

# Farmworker Safety and Health



**Josie M. Rudolphi, PhD**

Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering



UNIVERSITY OF  
**ILLINOIS**  
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# Objectives

- Describe US and Illinois farm labor force
- Characterize injuries and illnesses among farmworkers
- Describe resources, services, and interventions to improve safety and health among farmworkers





# Farm Labor

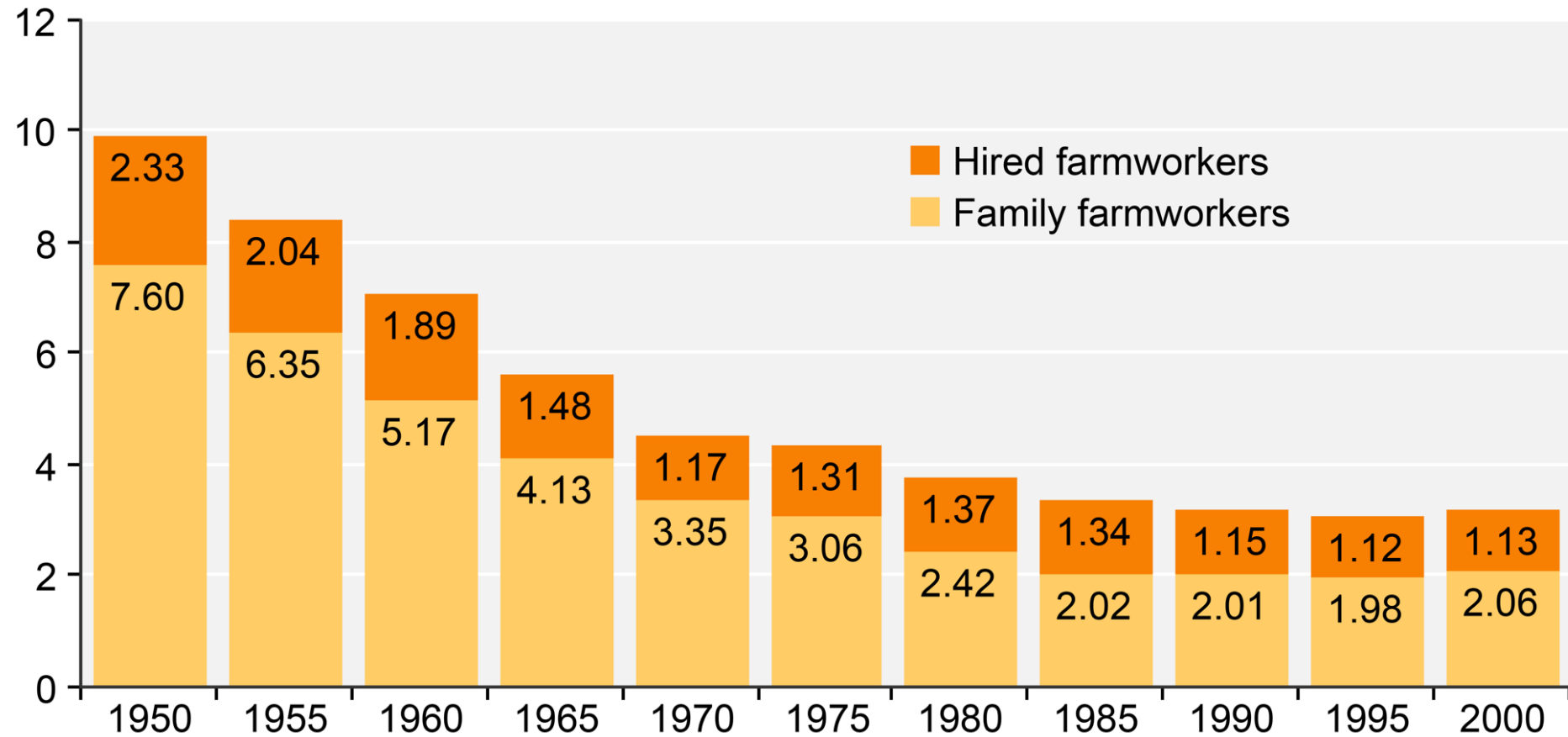




# US Farm Labor

## Family and hired farmworkers on U.S. farms, 1950-2000

Number of farmworkers (million)



Note: Family farmworkers include self-employed farmers and unpaid family members. Hired farmworkers include direct hires and agricultural service workers employed by farm labor contractors.

