

Immigration Issues and New York Dairy Farms

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Hispanic dairy workers in New York began to increase in the mid 90's

- 1) Dairy managers were looking for a dependable, productive workforce
- 2) Immigrants from poor rural areas in their home countries were looking for a way to support their families

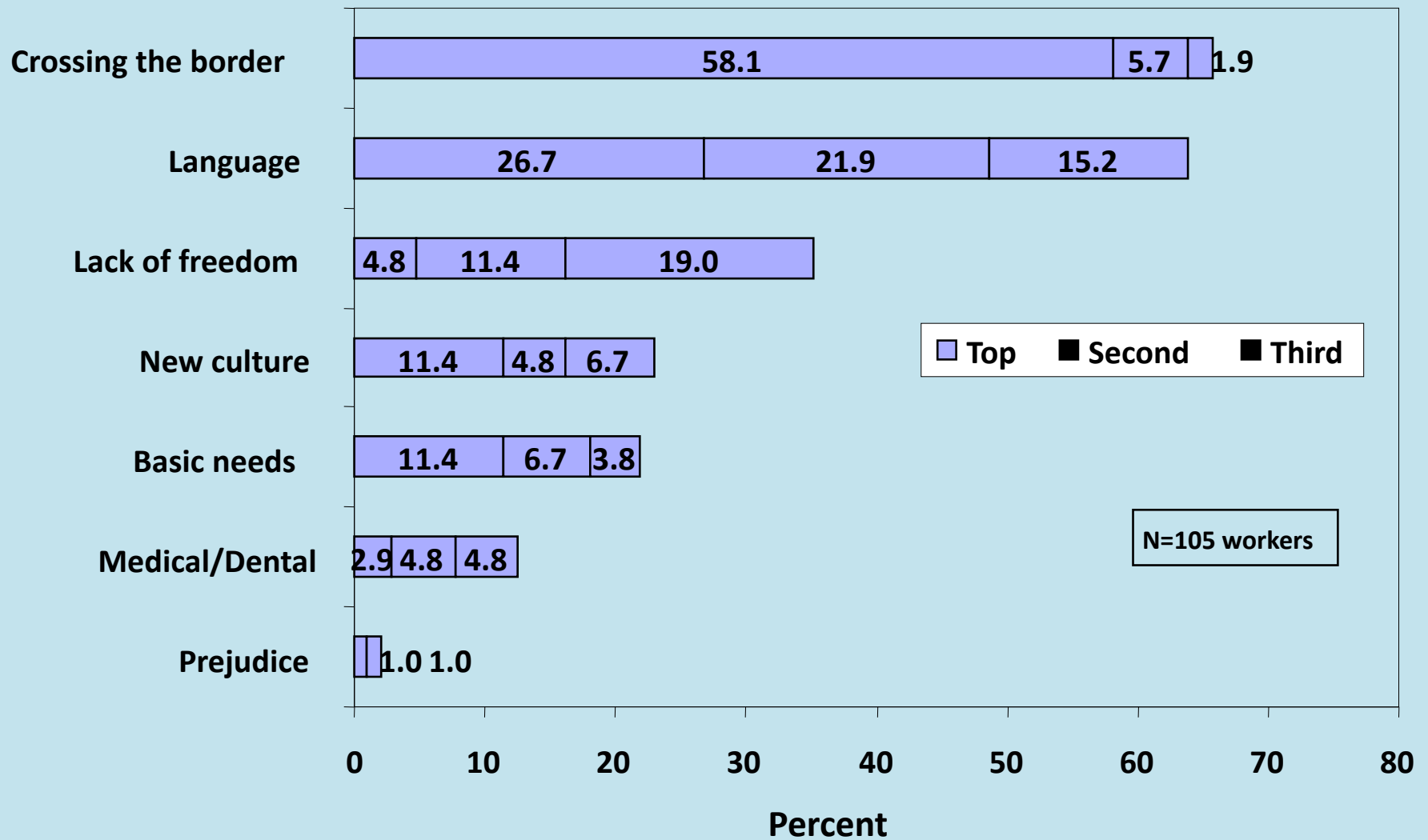
National Milk Producers Federation Immigration Study 2009

