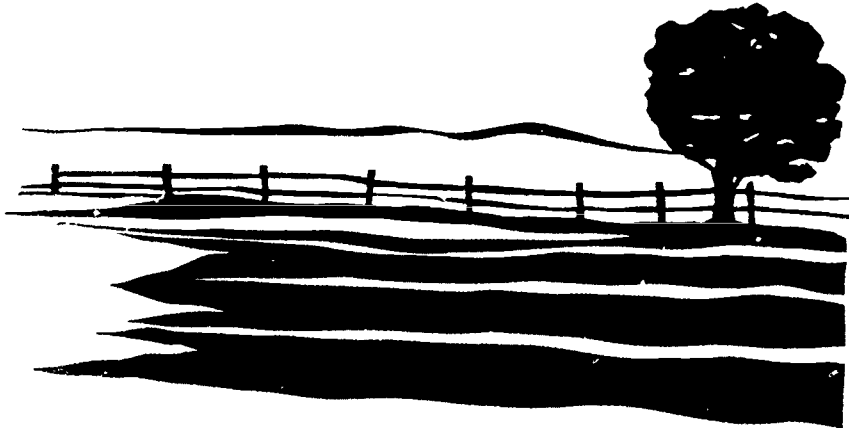


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Methodology for
Designating High Impact

Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Areas



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PREFACE

This report describes a methodology and the process by which it was developed to estimate the number of migrant and seasonal farmworkers present in a prescribed area during the harvesting of crops and seeks to pinpoint, in terms of health and social services, high impact areas of need. How well this, or any model, describes the events is necessarily dependent upon the accuracy of the underlying assumptions and the accuracy of the data available for input. This report discusses assumptions made and the subsequent selection of the recommended model.

The development of a national model is problematic in that many of the variables and parameters are area- and crop-specific, requiring modification to reflect these differences. Any estimating procedure, short of performing a complete census, has inherent errors. The difficulty is in selecting a procedure to minimize errors and maximize the confidence level of the procedure.

Simplicity was another concern. The model should be sufficiently simple so that planners and professionals at all levels of the health and social care spectrum can use it, not just the theoreticians who develop the model.

To develop this model HCR studied data in terms of type, accuracy, quality and amount. After exploring a number of possibilities HCR decided that a model based on crop acreage data was most appropriate. Data necessary to develop this model, length of harvest seasons, crops by acres and by county, human harvest production level and time worked by farmworkers were all available for use. The model did not depend on information supplied by the workers which would be affected by their legal immigration status.

To develop the most accurate and simplified model possible, within given time and financial constraints, HCR visited the Delmarva region and contacted persons responsible for the delivery of migrant health and social services in many areas of the United States. Data on farmworkers collected by the Departments of Agriculture, Labor and Education and migrant clinics were also reviewed.

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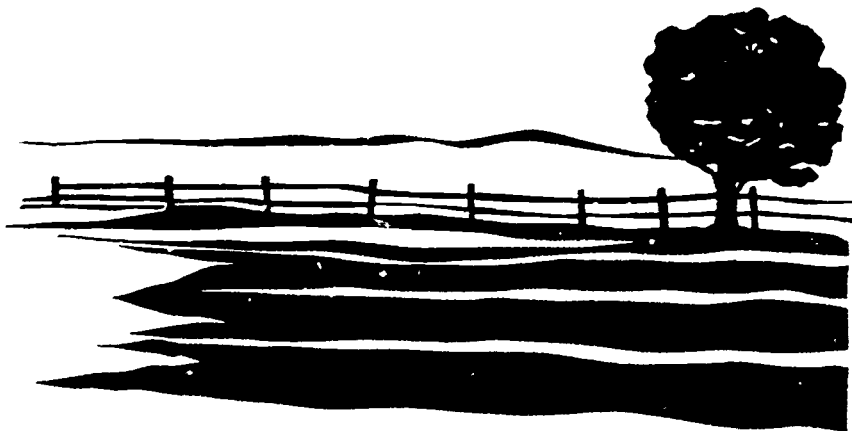
Appendix I - Procedural Manual

Appendix II - Estimates of Number of Farmworkers

I. Executive Summary

**Methodology for
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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Introduction

The health needs of migrant and seasonal farmworkers became a federal issue in the late 1950s when Congress established a committee to investigate the lack of sanitary conditions and inadequate immunization which posed serious health problems for migrants and residents of farming areas. After extensive hearings, the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare concluded in 1961 that migrant and seasonal farmworkers had a high level of need and a low level of health care, and that no county or state had been able to cope with the problem. As a result, Congress enacted Public Law 87-692 (76 Stat. 592) in September 1962, amending Title III of the Public Health Service Act of 1944, allocating federal grant money to stimulate state and local health programs to provide needed health care to migrants and seasonal farmworkers.