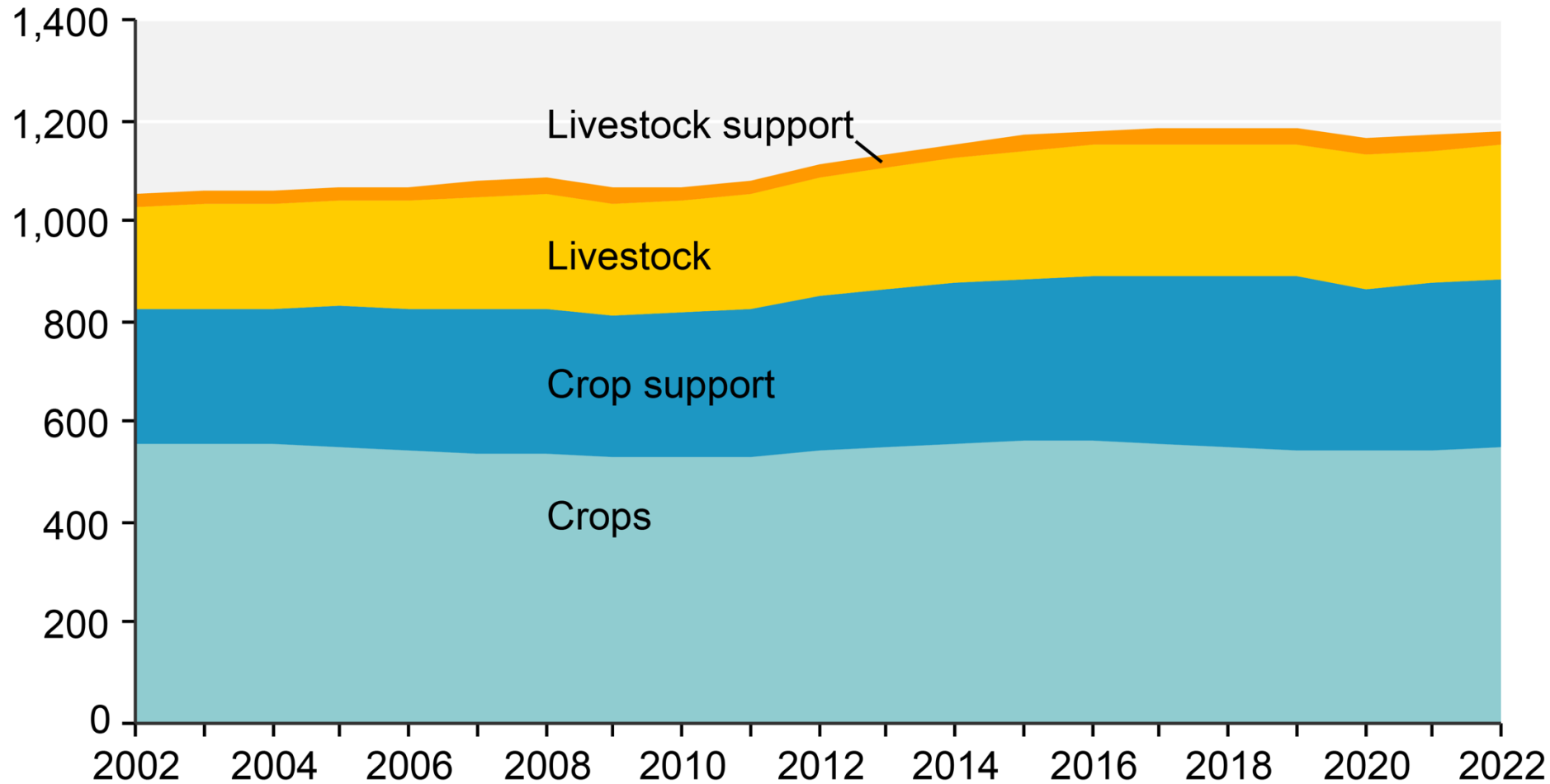
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Farm Labor Survey (FLS). The FLS stopped estimating the number of family farmworkers beginning in 2001. As of 2012, the survey no longer counts contracted agricultural service workers.



# US Farm Labor

## U.S. employment in agriculture and support industries, 2002-2022

Thousand jobs



Note: Employment is measured as the annual average number of full- and part-time jobs.

Data do not cover smaller farm employers in those States that exempt them from participation in the unemployment insurance system. Data for 2022 are preliminary.