- 50% of surveyed farms use immigrant labor and 62% of the nations milk supply (based on farms surveyed) comes from farms using immigrant labor
- Dairy farms employed an estimated 138,000 FTE's in 2008, an estimated 57,000 or 41% were immigrants, mostly from Mexico

A Win-Win Relationship

- Generally speaking dairy farm managers have a special admiration and respect for the hard work and contributions Hispanic workers bring to the dairy
- Hispanic workers come for the opportunity to improve their lives and the lives of their families
- Hispanic workers have added stability to the dairy workforce, and the dairy industry has come to depend on them

Greatest Challenges Coming to U.S. New York Dairy Workers 2004



2009 New York Dairy Survey

Objective:

Generate data that will help inform agricultural labor policy at the state level and immigration policy at the federal level

Methodology

- Mail survey sent out by NASS, New York field office
- Telephone follow up
- Stratified Random Sample – over sampled larger farms

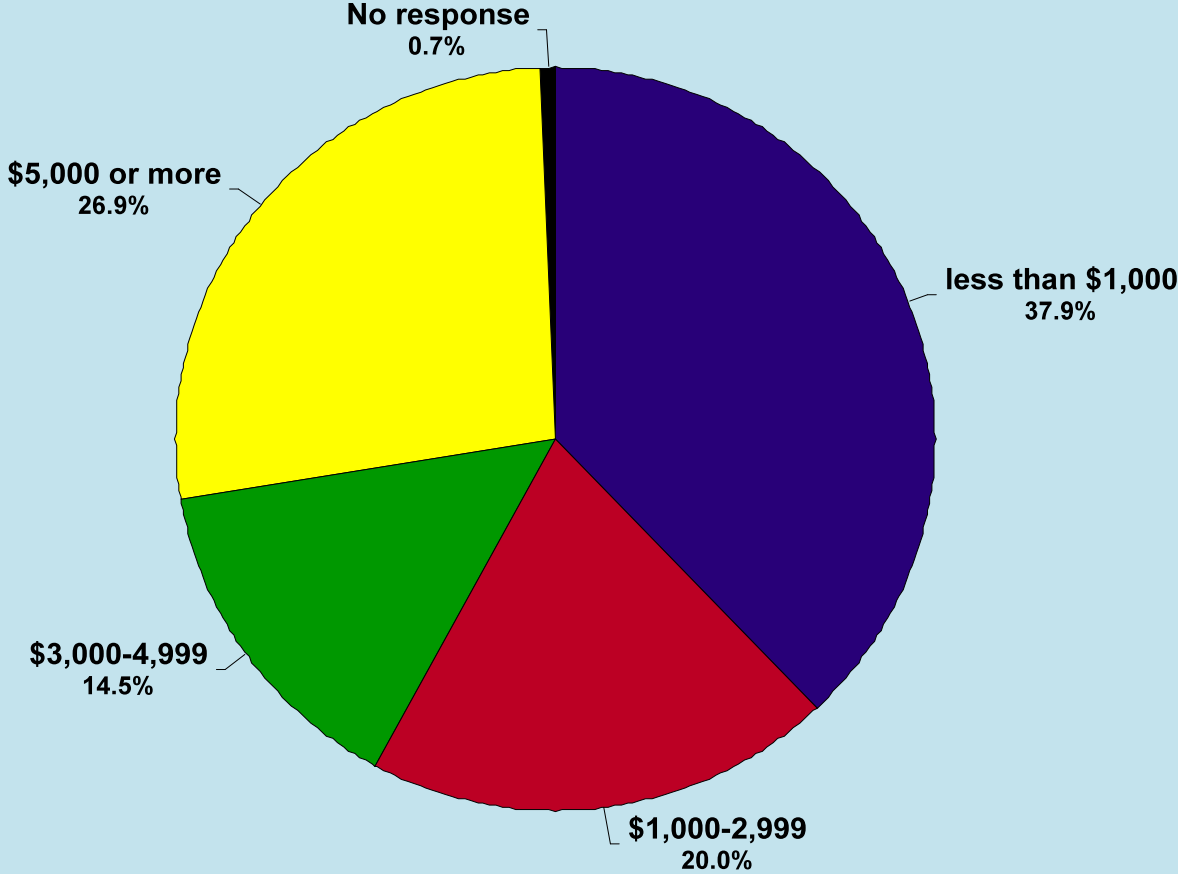
New York Dairy Farms Mail Survey Sample and Responses

