

La Cosecha (the Harvest): Increasing the sustainability of first and next generation Latino farmers



•PD: **Dr. David Mota-Sanchez** Michigan State University (MSU) Co-PDs: Luis Alonzo Garcia Migrant Student Services MSU, Dr. John C. Wise MSU. Donald T Kuchnicki **Telamon Corporation**. Team: Mark L. Longstroth, Ronald Goldy, Roger Betz **MSU Extension**. Dixie Sandborn and Janice Zerbe **4-H MSU**. Antonio Escobar-Castro Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. Dr. Esteban Valtierra, Rural Development CP.

BFRDP Award # [2017-70017-26860] Michigan State University

Background

Latino farmers are changing the face of specialty fruit production in the Midwest by replacing an older generation of farmers. However, transitioning from employment in industrial and farm laborer settings to farm owners is challenging due to lack of agriculture experience, stricter regulations in Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), and devastating fruit pests. In addition, cultural isolation, language barriers, lack of business skills, and a reduced access to markets hinder their longevity as farm owners. Despite adverse conditions, Latino farmers are persistent, hardworking, and play an increasingly important role in Michigan's agriculture. In addition, they are in a position to serve as farmland stewards and preserve family farms for future generations



Michigan blueberries

Goals

- To increase the sustainable access of socially-disadvantaged Latino farmers to critical resources and programs to succeed in their farming activities, and to engage them in modern and efficient pest and nutrient management to support viable crop production, market access, diversification, natural resources conservation, and enhanced food security.
- To provide knowledge and tools to the next generation of beginning Latino farmers so they can also become successful farmers.

Target audience:

- Socially Disadvantaged Latino Farmers and Ranchers.
- Beginning Hispanic Farmers and Ranchers



Socially disadvantaged Latino farmers in past trainings at MSU experiment station-Fenville, Michigan

Location: Southwest Michigan



MAP LEGEND
 Michigan State Boundary
 County Boundary and Name
 Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.
 Note: All boundaries and names are as of January 1, 2000.



Photo: Martin Hauser



Dangerous pests of blueberries

Objectives

- Increase the participation of Latino farmers in USDA programs.
- Improve crop farming practices of beginning Latino farmers by incorporating IPM, GAPs, pesticide education, and nutrient management into their agriculture practices.
- Provide farmers with the training to implement business management plans, marketing, and financial analysis.
- Provide crop diversification education to Latino farmers.
- Train the children of Latino farmers, farm laborers, and interested Latinos with non-farming backgrounds to become successful farmers.

Activities

- Workshops in IPM, GAPs, access to USDA programs, pesticide education, marketing and business, crops diversification.
- Recruitment of farmworkers, or Latinos with non-farming backgrounds to participate in beginner farmers training.
- Hands-on workshops and farm tours, MSU Extension, and MSU 4-H programs will introduce Latino youth from ages 5-19 to fruit and vegetables farming in Michigan.
- Field demonstrations.
- Bus tour that stops at non-traditional farms; including those with niche markets, young farmers, and Hispanic owned farms.
- One on one training.
- Evaluation of the project.

Outcomes

- Improve Latino farmers crop production and business security and increase their use of environmentally safe practices.
- Improve marketing diversification for Latino farmers from Michigan.
- Change behavior regarding crops practices and adopt the use novel tools deployed by MSU including sampling, enviro-weather, alerts, and digital messages.
- Increase crop diversification from fruit production to vegetables.
- Increase the access to pesticide certification, so socially disadvantaged Latino farmers will be able to responsibly use chemical compounds only when needed and at the same time protecting themselves, pollinators, and the environment.
- Increase the number of farm workers, Latinos from non-farming background, and sons and daughters of Latino farmers that want to be beginning farmers.

Acknowledgements

- We appreciate the valuable support from the USDA for the NIFA BFRDP Award # [2017-70017-26860] Michigan State University.



- Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.
- Michigan State University Extension and 4-H program