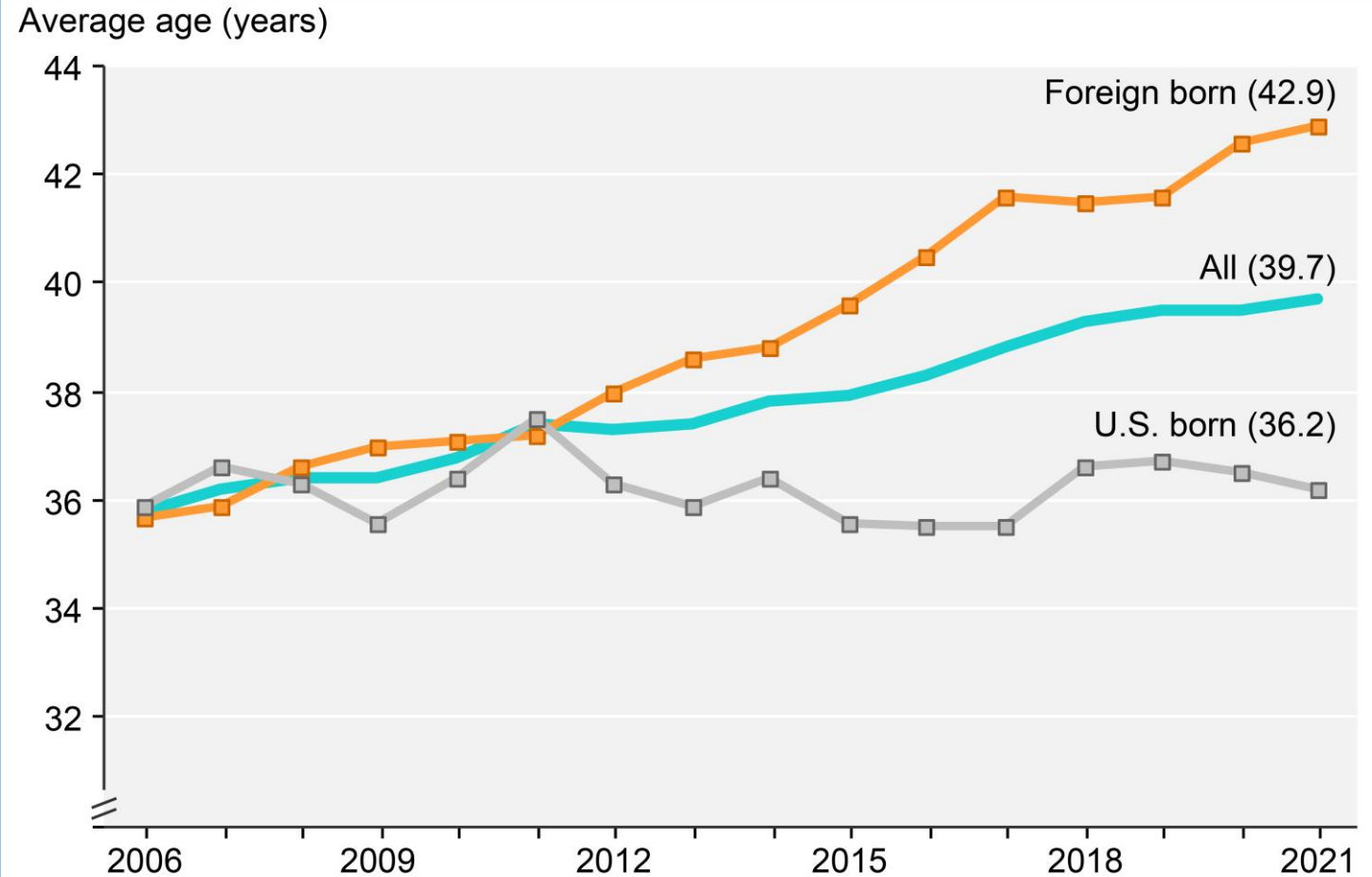
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Labor, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, June 7, 2023 release.



# Farmworkers

- Many are foreign-born
- Varying work status
  - Migrant
  - Seasonal (H-2A)
  - Settled

