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New Farmworker Justice Report Profiles Americans Working in Agriculture *Portraits of U.S. Workers Marginalized by Broken Immigration Policy*

Washington, DC – A new report profiling American farmworkers and their stories dispels the myth that U.S. workers do not take jobs as farmworkers.

Who Works the Fields? The Stories of Americans Who Feed Us, authored by the advocacy group Farmworker Justice, offers a sampling of stories from both U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents working on farms. Although a majority of farmworkers today are undocumented immigrants, there are hundreds of thousands of legally authorized U.S. workers in the agricultural labor force.

[Click here](#) to view the full report online.

“The notion we sometimes hear that *Americans just won’t work on farms* is simply untrue,” said Bruce Goldstein, President of Farmworker Justice. “In fact, Americans do work on farms in great numbers and are too often marginalized by a broken immigration policy that leads employers to prefer guestworkers and undocumented workers over U.S. citizens.”

Undocumented workers and guestworkers’ lack of immigration status deprives them of flexibility to negotiate higher wages or better working conditions, creating a skilled, vulnerable and inexpensive workforce that many growers abuse.

The report offers short-and long-term recommendations to support American farmworkers, including:

- Comprehensive immigration reform that allows undocumented farmworkers and their families to earn legal immigration status and eventual citizenship.
- Opposition to legislative proposals for harsh guestworker programs that would allow employers to displace U.S. workers and depress their wages and working conditions and would subject foreign citizens to poor wages and working conditions.
- Reforms to labor laws to grant farmworkers the same rights as other workers, including the right to join a union free from retaliation, workers’ compensation for job-related injuries, overtime pay, protection under occupational safety standards, equal protections for children working in agriculture and access to unemployment compensation.

“Our nation’s current immigration policy has created a system in which U.S. farmworkers are displaced while undocumented workers and guestworkers are exploited,” said Goldstein. “Proposals in Congress to create a new guestworker program with low wages would undercut American citizens and other legal farmworkers, making their hard lives even harder. Instead, the solution is to enact the Senate’s balanced immigration reform compromise that would benefit both undocumented farmworkers and U.S. farmworkers.”

“Working in the fields is very hard but it has taught a lot of lessons on life,” said Claudia Garcia, a U.S. citizen profiled in the report. “Sometimes I want to complain so bad...then I remember those people that work with us but do not have documents. They have to do all this too but they are made to work longer hours and get paid less than us. Life as a farm worker is so hard but it is something we are always willing to do.”

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Farmworker Justice is a nonprofit organization that seeks to empower migrant and seasonal farmworkers to improve their living and working conditions, immigration status, health, occupational safety and access to justice.