Sample Size	- 692
Number of Usable Responses	- 346
Percent Usable Response	- 50%
Expanded Sample of Farms	- 3500
Hired Dairy Workers at Peak	- 9600
Number of Hispanic Workers at Peak	- 2600

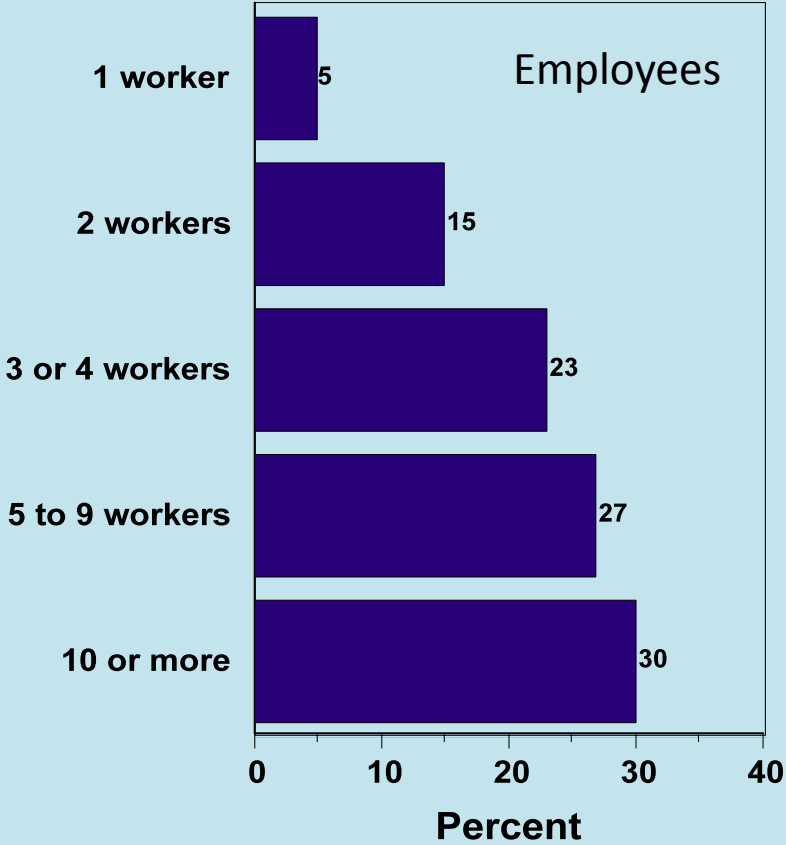
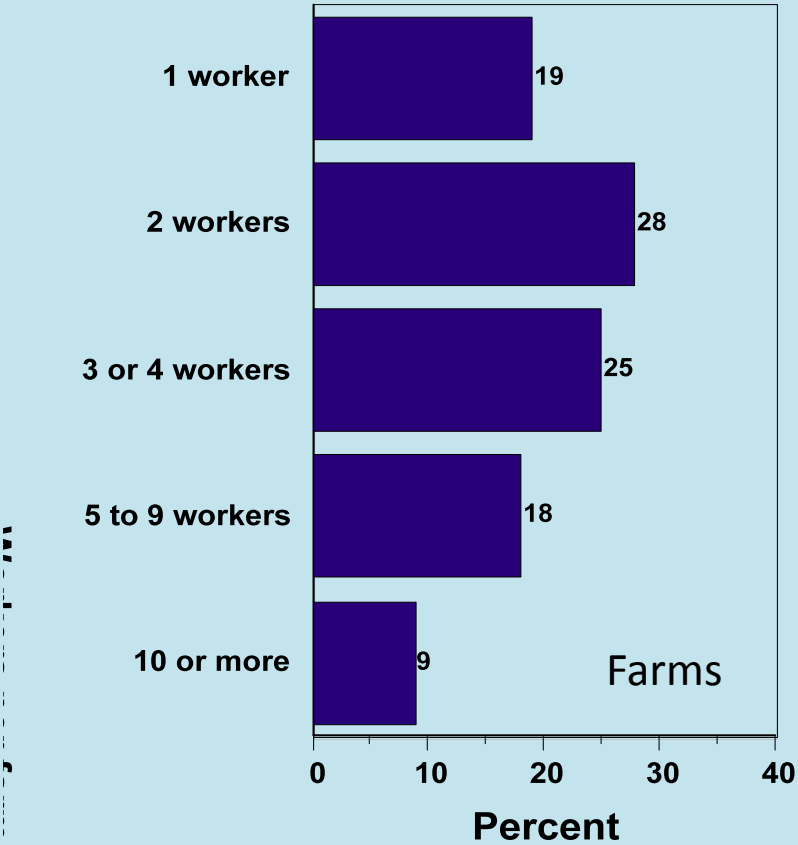
Average Hourly Rate Paid for Milkers and General Laborers - Average hourly wage rate for New York dairy farms, 2009