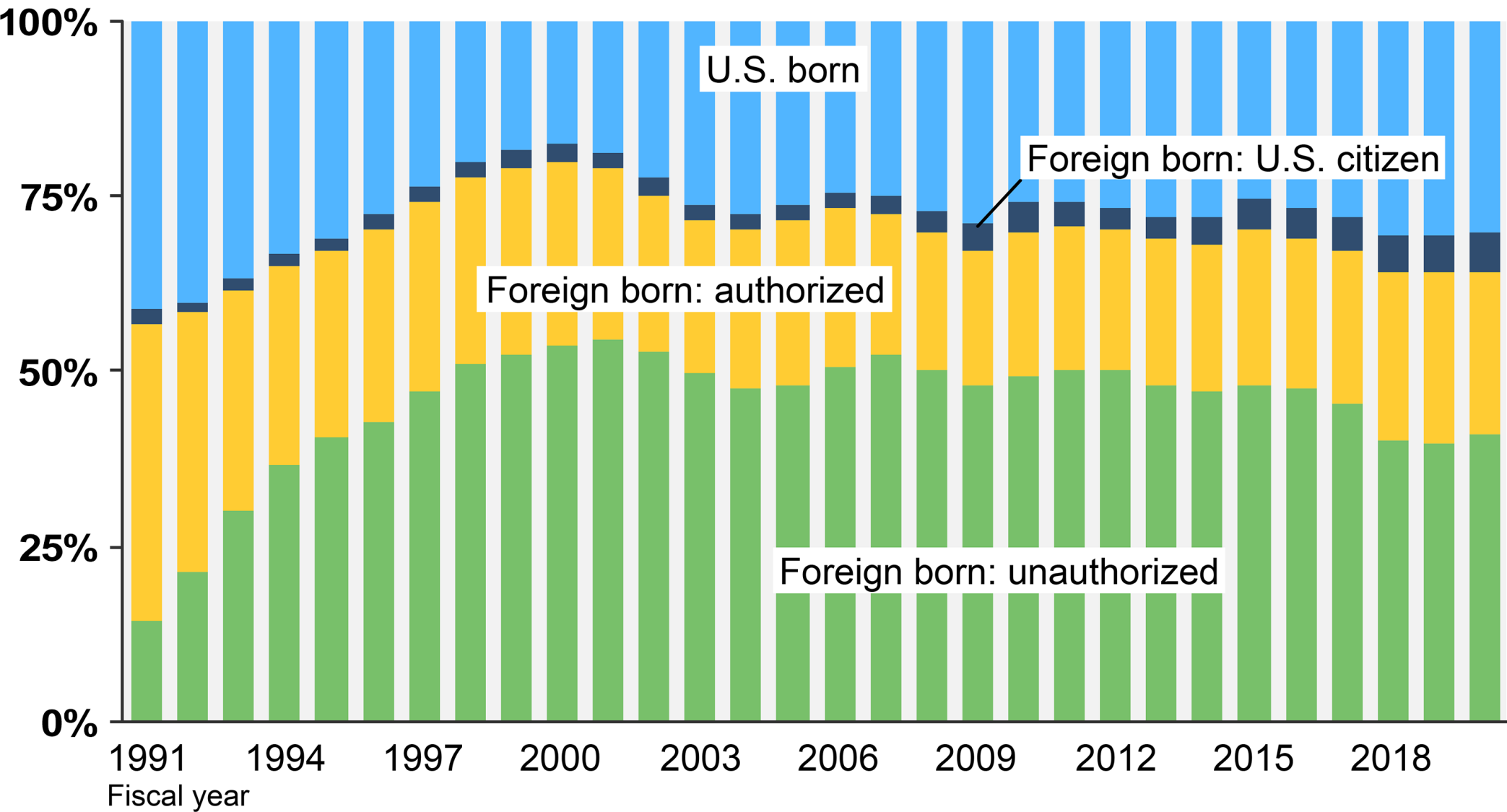
Average age of U.S. farm laborers/graders/sorters by place of birth, 2006–21



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, annual American Community Survey.



