

Title Page: Understanding the Hispanic Workforce in Agriculture: *An Extension Publication for Agricultural Employers who seek Maximum Productivity at Work*

Project Leader (PL) Information: Jorge M. Fonseca. Assistant Specialist, Assistant Professor. Yuma Agricultural Center 6425 8th Street. Yuma, AZ 85364. Phone: (928)782-3836, E-mail: jfonseca@ag.arizona.edu

Abstract : This project proposes to elaborate a 5-page extension publication that will help agricultural employers and managers in understanding the Hispanic culture and in developing skills to improve the working environment for improved productivity. More than 90% of all the farm workers in the United States are Hispanic. Many of these Hispanic workers lack appropriate training and an adequate induction to work, which often causes low productivity and even work accidents. Despite the fact that most growers and managers recognize that laborers management has become the most important issue to increase productivity in any agricultural businesses, very few has been published to educate agricultural employers on how to use cultural knowledge to maximize efficiency and profits. During the last three years, the PL has trained people in the agricultural industry on “Hispanic management issues” and has developed tools to help increase productivity of Hispanic workers. The PL will attend a conference on this issue to add the most recent information to that previously compiled and will elaborate a condensed extension document. This publication aims to provide the agricultural industry with information that will help employers to become aware about alternatives for minimizing downfalls of labor productivity.

Nature of Project:

This project proposes to elaborate a 5-page extension publication that will help agricultural employers and managers in understanding the Hispanic culture and in developing skills to help improve the working environment.

According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, more than 90% of all the farm workers in the United States are Hispanic. Spanish is in fact the language predominantly spoken by agricultural laborers in Arizona, and in the United States in general. Despite the fact that most growers recognize “laborer management” as the most important issue to increase productivity in any agricultural business, very few has been published to educate agricultural employers on how to use cultural knowledge to increase productivity at the work site.

In some cases the need for effective cultural teaching materials is critical as miscommunication with Hispanic growers may cause problems that can escalate into fatal consequences. Hispanics workers in the United States have accidents at work more than the other racial groups combined. According to *USA Today* (03-19-03), Hispanics is the only cultural group where a growing trend of fatalities at work still prevails. Most of these accidents may be prevented with better understanding of the needs of the laborers.

The extension publication proposed in this project will be written on the premise that those who read it will want to learn about cultural aspects of Hispanics that can be managed to maximize farm outputs as well as long-term profits. The emphasis is on management principles whose importance transcend geographical and cultural backgrounds, rather than on legal requirements. This publication will be a tool that can provide farm employers with more creative and cost-efficient ways of managing agricultural labor.

Goals, inputs, outputs, outcomes:

Goals: To provide agricultural employers and managers with a summarized guide about the Hispanic culture, and how to use this knowledge to maximize productivity in the agricultural sites.

Inputs: The experience of the PL on this topic will be a major input to this project. The PL has taught the class “Understanding the Latino Workforce” course to senior students of the Horticulture program at Clemson University during 2002-2003. He has also presented works on this topic to several audiences, and was the content director of a new video on “Farm and Food Safety” developed for new agricultural employees. The PL is Hispanic, carries an interdisciplinary background that includes vegetable production and business management, and has done consultant work in several countries of Latin America, including Mexico, Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama and Dominican Republic. Two technicians work in the Vegetable Quality program lead by the PL, who will be assisting in compiling more information about this issue.

Outputs: The project will allow a faculty to become better trained on how to manage Hispanic workers. By reading the extension document, farm employers will also become aware of alternatives on how to manage Hispanic workers to increase productivity.

A. **Outcomes – Impact.** The projected impacts of this project will be:

Short Term: The PL will acquire more knowledge about the different aspects in the Hispanic culture that needs to be understood in order to develop a working environment that allow maximum productivity. Arizona growers and agricultural managers will become aware of the publication developed in this project.

Medium Term: Some of the Arizona growers and managers will start using the publication with recently hired laborers or before the beginning of the production season.

Long Term: Growers outside the State of Arizona will apply the information provided in the publication for their workforce. Subsequent publication will be pursued to further detail alternatives to maximize labor productivity.

How it will meet the endowment mission:

Promoting diversity and awareness for other cultures and races is the mission of the Shirley O'Brien endowment. The goal of this project is to help agricultural employers and professionals understand the Hispanic culture, which clearly matches the endowment mission. The ultimate goal of this project is to benefit both the employer and the employee by providing information that highlights the advantages of respecting diversity.

Personnel for completion:

The final extension publication will be revised by both Hispanic professionals and by personnel that supervise Hispanic workers. The following are some of the people that will be invited to revise the extension document:

Dr. Charles Sanchez, Resident Director, Yuma Agricultural Center.

Humberto Hernandez, Farm Supervisor, Yuma Agricultural Center.

Jorge Aguilar, Agri-Trend, Yuma, Arizona.

Gabriel Jauregui, Lab Director, JV Farms, Yuma, Arizona.

How it will be integrated into the University Community:

The clientele of many extension agents and specialists of the University of Arizona consists of people of different cultural background including those with Hispanic roots. In most cases Hispanics behave similarly regardless of the work type, so this project may also benefit people working in different work areas. This publication will be available for all the university community, thus, it will help faculty and staff from areas others than agriculture to become aware about the Hispanic culture.

Budget:

1. Travel Expenses to "Managing the Hispanic Workforce" Conference	
Air fare	\$300
Registration fee	\$175
Lodging and meals	\$350
Other transportation expenses	\$150
2. Books and reports published on this topic	\$ 125
3. Mailing, printing and office expenses	\$ 200
	<u>TOTAL: \$1,300</u>

Budget Justification:


1. Faculty from Cornell University and Penn State University have planned a conference on this topic to be held in January 18-19, 2005 in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania. This conference will bring nationally respected speakers such as Angelo Miño, president of Summit Consulting Services and Miguel Morales, Market Director with Monsanto. By attending this conference the PL will be informed about the most recent tools used to approach Hispanic laborers and improve productivity at agricultural sites. This information will add to the information already compiled by the PI and to experience generated as consultant and instructor in this topic.

2. To our knowledge no book has directly approached the topic of "Understanding the Hispanic Culture to Maximize Productivity in Crop Production Sites," however; a few recently-published books provide information that applies to the topic of this project. An example is the publication "Labor Management in Agriculture" by Gregorio Billikopf from University of California

3. The publication will be posted in the Arizona Crop Information Service web site, and will be sent as hard copy to those growers and industry people signed in the list of cooperative county agencies.

 10-28-04

Applicant Signature & Date



Supervisor Signature & Date