



# Participatory Methods to Improve Latino Farmworker Health and Safety

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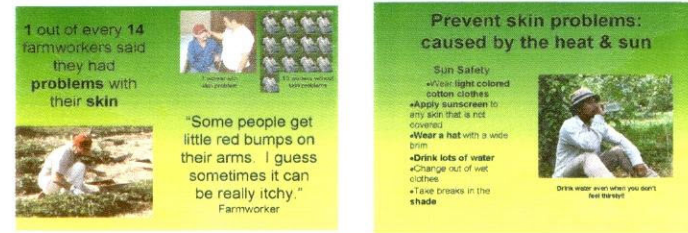
**ABSTRACT:** The Northeast Center for Agricultural Health (NEC) researchers have collaborated with migrant and seasonal farmworkers to develop educational tools addressing occupational injuries. Instead of presenting traditional “how to” recommendations, researchers relied on guidance from the target population in formulating the best way to communicate study findings and safety guidelines.

Over the past decade the NEC’s Community Collaborations Partnerships have addressed important health and safety issues in diverse agricultural populations at various sites across the Northeast. In most of these projects, the key effector is a “work team” composed of workers, employers and other interested parties. Work teams are organized and facilitated by staff from NEC and local partner community groups. With community input, these work teams define priority problems, select interventions, assist in the testing and evaluation of the proposed interventions and help with the dissemination of proven interventions.

## National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) Materials Development Project

The goal here was to disseminate results of a national survey to the migrant and seasonal farmworker population through print materials.

Interviews with farmworkers guided initial designs. Farmworker focus groups were used to select one of two prototype formats as preferable (based on both clarity and appeal). The final product was a low-literacy flip chart (in Spanish), which included photos of farmworkers and addressed concerns and questions raised by participants.



## Connecticut Field Hygiene Project

In response to skin and eye irritation, workers at CT, shade tobacco farms helped design teaching materials for bilingual trainings focusing on hygiene (hand washing, clothing storage, laundry techniques, and pesticide safety).



## New York Eye Irritation Project

New York vegetable farmworkers selected different types of protective eyewear. Field trials assessed the impact on eye irritation. Pocket eyewash solution and training on eye protection, irritation and infection were provided. The NEC developed low-literacy Spanish language pocket information cards on eye safety for distribution to workers. These were later used at other sites in New York.



## Maine Blueberry Harvest Project

Farmworkers selected musculoskeletal injury from blueberry raking in Maine as a priority problem to address. Injury rates were reduced and productivity increased by adding longer handles to rakes.



## Northeast Center Community Collaborations

Here “work teams” of farmworkers, employers, health personnel and facilitators work to utilize the expertise of the community.



## BACKGROUND:

NEC researchers and educators have collaborated with Latino farmworkers on a series of intervention and educational projects:

- National Agricultural Worker Survey
- Community Collaboration Projects
  - Connecticut Field Hygiene
  - New York Eye Irritation
  - Maine Blueberry Harvest

