



Number of Latino farmers on the rise across the U.S.

By Karen Van Epen
ATTRAnews Editor

The 2002 Census of Agriculture, released at the beginning of June by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, shows a remarkable increase in the number of Latino farmers in the U.S. These are not farm workers, but farm operators who own or lease the land. Observers note distinct groups of

Editor's note: This issue of ATTRAnews looks at the rapidly growing population of Spanish-speaking farmers and ranchers in the U.S. We highlight our Spanish-language publications and services, and some of the other groups who work with these farmers.

Latino farmers, who achieve farm ownership in different ways.

In Texas and New Mexico, many Hispanic farmers and ranchers are still working the land granted to their ancestors by the Spanish crown in the 1700s. But all over the country, large numbers of Spanish-speaking

farmworkers and managers are buying the farms where they work.

In many cases, the children of the boss are not interested in following in their parents' footsteps on the family farm. The workers, on the other hand, know how to run the farm and are sure they want to do it. The farmers and their employees trust each other and are able to create purchase agreements, often transferring ownership of 5, 10, or 15 acres at a time.

Juan Marinéz, of Michigan State University Extension, points out that this wave of immigrant farmers is similar to previous American generations—Norwegians in Minnesota, Germans in Texas, Japanese and Italians in California. They work hard, belong to tight-knit families, and live frugally as they save money to purchase property.

(See Latino Farmers on page 4)



Photo courtesy of Rural Community Development Resources

Hilario Alvarez (standing at center) and crew clean onions on their farm in the Yakima Valley of Washington.

Alvarez Family Farm: Another classic American success story

Almost 25 years ago when Hilario Alvarez came to the Yakima Valley in Washington, he went to work for local farmers. He leased some land to farm in his "off" hours and with his savings was eventually able to buy 25 acres.

Hearing about the Cesar Chavez movement in California and the dangers of pesticides, Alvarez decided to farm organically. Since 1991, he has sold much of his produce at the bustling Pike Place Market in Seattle and also provides weekly boxes of produce to area subscribers.

The nine Alvarez children are all involved in the farm — growing, harvesting, packing, and marketing at farmers' markets in the Tri Cities and Yakima areas as well. On their 45 acres, the family produces green beans, beets, cucumbers, eggplant, garbanzos, garlic, onions, peas, peppers, potatoes, squash, sweet corn, tomatillos, tomatoes and melons.

Hilario participates in the training programs of the Center for Latino Farmers (see story on page 2) and in various conferences, where he shares his experiences with aspiring farmers and farmers' market vendors.

Number of Latino-owned/operated farms in U.S. tabulated by USDA Census

1992 Ag Census -- 20,956 Latino Farmers
1997 Ag Census -- 27,717 Latino Farmers
2002 Ag Census -- 61,094 Latino Farmers

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RCDR is guiding light for WA's Latino farmers

In 1992 Luz Bazan Gutierrez founded the Yakima-based Rural Community Development Resources (RCDR) to help limited-resource Hispanic producers enter agriculture and build successful collaborative businesses. RCDR's Center for Latino Farmers guides beginning farmers with limited English skills as they establish their own family farms. The Center staff also provides workshops and training sessions for Latino farm operators who want access to USDA programs.

Gutierrez and Dr. Malaquías Flores, director of the Center for Latino Farmers, deliver training in financial and risk management, marketing, and practical farming techniques. While many Latino farmers do not know how to use computers, they often have the machines in their homes for their children to use. So the Center finds ways for the children to help parents learn. **Contact: Center for Latino Farmers** 24 S. 3rd Ave., Yakima, WA 98902 509-453-5133, rcdr@charter.net

ALBA & NCAT train Hispanic-American farmers

On California's Central Coast, the Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association (ALBA) provides education about sustainable agriculture to Spanish community members who otherwise wouldn't have the resources to pursue small-scale family farming.

ALBA offers bilingual support in farm management, agronomy, conservation, environmental restoration, business management, postharvest techniques, and marketing. NCAT staff in California have collaborated with ALBA to present workshops on organic pest management and risk management.

Aspiring farmers may attend a six-month, classroom-based program called PEPA—Programa Educativo para Pequeños Agricultores. Upon graduation, they can put their lessons to work on a half-acre of land at ALBA's 112-acre Rural Development Center south of Salinas. The new farmers have the option of a three-year extended apprenticeship.