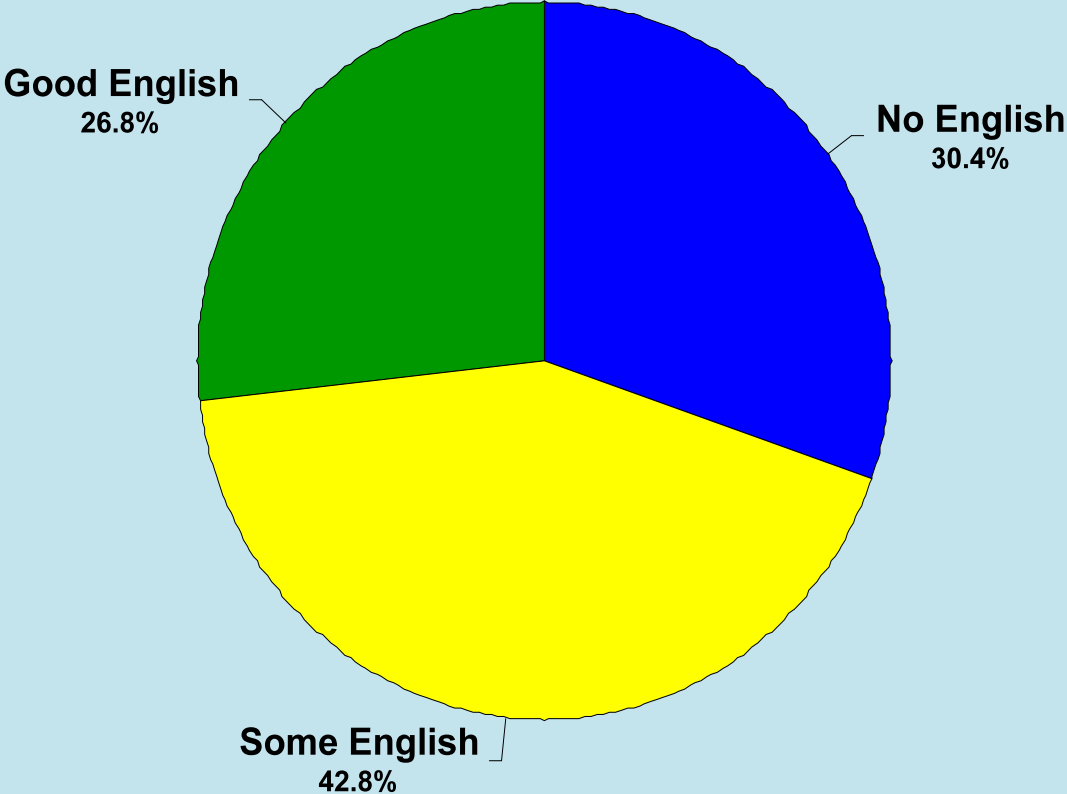
Value of Benefits - Estimated annual value of benefits provided per hired worker, New York dairy farms, 2009



