San Jose State University





Agricultural workers are at increased risk of acute pesticide poisonings in comparison to non-agricultural workers, particularly through drift, *early reentry into a treated area*, and use in conflict with the label.

The incidence rate was almost twofold higher in female agricultural workers compared to males.

(Source: [Calvert et al.](#) Acute pesticide poisoning among agricultural workers in the United States, 1998-2005. Am J Ind Med. 2008 Dec;51(12):883-98)





# Who are Farmworkers?

- Farmworkers face many barriers and challenges on a regular basis, including:
  - Language accessibility;
  - Access to healthcare and insurance;
  - Compounding stressors;
  - Pesticide label accessibility; increased exposure to pesticides;
  - Limited knowledge on how to report incidents; and
  - Limited clinician awareness of pesticides, their health effects and how to report incidents.



# PPDC Farmworker Work Group Discussion Themes

- Pesticide labels are highly complex legal documents that are **difficult for users to read/understand** and often contain language that is difficult for regulators to enforce. As a result, incidents of pesticide misuse are underreported and risks from use are likely greater than modeling/assessments suggest. EPA has discretion to change the terms of the registration and labelling based on how the product may be reasonably foreseen to be used.
- Incidents of acute pesticide exposure are **underreported**. What could be done to reduce barriers to reporting?
- **Farmworkers feel unheard**, perhaps because of many layers buffering EPA/OPP from farmworkers' field experiences. Where in the process is the disconnect occurring? Are there ways to setup feedback loops to provide information to EPA directly?
- What **data** exists that could provide information on where policies might not be playing out as intended (e.g., incident data, WPS inspections, etc.)?
- How can the PPDC workgroup build upon the **NEJAC farmworker report** and recommendations released in July 2024?
- Where could **inter-agency collaboration** be improved to expand upon existing connections with the farmworker community?

# Discussion on Incorporating the Farmworker Voice into PPDC Efforts



How can we ensure that the farmworker voice is integrated into PPDC workgroup activities?



How can this workgroup support other PPDC workgroups in their incorporation of farmworker voices into their work?



Could this workgroup develop guidelines for the role of farmworker advocates participating in PPDC workgroups?



# Discussion & Questions



Photos courtesy of: Joe Grzywacz (right) and Emma Torres (top & bottom)