# Legal status of hired crop farmworkers, fiscal 1991-2020

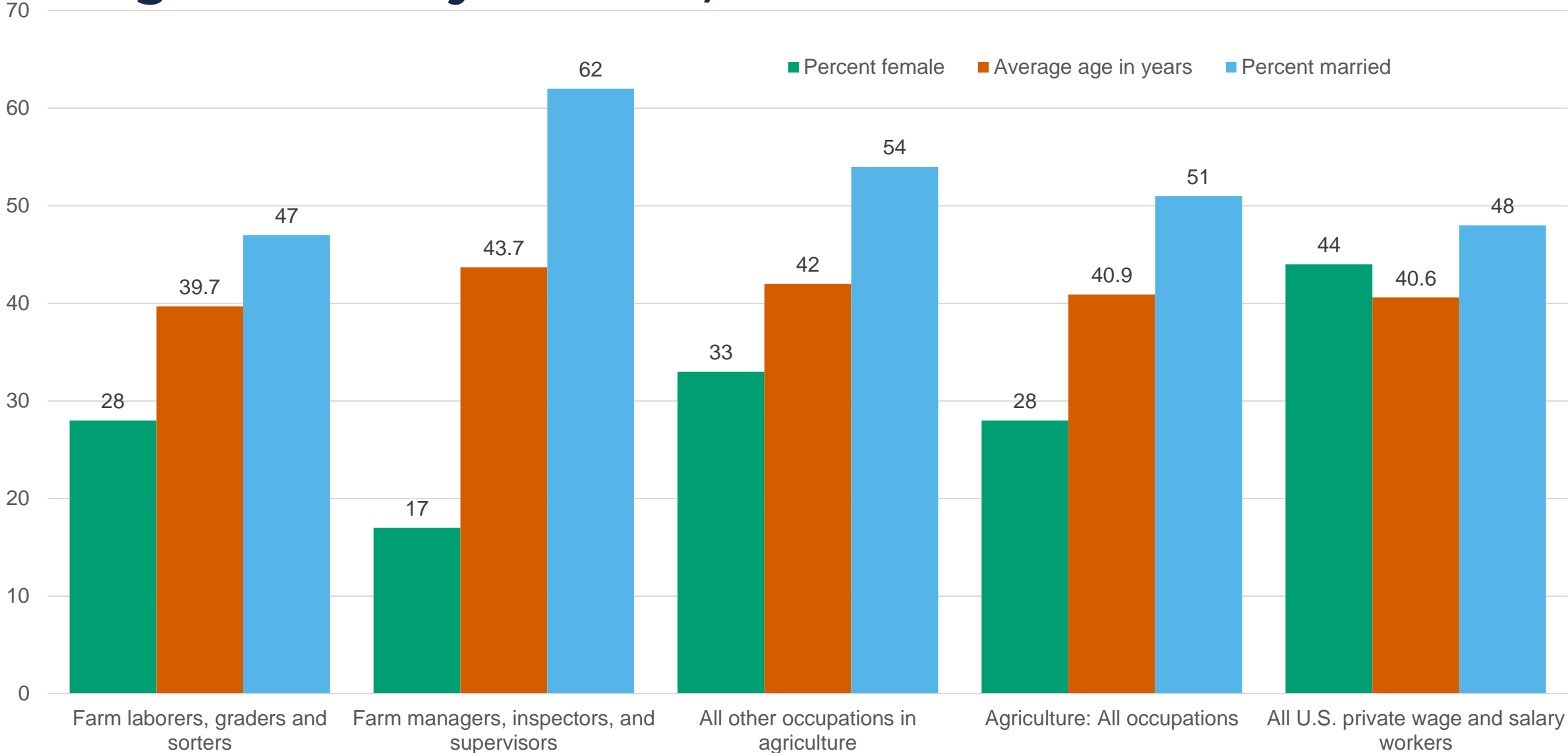


Note:  
Values for each year are 3-year moving averages to smooth fluctuations due to small sample sizes: e.g. data reported for fiscal 2020 are the average over fiscal 2018-20.

U.S. born includes those born in Puerto Rico.



# Demographic characteristics of U.S. hired farmworkers and all wage and salary workers, 2021





# Farmworker Demographics

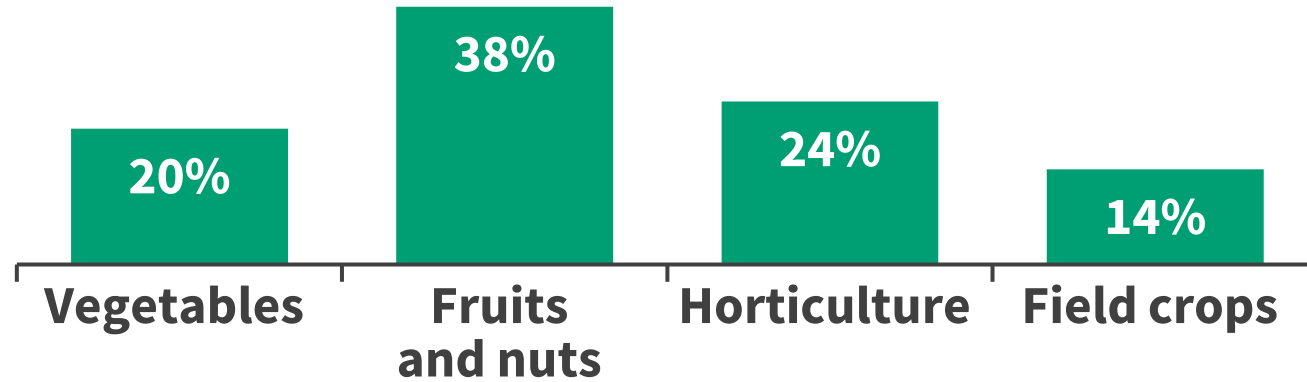
- Majority are foreign-born (70%)
- About 60% are male
- Mean age of 41
- Almost 80% identify as Hispanic
- Over 60% are most comfortable conversing in Spanish
- Average completed education: 9th grade





# Employment Characteristics

## Primary Crops



## Livestock

- Pig production
- Dairy cattle

**Worked an average of 39 weeks/year in agriculture.**





# Farmworkers in Illinois

- Estimate 50,000 farmworkers annually

- Contribute to:

- Seed corn
- Pork
- Specialty crops
- Nursery and landscape







# Injuries



Sorry you  
got kicked  
by my cow,  
Crazy Legs.

Say, can you  
milk for me  
again tomorrow  
night?





# Physical Hazards

- Livestock
- Machinery and equipment
- Repetitive movements / awkward posture



# Injuries among Farmworkers

## Causes of injuries

- Transportation
- Machinery
- Bites or contact with animals
- Cuts and piercings

**Fractures account for majority of injuries**





# Illnesses





# Health Hazards

- Warm/hot environments
- Chemical and pesticide exposure
- Dusts
- Repetitive movements / awkward posture





# Illnesses among Farmworkers

- Heat-related illnesses
  - Heat stroke, exhaustion, dehydration
- Pesticide-related illnesses
  - Acute to chronic
- Muscle or connective tissues diseases
- Skin diseases
- Mental health disorders



