

# U.S. National Pulse on Infectious Diseases among Farmworkers

*Keeping a pulse on the health of farmworkers in the U.S.*

*March Edition 2023*

The purpose of this National Pulse is to systematically collect and share timely, significant network insights, current media stories, and research about issues and trends concerning COVID-19, influenza, and other emerging infectious diseases among farmworkers in the U.S. The National Pulse includes...

1. findings from a national poll of farmworker-serving organizations;
2. insights from recent data collection efforts with farmworkers; and
3. a summary of recent research and media articles published

## Network Insights

At the beginning of March 2023, NCFH circulated a short poll in English and Spanish via email to a total of 284 network contacts. These contacts include **executive and outreach staff of Migrant Health Centers, farmworker-serving non-profit organizations, and health department staff**, and are all affiliated with NCFH through various networks and contracts. A total of **51 recipients participated in the poll, who serve farmworkers in 24 states** across the country. The topic of this month's poll was **Adult Vaccinations**

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*79% of respondents work directly with farmworkers*

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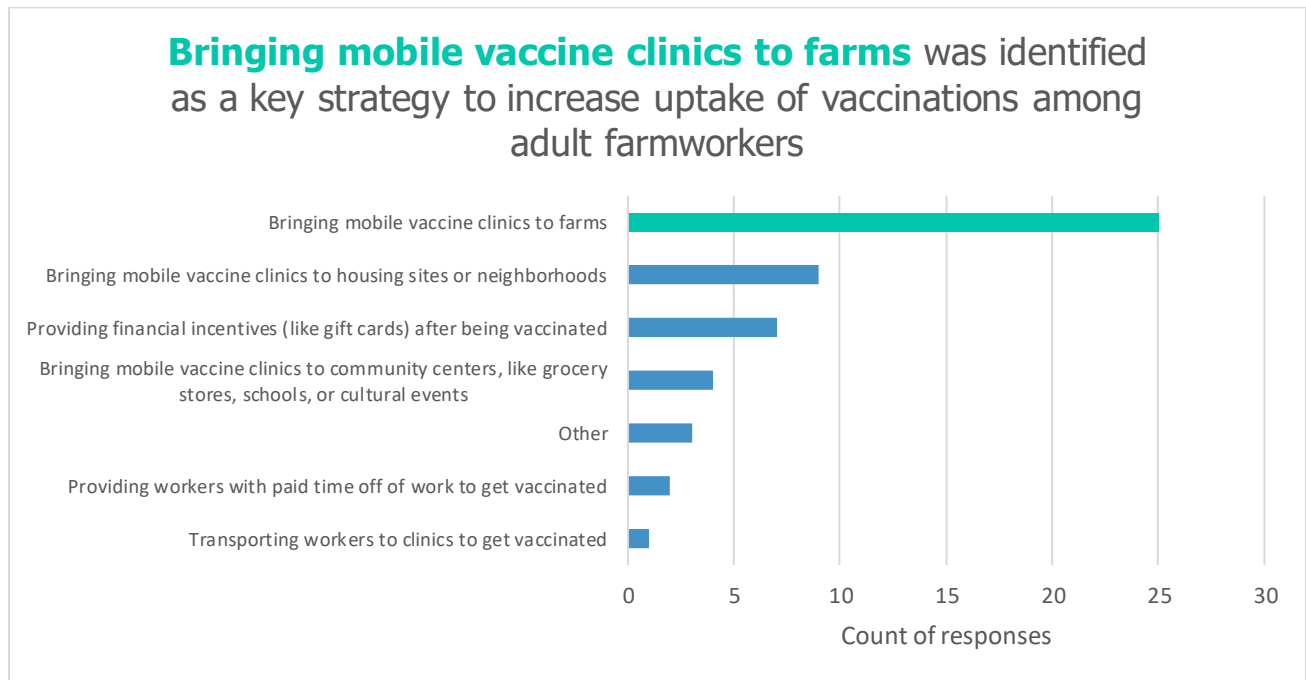
**Eighty-four percent of poll respondents were either somewhat or very concerned that farmworkers in their communities are not up to date on their adult vaccinations. Zero respondents were not concerned at all.** According to the CDC, "immunizations are not just for children. Protection from some childhood vaccines can wear off over time. You may also be at risk for vaccine-preventable disease due to your age, job, lifestyle, travel, or health conditions.

**All adults need immunizations to help them prevent getting and spreading serious diseases that could result in poor health, missed work, medical bills, and not being able to care for family.**

- All adults need a [seasonal flu \(influenza\)](#) vaccine every year. Flu vaccine is especially important for people with chronic health conditions, pregnant women, and older adults.
- Every adult should get a [Tdap](#) vaccine once if they did not receive it as an adolescent to protect against pertussis (whooping cough), and then a [Td](#) (tetanus, diphtheria) or Tdap booster shot every 10 years. In addition, women should get the Tdap vaccine each time they are pregnant, preferably at 27 through 36 weeks."