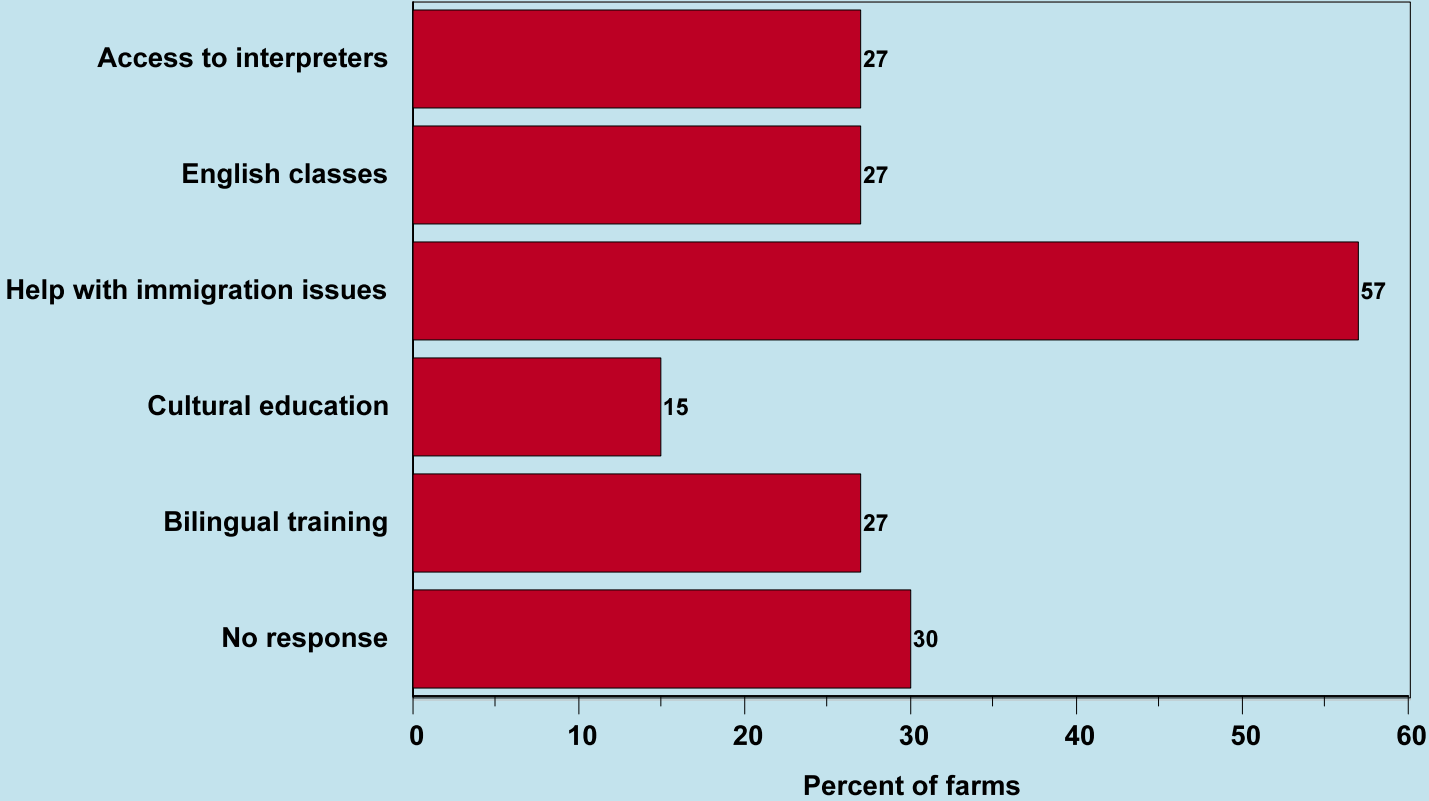
Size Distribution of Peak Hispanic Labor Force - 2,600 workers on 670 New York State dairy farms, 2009