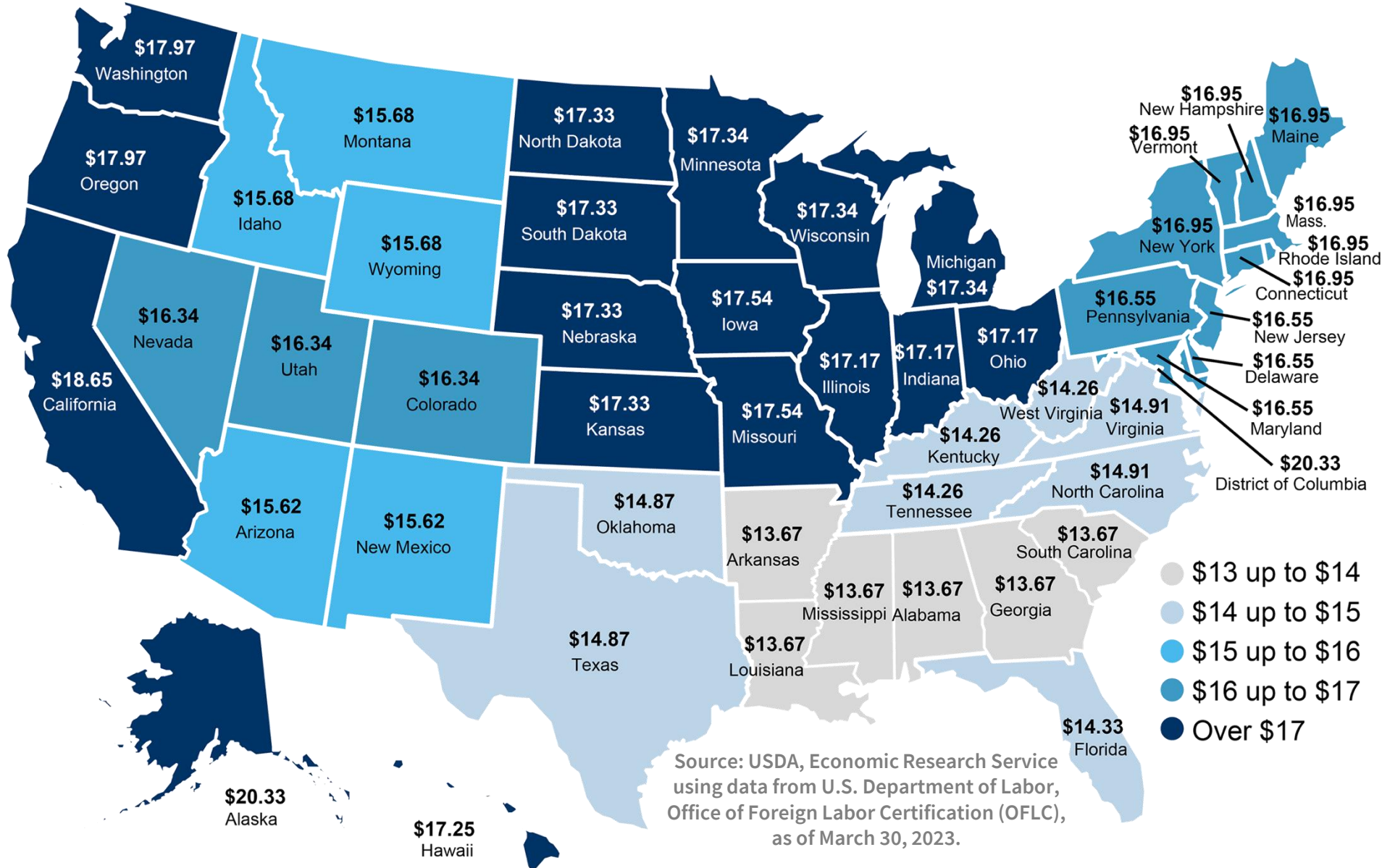
# Additional Risk Factors to Health and Safety