Check out this webpage to review other vaccines for adults: [Recommended Vaccines for Adults](#)

*[Regarding adult vaccinations,] farmworkers in our community are well vaccinated from my knowledge. Most do not want boosters. Fear about prolonged effects is still an issue. Some complain that after the vaccine their immune system got worse and will not take a booster because of it. – Poll respondent*



Bringing mobile vaccine clinics to farms was identified as a key strategy to increase the uptake of vaccinations among adult farmworkers, followed by bringing mobile vaccine clinics to housing sites or neighborhoods, and providing financial incentives after being vaccinated. Several poll respondents noted that a combination of the above strategies is the most effective. One respondent explained, *“This is really dependent on the person. A mixture of some of these would be most effective. Taking a mobile unit to an H-2A farm and providing incentives to get vaccinated has proven to be most effective. Also, when you are able to work with farm management and get their support.”*

Healthcare and vaccine providers commented on how the cost of adult vaccines impacts their ability to administer vaccines to uninsured farmworkers...

*“In Michigan, the Adult Vaccine Program (AVP) doesn't have vaccine stock available for all recommended adult vaccines; when AVP does not have inventory available, private stock must be used which can be cost prohibitive.”*

*“Nosotros usamos vacunas del estado que son gratis para las personas sin seguro medico y nuestros trabajadores agricolas califican para ellas. // We use state vaccines that are free for the uninsured and our farm workers qualify for them.”*

*“Nuestros servicios son 100% GRATUITOS, eso implica que estamos constantemente buscando recursos y donaciones para poder hacer nuestro trabajo sin costo para el paciente FW.” // “Our services are 100% FREE, that means we are constantly looking for resources and donations so we can do our work at no cost to the farmworker patient.”*

Respondents ranked the **most important types of resources that farmworkers need about adult vaccinations.**

1. Health education
2. Information about available vaccine clinics
3. Time off work from employer

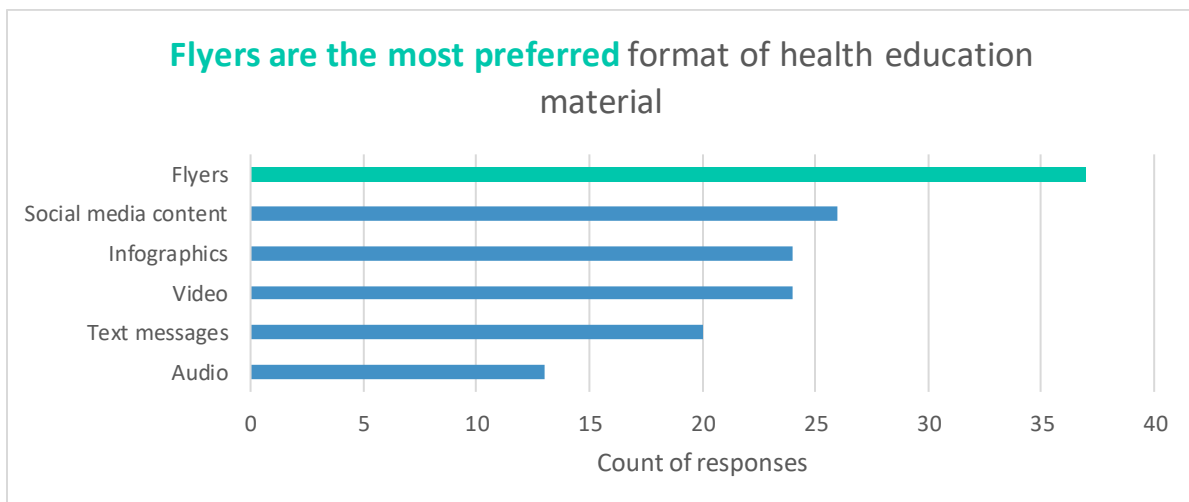
Respondents also ranked the **most important types of resources that organizations need about adult vaccinations.**

1. Additional outreach staff
2. Health education materials
3. Information on available health care resources
4. Training

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*“Our biggest barrier is being limited on staff. Finding local partners is the easy work. Having the staff to run these clinics is the barrier. There are many resources out there to access vaccines but the portion that needs to be supported is the staff performing the work. Not only with staff but with resources. This includes vehicles, transportation coolers, and funding to make these programs sustainable.” – Poll respondent*

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Respondents identified the **formats of health education materials** they prefer. Flyers were the most popular, followed by social media content, infographics, and video content. Respondents note that all materials should be available in Spanish, or common languages spoken by farmworkers in their communities.