A major impediment in meeting the health needs of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in this country has been, and continues to be, the lack of accurate data on their numbers and location. For the Department of Health and Human Services to effectively meet its obligation under Section 329 of the Public Health Service Act, allocating federal funds to High Migrant Impact Areas on a first priority basis, a methodology is needed to enumerate migrants and seasonal farmworkers by area.

There is a number of factors which makes accurate estimates of migrants and seasonal farmworkers difficult. The definitional problem is paramount, as the determination of who is a migrant or seasonal farmworker varies from agency to agency, artificially dissecting the population and impeding accurate estimation. For example, the Department of Labor defines a "migrant farmworker" as "a seasonal farmworker who performed during the preceding

twelve months agricultural labor which requires travel such that the worker is unable to return to his/her domicile within the same day."¹ The Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C.(254 (b)(a)(2)) uses a different definition, while yet another definition (migrant agricultural worker) is included in the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Protection Act, Public Law 97-470 which states that "Migratory Agricultural Worker means an individual whose principal employment is in agriculture on a seasonal basis, who has been so employed within the last 24 months and who establishes for the purpose of this employment a temporary place of abode."

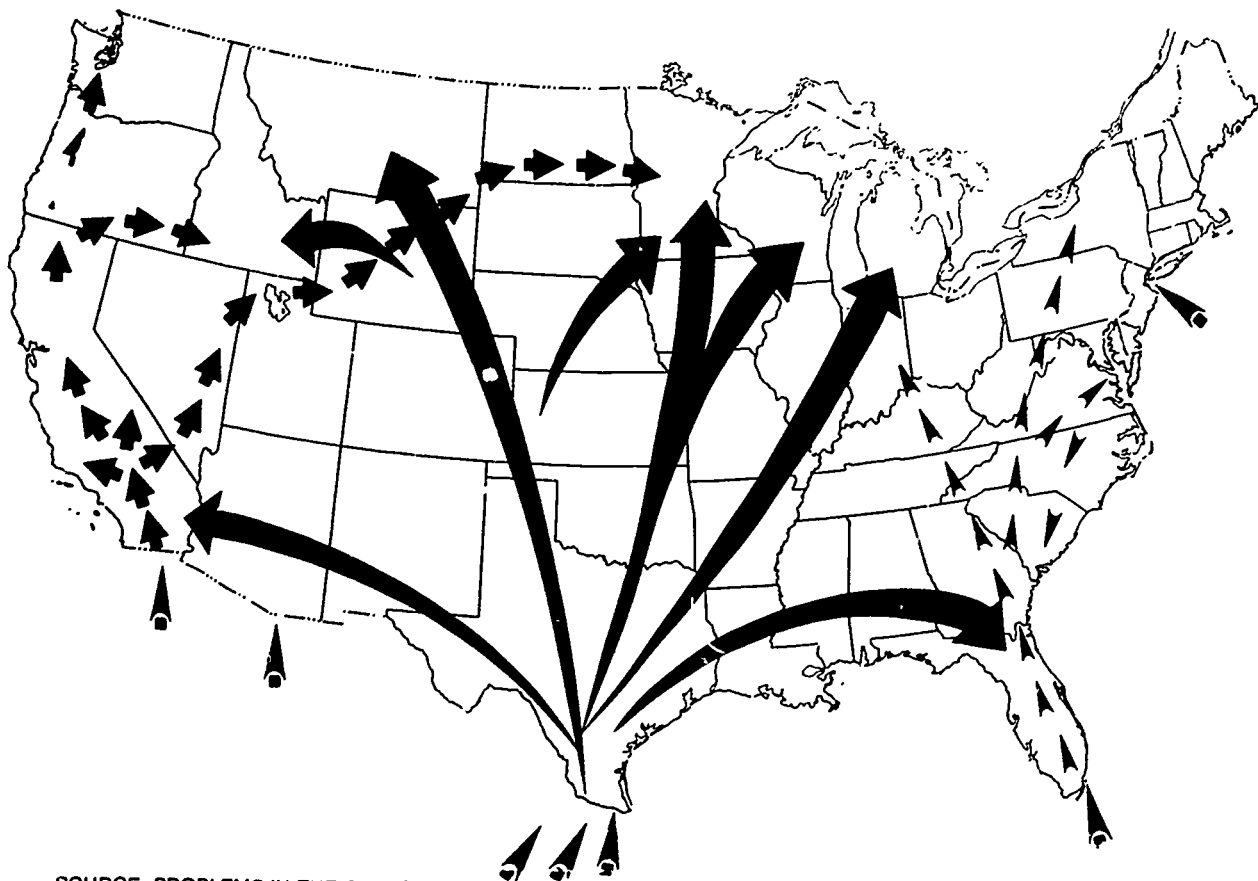
For purposes of this report, a farmworker is any person who works for wages to plant, maintain, harvest or process a farm product for any period of time. The two groups of workers who make up the farmworkers population are the settled (seasonal farmworkers) and migrant farmworker. Migrants are those farmworkers who cannot return to the residence they maintain at the end of the work day; seasonal farmworkers are those who can.

