

Changing Trends in Crop Agriculture and Migrant Crop Workers

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This presentation provided information on crop agriculture from the Census of Agriculture (CoA), and current patterns and changing trends in farmworker demographic and employment characteristics from the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS). The presentation focused on characteristics of current migrant families and out-of-school youths under 22 years old and the challenges they face. In 2012, U.S. crop sales totaled 200 billion dollars, there were approximately ten million acres in labor-intensive crops, and crop labor expenditures totaled 23.2 billion dollars. From 1999-2000 to 2013-2014, the crop labor force aged an average of seven years, the share of workers who were single decreased by one-third and the share living with nuclear family increased by more than a quarter. While the labor force continued to be made up primarily of immigrants from Mexico, more crop workers were U.S. citizens and fewer were unauthorized. The share of workers who were migrants decreased from nearly six in ten in 1999-2000 to fewer than two in ten 2013-2014, and the share that crossed the U.S.-Mexico border to do U.S. farm work decreased from more than one-third to less than one-tenth. In 2010-2014, nearly half of migrants lived in poverty and the majority used one or more government service programs. Approximately one-quarter of migrants had attended adult education courses in the U.S. and approximately half of migrants had used visited a U.S. health care provider in the previous two years. The vast majority of the children of migrant farmworkers were U.S.-born and nearly half were six years of age or younger. In 2013-2014, out-of-school youths comprised 3 percent of the total farmworker population and 28 percent of youth crop workers; 42 percent of all out-of-school youths were located in the Western Stream. More than 80 percent of out-of-school youths had less than a 10th grade education and approximately 2 in 10 had attended adult education or job training courses.