



UMASH Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center

SUCCESS STORIES

Promoting Health and Safety for Immigrant Dairy Workers in the Upper Midwest



THE PROBLEM

Immigrant workers are essential to the dairy workforce and represent half of all workers in the industry. Agricultural work can be especially hazardous for these workers as many face societal, cultural, and language barriers to learning and practicing safety on the farm. To stay safe on the job, immigrant workers need access to culturally appropriate occupational safety training in the language they can best understand.



OUR RESPONSE:

In 2011, UMASH, led by the Migrant Clinicians Network and the National Farm Medicine Center, worked with producers, extension agents, migrant health experts, and health and safety professionals to create Seguridad en las Lecherías (Safety on Dairy Farms), a five-lesson, OSHA approved, safety training curriculum available for free in both English and Spanish.

The program uses engaging visuals and conversation, covering various topics, including safe animal handling, chemical handling, equipment and machinery usage, and worker rights and responsibilities to:

- Teach essential and practical safety information
- Share impactful personal stories
- Promote accurate attitudes toward the likelihood and severity of injuries
- Increase safer behaviors on the farm

VIDEO

Immigrant Dairy Workers - A Training Model for Health and Safety on the Farm

Seguridad en las Lecherías
(Safety in Dairies)

OVER THE LAST DECADE...



UMASH has trained over 1,300 workers on almost 100 dairy operations in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and South Dakota. More than 50 organizations in the US and beyond have requested and used the program. Participating producers have shared positive feedback, such as:

“Safety is the elephant in the room, and it’s overwhelming for someone in my position. [This program] .. breaks it down so that we can tackle it one thing at a time.”

“Access to a safety program in Spanish, both written and with the trainer, is limited. So this is easy and free and covers important information.”

THE IMPACT

Analyses of pre-and post-test scores showed a statistically significant increase in workers' knowledge after each lesson and after the entire training program. Starting in 2016, the project team also interviewed workers both before and after the program, finding that.



- ➔ **All workers** were able to remember **at least one health and safety right that workers have** in the United States, compared to only 14% before.
- ➔ **75% of workers felt very confident** about being able to keep themselves safe and healthy on the farm, compared to 46% before.

Producers on participating farms also shared that after the program ended, **workers were using safe farm practices more often**, like using personal protective equipment (PPE) and safer handling practices.

“[There have been] less accidents. Prior there were a fair amount of accidents. In the last two months, there were **zero accidents reported.**”

“Workers feel confident that they can ask for safety trainings and safety materials. They also know whom to ask. They know that if they talk with [the safety manager], then they will be working on it. So, **workers take charge of their safety**, and they know that they have the support of the safety manager.”



RESPONDING TO THE H5N1 AVIAN FLU OUTBREAK IN U.S. DAIRIES: RESOURCES AND TRAINING FOR WORKER HEALTH AND SAFETY

UMASH, in collaboration with its partners and with support from NIOSH, is providing critical resources and training to address the emerging H5N1 (avian flu) outbreak in U.S. dairies. This includes bilingual educational materials on bird flu prevention, a survey of dairy producers in Minnesota and Wisconsin, and updates to the Seguridad worker training program to enhance biosecurity, personal protective equipment use, and worker health and safety.



LEARN MORE AT
umash.umn.edu/seguridad