Because even experienced growers face daunting challenges, ALBA also offers a program for established farmers. The instruction consists of short courses on pest management, postharvest handling, and marketing. In the fields, the farmers focus on conservation and restoration practices that promote the health of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

Contact: ALBA, PO Box 6264, Salinas, CA 93912, 831-758-1469, www.albafarmers.org



Photos by NCAT specialist Rex Dufour & ALBA staff

Latino farmers (above) attend an ALBA class. At right is one of the proud PEPA graduating classes.



ATTRA offers free Spanish-language sustainable & organic farming publications

Order ATTRA publications in Spanish by calling 1-800-346-9140 (English) or 1-800-411-3222 (Español), or download them from ATTRA's Web site at www.attra.ncat.org. Our Spanish publications include:

Available on CD-Rom

El Manejo Integrado Orgánico de Algunas Plagas de la Agricultura (Organic Integrated Pest Management)

- Los Insectos Benéficos, Plagas y Hábitat para los Benéficos

- El Manejo de Enfermedades de Planta
- El Manejo de Malezas
- El Manejo de Plagas Vertebrados

Vías del Mercadeo (Marketing Channels)

- Mayorista de Servicio de Alimentos
- Mercado de Terminal
- Mercados Directos a Consumidores
- Tiendas de Comestibles Pequeñas e Independientes

Negocios (Business)

- Las Reglas de Oro del Mercadeo
- Diez Preguntas para Hacer (y Contestar) antes de Firmar un Contrato
- Presupuestos de Flujo de Fondos

Printed Publications

- *Fresas Orgánicas y Opciones Para el Manejo Integrado de Plagas* (IPM Options for Organic Strawberry Production)

Available Soon

- *Certificación Orgánica y el NOP* (Programa Nacional Orgánico)
- *Producción Orgánica de Lechugas de Especialidad y Verduras para Ensalada*
- *Aves de Corral Sostenibles: Resumen de Producción*
- *Manejo Sostenible del Suelo*
- *Escarabajos del Pepino: Manejo Integrado de Plagas — MIP Orgánico y Bioracional*

Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) Publications

- *Alternativas en la Ganadería*
- *Estrategias Económico- Ambientales en la Crianza de Cerdos*

Visit ATTRA's Spanish-language Web Site at www.attra.ncat.org/espanol/index.html.

ATTRA Spanish IPM field guides now available

ATTRA proudly presents a new series of Spanish-language pictorial "field guides" to organic Integrated Pest Management (IPM). The focus is on ecologically based strategies that prevent insect and vertebrate pests, diseases, and weeds from becoming a problem in the first place.

The guides feature color photos of important pests and beneficial organisms. Brief text provides useful "take-home messages" for farmers. Only the Spanish-language field guide is available now, but an English-language version is coming soon.

Excerpt from the ATTRA IPM Field Guide:

El Manejo Integrado Orgánico de Algunas Plagas de la Agricultura (Organic Integrated Pest Management)

Mosca Sírfida (Syrphid fly)

¡Protege a estos Insectos Benéficos que Comen los Insectos Plaga!
(Protect these Beneficial Insects that Eat Pest Insects!)

Ciclo de Vida de la Mosca Sírfida (Life Cycle of the Syrphid Fly)

¿Qué Comen?

Las larvas comen áfidos. Los adultos comen polen y néctar.

(What do they eat?)

Larvae eat aphids.

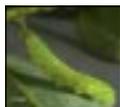
The adults eat pollen and nectar.)

¿Dónde Viven?

En plantas de la familia de las zanahorias — hinojo, eneldo, Queen Anne's lace — y milenrama, girasol, alforfón, alhelicillo, coyote brush, y otras plantas que florecen.

(Where do they live?)

On plants of the carrot family — fennel, dill, Queen Anne's lace — and yarrow, sunflower, buckwheat, alyssum, coyote brush, and other flowering plants.)



Syrphid Fly larva (above) & adult (at right)

Photos by Rex Dufour & Oregon State University



Resources roundup for Latino farmers

Bilingual on-line pest management

The University of Minnesota provides an amazing bilingual "electronic textbook" of Integrated Pest Management, featuring lots of color photos and details about the life cycles of key beneficial and pest insects. The site presents state-of-the-art information on all aspects of IPM.