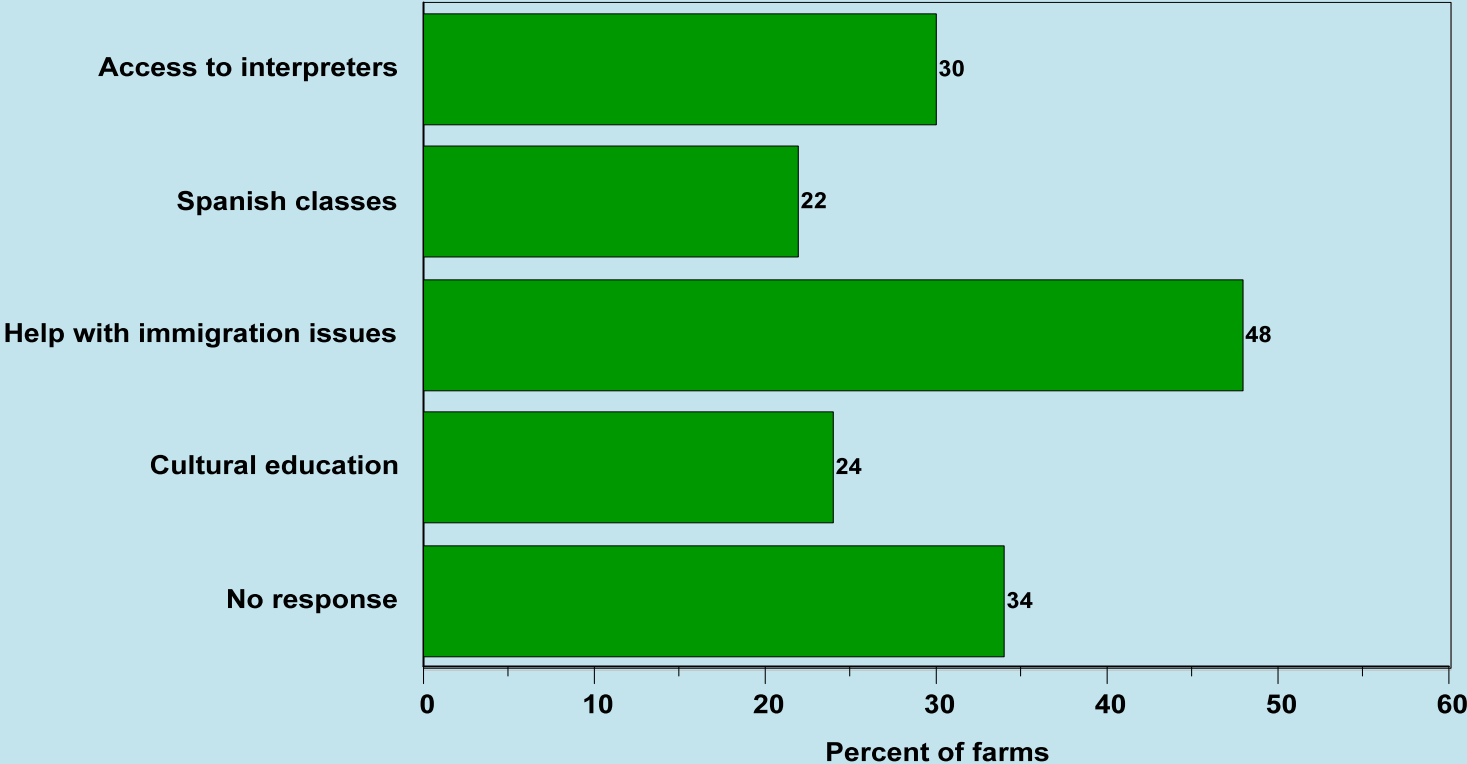
Language Skills of Hispanic Workers - 2,600 workers on 670 New York State dairy farms, 2009