- Substandard housing
- Chronic health conditions
- Low-wage



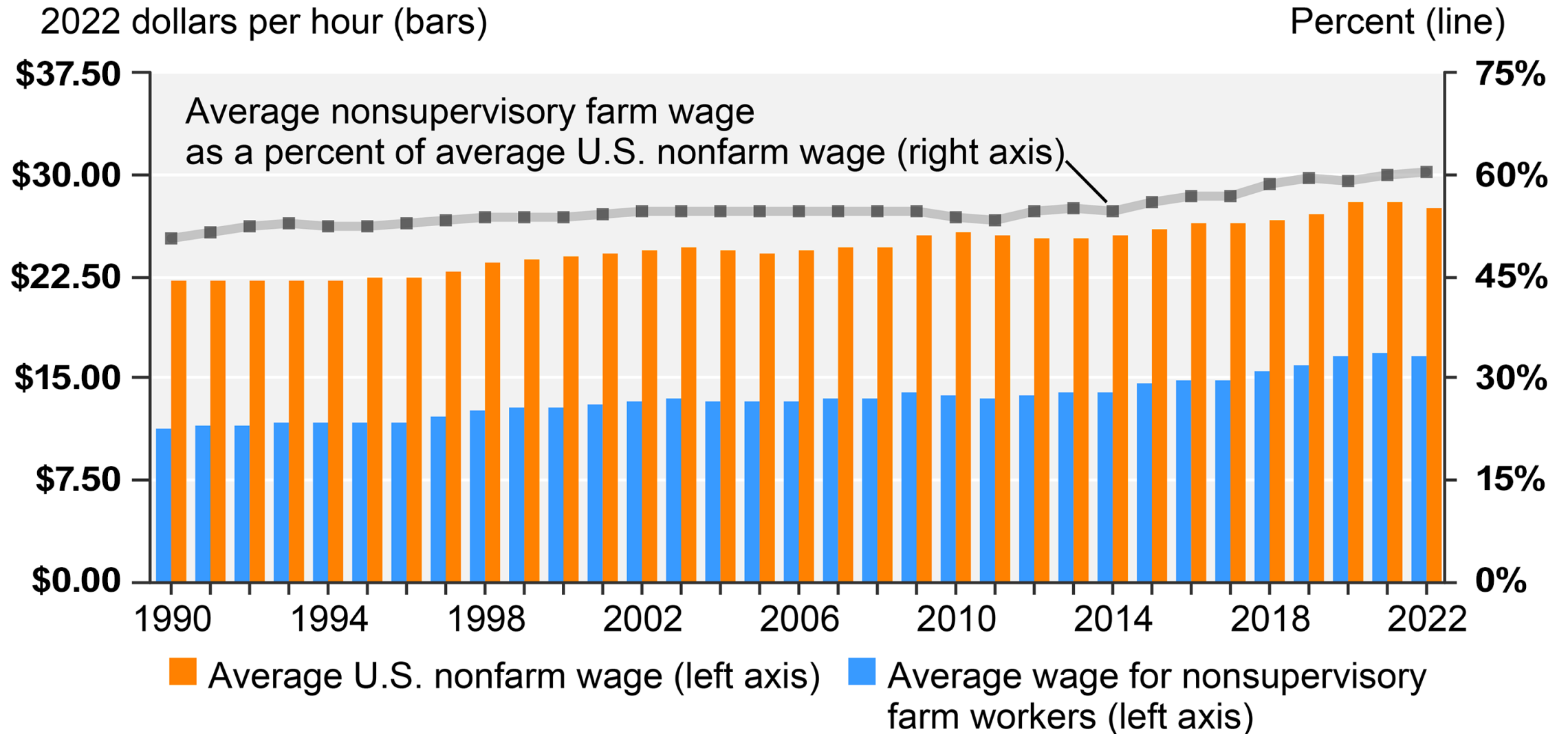


# Adverse effect wage rates (AEWR), 2023



H-2A employers must provide transportation and housing and pay the higher of the applicable State or federal minimum wage, the prevailing wage in that region and occupation, as determined by the U.S. Department of Labor, or the regional average farm wage observed in the NASS FLS.

# Real wages for U.S. nonsupervisory farm & nonfarm workers, 1990-2022



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Farm Labor Survey and nontarm wage data from U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics survey.



# Barriers to Care





# Barriers to Healthcare

- Insurance
- Education & health literacy
- Frequent mobility
- Language
- Lack of transportation
- Culture
- Workers' compensation
- Fear





# Farmworker Serving Organizations in Illinois



# Great Lakes Center for Farmworker Health and Wellbeing

- Collaborative between UIC, UIUC, FW serving orgs in Illinois.
- Research and outreach to improve health and safety
  - Yr 1: connected with 600 FWs
- Funded by NIOSH
- Learn more: <https://farmworkerhealth.uic.edu/>



GREAT LAKES CENTER FOR  
**FARMWORKER**  
HEALTH AND WELLBEING



# Illinois Extension

- **Illinois AgrAbility**

- Services to FWs with disabilities
- Health education and resources



- **Integrated Health Disparities Extension Core**

- Child and adult obesity prevention education
- Social support programming
- Cultural humility training for healthcare providers



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# Community Health Partnerships of Illinois (CHP)

- Federally Qualified Migrant Health Center
- Serves 8,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families across 37 counties
- Six clinic sites
- Two mobile clinics



