

Migrant Farmworkers in the United States: A Case Study from California

Migrant farmworkers are essential to the United States food system. They harvest the fruits, vegetables, and nuts that feed the nation. However, they often work in difficult and dangerous conditions, and they are often paid poverty wages.



Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States (California Series in Public Anthropology Book 27) by Seth M. Holmes

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This article examines the experiences of migrant farmworkers in the United States, with a particular focus on the state of California. It discusses the challenges they face, the contributions they make, and the policies that affect them.

Challenges Faced by Migrant Farmworkers

Migrant farmworkers face a number of challenges, including:

* **Low wages:** Migrant farmworkers are often paid poverty wages. In California, the average farmworker earns less than \$15 per hour. This makes it difficult for them to support themselves and their families. * **Long hours:** Migrant farmworkers often work long hours, often in extreme heat or cold. They may work 12 or more hours per day, seven days a week. This can take a toll on their physical and mental health. * **Unsafe working conditions:** Migrant farmworkers often work in unsafe conditions. They may be exposed to pesticides and other chemicals, and they may work with dangerous machinery. This can lead to injuries and illnesses. * **Lack of access to healthcare:** Migrant farmworkers often lack access to healthcare. They may not have health insurance, and they may not be able to afford to see a doctor. This can make it difficult for them to get the care they need. * **Discrimination:** Migrant farmworkers often face discrimination. They may be discriminated against because of their race, ethnicity, or immigration status. This can make it difficult for them to find housing, jobs, and other services.

Contributions of Migrant Farmworkers

Despite the challenges they face, migrant farmworkers make significant contributions to the United States. They provide the labor that is essential to the food system. They also contribute to the economy by paying taxes and spending money in local businesses.

In addition, migrant farmworkers play an important role in preserving cultural traditions. They bring their own unique traditions and customs to the United States, and they share them with their co-workers and neighbors.

Policies Affecting Migrant Farmworkers

A number of policies affect migrant farmworkers. These policies include:

* **Immigration policy:** The immigration status of migrant farmworkers affects their ability to work in the United States. Undocumented workers may be afraid to report unsafe working conditions or to seek medical care. *

Labor law: Labor laws protect migrant farmworkers from exploitation. However, these laws are often not enforced, and migrant farmworkers may be afraid to report violations. *

Farmworker housing: Farmworker housing is often overcrowded and unsanitary. This can lead to health problems and other issues. *

Education and training: Migrant farmworkers often lack access to education and training. This can make it difficult for them to improve their skills and find better jobs.

Migrant farmworkers are essential to the United States food system. They face a number of challenges, but they also make significant contributions to the economy and to society. It is important to support policies that protect migrant farmworkers and ensure that they are treated with dignity and respect.

References

* [1] National Center for Farmworker Health: <https://www.ncfh.org> * [2] United Farm Workers: <https://www.ufw.org> * [3] California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation: <https://www.crlaf.org>



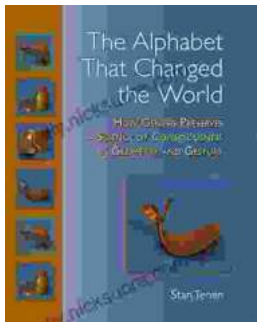
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