

## Dairy Safety Initiative: NFMC Interns' Experience

This summer we had the opportunity to be interns at the National Farm Medicine Center (NFMC) in Marshfield, Wisconsin. Our main task was to work with the research team on the *Seguridad en las Lecherías* project, which is exploring a safety intervention for Hispanic workers in the dairy industry. The *Seguridad* project is designed and being implemented by NFMC, Migrant Clinicians Network (MCN), and UMASH.

Our placement with NFMC and the *Seguridad* project gave us valuable inroads into the dairy industry that would have been difficult to attain on our own. We were able to talk to numerous Hispanic workers, participate in safety trainings, and sit in on interviews and meetings with farm owners. Hearing multiple perspectives and having access to the various facets of the industry allowed us a much more nuanced view of the worlds of agriculture and occupational safety and health, and the complexities involved in merging the two worlds. We also learned that the dairy industry is undergoing rapid changes in the way farms are structured as small-scale farms are being replaced by large operations. The burgeoning industry has precipitated the changing workforce in some job sectors of dairy which are now predominately composed of immigrants from Mexico and Central America. During our time this summer, we identified the need to bridge the communication and understanding gap between the farmer and the worker. We believe that focusing on dialogues to bridge this gap could have big implications for creating a safer work environment in dairy.

We greatly appreciate this experience. Being a part of it helped to open our eyes to the way that food is produced and the labor-intensive tasks involved. Working with Hispanic laborers and farm-owners alike helped put a face to the industry. We have a renewed respect for the people that work hard and take great risks in order to put food on the table. We thank everyone involved for this great experience that will resonate with us for years to come.