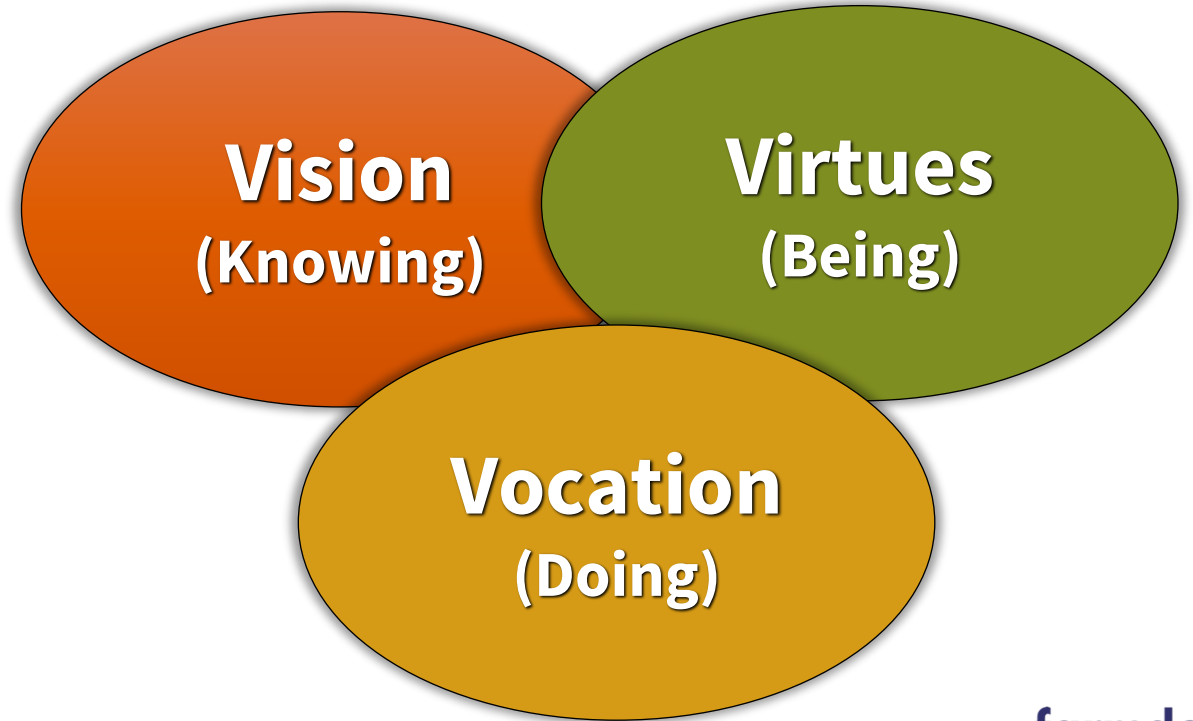


# Community Health Partnership of Illinois (CHP)



# North Central Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Center


- Stress and mental health-related programs and resources to farmworkers
- Support groups for farmworkers in Nebraska
- Bringing the program to Illinois





# Additional Organizations

- Shawnee Health
- Illinois Migrant Council
- Legal Aid Chicago
- National Center for Farmworker Health
- Migrant Clinicians Network



**WHO WE ARE**

The National Center for Farmworker Health (NCFH) is a private, not-for-profit corporation located in Buda, Texas dedicated to improving the health status of farmworker families. We provide information services, training and technical assistance, and a variety of products to community and migrant health centers nationwide, as well as organizations, universities, researchers and individuals involved in farmworker health.

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# Thank you Illinois Extension



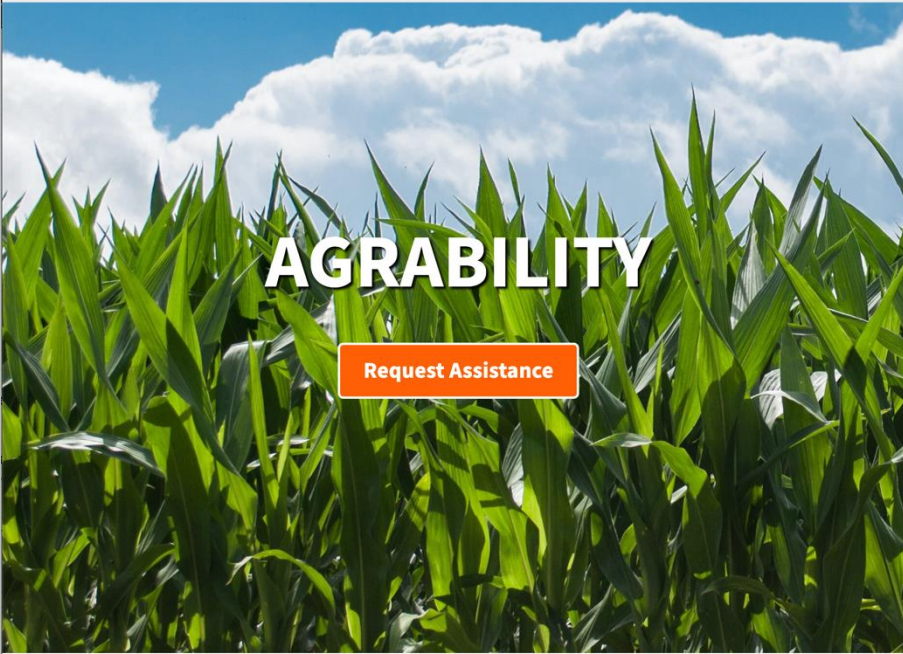
**Josie Rudolphi, PhD**  
[josier@illinois.edu](mailto:josier@illinois.edu)

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### You've worked hard your whole life.

Farming is in your blood. Don't let challenges keep you from doing what you love. Illinois AgrAbility offers education and assistance to eliminate barriers, accommodate limitations, and help you continue farming.

- Customized, onsite farm assessments
- Effective solutions and safe modifications
- Educational opportunities and resources

### We know you aren't one to ask for help.

Life changes with age, but that doesn't mean you have to quit farming. The average age of farmers in Illinois is 58, so many of your neighbors could also benefit from our life-changing services. Don't let your pride keep you from finding out how we can help.