<http://ipmworld.umn.edu>

Rural Coalition/ Coalición Rural

This alliance of regionally and culturally diverse organizations is working to bring fair returns to minority and other small farmers and rural communities, ensure good working conditions for farmworkers, protect the environment, and deliver safe, healthy food to consumers. Rural Coalition, 1411 K Street NW, Suite 901, Washington DC 20005 www.ruralco.org

USDA Farm Service Agency

The Farm Service Agency helps Hispanic-American farmers and ranchers stabilize farm income, works with them to conserve land and water, and provides loans to new and disadvantaged family-size farmers and ranchers.

Public Affairs, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC 20005 202-690-1098

(Español), www.fsa.usda.gov/pas

Texas/Mexico Border Coalition

This community-based organization is working to establish and maintain the survival of small rural communities along the border. Last February they sponsored the First Annual National Hispanic Farmers & Ranchers Conference in San Antonio.

TMBC, 208 S. Norris St., Rio Grande, TX 78572, 956-488-0534 www.empowernetonline.org/tmbc

Net-mobile forging computer literacy for Texas farmers

In South Texas, limited-resource farmers and ranchers—particularly Hispanic operators—can call upon the University of Texas Pan American's Project FORGE for computer training and access to on-line resources.

When the project's "net-mobile" rolls into town—with its wireless Internet access and plenty of computers—local farmers, ranchers, and rural residents eagerly climb on board. Instructors teach computer literacy, word processing, spreadsheet programs, and how to use the World Wide Web and e-mail. ATTRA's Spanish-language Web site and publications are included in the educational experience.

Contact: Project Forge, University of Texas Pan American, 1201 W. University Drive, Edinburg, TX 78539-2999, 956-743-5348, www.coserve.org/forge

Students from migrant families attend Chile Pepper U

This summer, 10 students from migrant families are attending courses devoted to pepper research at New Mexico State University, Las Cruces.

"Our students are US citizens from first- or second-generation migrant families anywhere in the United States," said Danise Coon, assistant director of NMSU's Chile Pepper Institute. "The goal is to introduce these students with migrant backgrounds to the agricultural research process and to broaden their interest in scientific studies."

During the summer session, students are paired with graduate students and faculty members for instruction in plant breeding, mechanical harvesting and variety development, as well as disease and insect control.

Contact: Danise Coon, 505-646-3028, www.chilepepperinstitute.org



Congress begins action on '05 sustainable ag budgets

Sustainable Agriculture Program	Congressional FY04 Budget	President Bush's FY05 Budget	FY05 House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee
Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) Program	\$12.3 million	\$9.2 million	\$12.7 million
SARE Professional Development Program	\$4.4 million	\$3.8 million	\$4.0 million
Organic Transition Research, Education & Extension Program	\$1.9 million	\$0.5 million	\$1.9 million
ATTRA	\$2.5 million	\$0	\$2.5 million
Rural Cooperative Development Grants	\$6.5 million	\$5.0 million	\$5.5 million
Value-Added Producer Grants Program	\$15.0 million	\$15.5 million	\$15.5 million

The Sustainable Agriculture Coalition and the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture has provided this update on funding recommended by the House agriculture appropriations subcommittee for key sustainable agriculture programs within USDA.

For updated information for these and other key programs, including conservation programs provided for in the 2002 Farm Bill, please contact Margaret Krome at 608-238-1440 or mkrome@inxpress.net.

Latino farmers

But unlike previous immigrant generations, who settled together in ethnic communities, these farmers are spreading out from coast to coast. Their networks are national in scope, drawing them all over the country.

The 2002 ag census reveals that the wave of Latino farmers has even reached New England, which shows

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some of the sharpest increases in Latino farm ownership.

USDA's 2002 Census of Agriculture is available from the National Agricultural Statistics Service at www.nass.usda.gov/census. Their hotline is 1-800-727-9540.

New & Updated ATTRA Publications

- ◆ Organic Alternatives for Late Blight Control in Potatoes
- ◆ Pork: Marketing Alternatives
- ◆ Sustainable Soil Management
- ◆ Thrips Management Alternatives

ATTRAnews

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