**Topics of trainings** that would be useful for organizations include:

1. Outreach strategies
2. Communication and messaging techniques
3. Informational

## **NCFH Data Collection Updates: Farmworker COVID-19 Community Assessments (FCCAs)**

NCFH has concluded Phase 2 of the FCCAs assessments in five communities: Colquitt County, GA; Sampson County, NC; Weld County, CO; Atlantic and Cumberland Counties, NJ; Yakima County, WA. You can learn about the adapted methodologies NCFH used based on the CDC's Rapid Community Assessment framework [here](#).

NCFH kicked-off data collection of Phase 3 of the FCCAs in Hillsborough County, FL March 9-12. Initial findings to come later in Spring.

To learn more about NCFH's Farmworker COVID-19 Community Assessments, [CLICK HERE](#).



**1 in 4**  
respondents in  
Yakima County  
live in  
overcrowded  
housing  
conditions

**Learn more about the living conditions  
that put Washington's farmworkers at  
high risk for COVID-19:**

**NCFH.ORG/FCCA**



**NCFH**  
National Center for Farmworker Health, Inc.

## Media & Research

### Media Articles

[Bilingual COVID, health hotline available for seasonal farmworkers](#)

Michigan Farm News, February 24, 2023

[Congress Killed a Bill to Give Farmworkers a Path to Citizenship. What Comes Next?](#)

Civil Eats, February 22, 2023

[\\$600 stimulus pay available for agriculture and farm workers impacted by pandemic](#)

ABC30, February 22, 2023

[Resurrected bills take aim \(again\) at COVID-19 vaccines](#)

Boise State Public Radio, NPR, March 10, 2023

[How to stop the bird flu outbreak becoming a pandemic](#)

Nature, March 1, 2023

### Research Articles

This section includes research articles published within the last two months.

[A Case Study on the Practical Use of Low-Fidelity Modeling to Mitigate the Spread of COVID-19 Amongst the Underserved Farmworker Community](#)

February 2023

This research provides a mitigation technique for COVID infection among agricultural worker dormitories. This model considers room dimensions, sleep orientation, and guides on individual and group sanitation practices, and includes an isolation protocol.

[Perspectives of dairy employees at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic: A survey of health risks and educational needs](#)

February 2023

Sixty-three farmworkers were surveyed from May - September 2020 about COVID-19 safety measures taken within the workplace. Key findings include: COVID-19 safety trainings were mostly limited to posters on walls; Dairy managers received more COVID-19 safety training than did entry-level workers; Social media was dairy employees' main source of COVID-19 information; and Successful emergency plans on dairies should consider dairy workers' learning preferences

[Parent Perception of School Meals in the San Joaquin Valley during COVID-19: A Photovoice Project](#)

February 2023

Data collected show that although the meals could mitigate food insecurity, the authors noted that meals were high in sugar and unhealthy. The transition to grab-and-go style meals was an effective strategy for providing food to families during pandemic school closure, however, negative parental perceptions of the nutritional content of provided foods may have decreased school meal participation.

[Addressing COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy in rural communities: A case study in engaging trusted messengers to pivot and plan](#)

**February 2023**

This study found that including health care access challenges, misinformation, political loyalties, and concerns regarding the perceived lack of trustworthy evidence and knowledge of long-term effects of the vaccination were factors influencing hesitancy.

[Farmworker Health in California](#)

**February 2023**

This study was funded by the California Dept. of Public Health and conducted by the University of California Researchers from July 2021 to April 2022. The survey topics included Farmwork Social and Economic Organization, Women’s and Reproductive Health, Physical Health, COVID-19, Mental Health, Use of Preventive Health Services, Health Behaviors, and Healthcare Insurance and Access. The authors conclude with the following recommendations: 1) Invest public resources in agricultural development that raises industry work standards; 2) Continue to invest public resources in protecting workers’ rights; 3) Expand access to the economic safety net; 4) Expand access to the healthcare safety net; 5) Expand healthcare access; 6) Build capacity for innovating community healthcare worker co-ops.

[The role of coalitions in the health and well-being of farmworkers](#)

**January 2023**

This paper is a commentary on sustainable coalitions among farmers, farmworkers, policymakers, and informed community partners. Authors suggest these coalitions are essential in order to combat the various inequities faced by farmworkers, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.



**[READ THE NCFH COVID-19 IMPACT ON AGRICULTURAL WORKERS FACT SHEET!](#)**

**[THIS FACT SHEET IS UPDATED QUARTERLY TO BRING THE MOST CURRENT INFORMATION ABOUT THE PANDEMIC'S IMPACT ON AGRICULTURAL WORKERS.](#)**