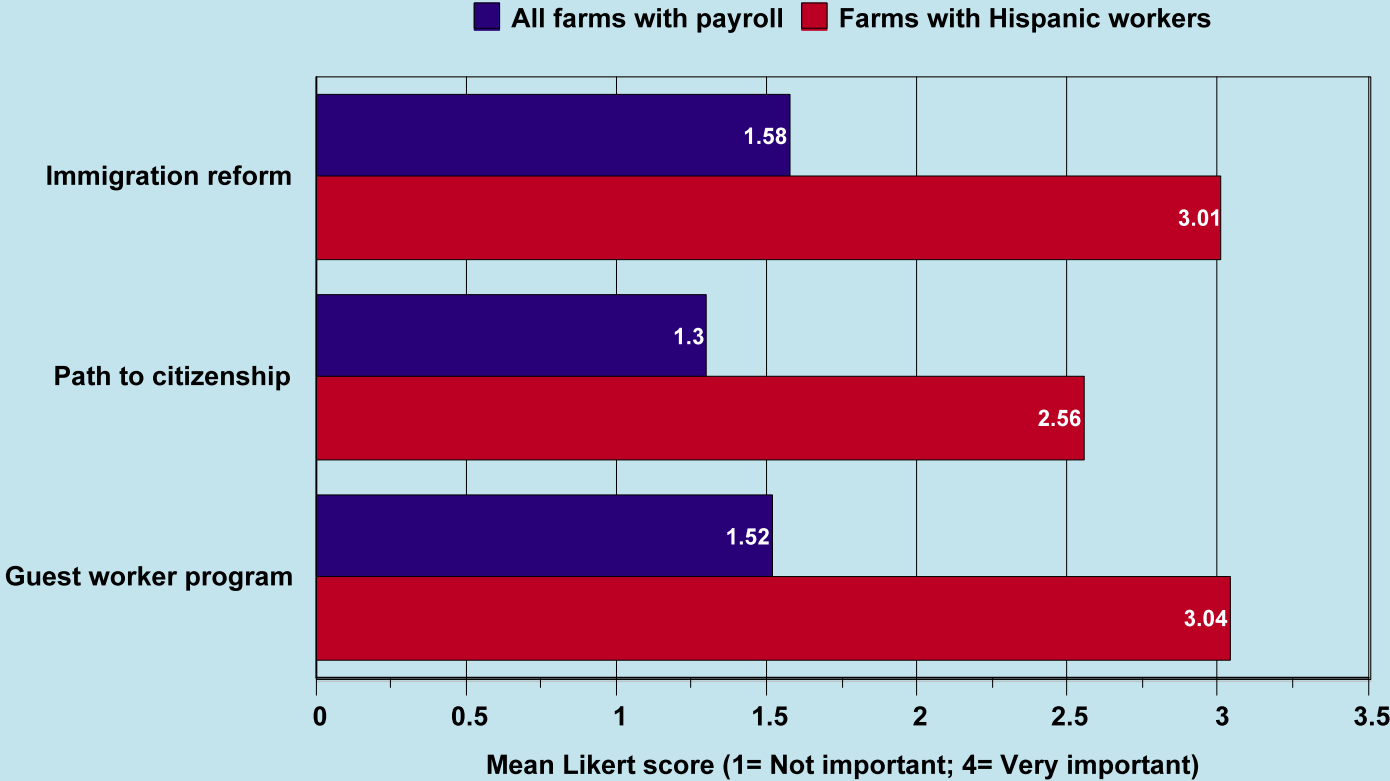
Services Needed to Assist Spanish Speaking Employees - 670 New York State dairy farms (multiple responses allowed)



Services Needed to Assist Farm Managers Who Work with Spanish Speaking Employees - 670 New York State dairy farms



Average Scores on Attitudes Toward Changes in Federal Immigration Policies – 2100 New York Dairy Farms, 2009



The Butterville Farms Case

Jefferson County, NY

- Worker from Mexico dies in farm accident April 2011
- Farm owner charged with harboring illegal immigrants
- Area dairy farm owners extremely concerned that this could happen to them
- Farmers now learning about their legal rights and considering retaining an immigration attorney
- Dairy farmers want a way to hire legal immigrants

The Case for a Guest Worker Program

- Farmers managers want access to a legal workforce
- Farm workers are staying longer because crossing the border is more expensive and more dangerous
- Would allow workers to cross the border without the current risk and expense

Note: Dairy H-2A legislation is likely to receive strong support from the dairy industry

Summary

- Many dairy employers currently depend on immigrant workers
- Dairy employers want new immigration policies that will allow them to hire legally authorized workers

The 2009 Dairy Survey Publication

Can be found at:

<http://dyson.cornell.edu/research/>

Go to research, research bulletins, 2011