The constant movement of migrant workers and their families compounds the problem of estimation. The extent to which students comprise a portion of the working migrant force is unknown. Another factor of increasing importance is the influx of illegal or undocumented aliens into the migrant labor force. Estimates of illegal or undocumented aliens in the Southwest alone are in the millions. An accurate count of this last subgroup is difficult because aliens often desire to remain hidden or because employers are unwilling to report them. Finally, the statistics do not reflect unemployed migrants who look for work during economic slow down.

It is commonly believed that migrants move from their home base to work areas through three streams. The three home-based areas are Florida, Texas and California. Each stream moves northward from the home base. Workers also come from Mexico, Puerto Rico and the West Indies. Figure I shows how migrants fan-out from home bases into the three streams.

Current methods of collecting data on migrants and seasonal farmworkers are divided among a number of service agencies and the results are often skewed

**Figure 1. Movement of Migrant Farmworkers
The Major Migrant Streams**



SOURCE: PROBLEMS IN THE STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE MIGRANT HEALTH PROGRAM
HRD - 81-92
MAY 8, 1981

- ➡ Western Stream
- Eastern Stream
- ➡ Midwest Stream

to meet the needs of the data collectors. The monthly compilations by the Department of Labor on migrant, seasonal and foreign laborers are completed for purposes of unemployment insurance. Because the majority of agricultural employers in the United States are not covered by unemployment insurance, many migrants are missed in this count. Additionally, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA 223) data are an estimate of unknown reliability and accuracy. Since there is no reliable annual summary, these figures cannot be compared with any other data available nationally.

The Department of Education, Office of Migrant Education, implemented the Migrant Student Record Transfer System (MSRTS) to improve the continuity of education and health record transfers between school districts serving migrant children. MSRTS data are collected by recruiters of local education departments who visit the schools and migrant camps to register migrant students and children of school age not currently enrolled in school programs. The accuracy of MSRTS data therefore depends on the aggressiveness of the local recruiters. Because MSRTS reporting efforts have focused on rural school districts, the numbers of migrant children residing in urban school districts are not reflected in MSRTS reports. Additionally, MSRTS data reflect information only on the student and not family members.

A third method of counting migrant farmworkers is the biennial data compiled by the Bureau of Census for the Department of Agriculture. The 1983 count, however, has indicated a 50% decrease from the 1979 total of 217,000 migrant farmworkers. Because changes in production patterns cannot account for this decrease, it is believed that error may have been caused by the substitution effect of illegal aliens and/or changes in the sampling pattern.

It is obvious that provision of health care services to those migrant and seasonal farmworkers most in need will continue to be severely handicapped unless a model for estimating the migrant population is developed that can be used in areas with different characteristics and demographics. Such a model must provide unbiased results of measurable accuracy and reliability.