

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

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

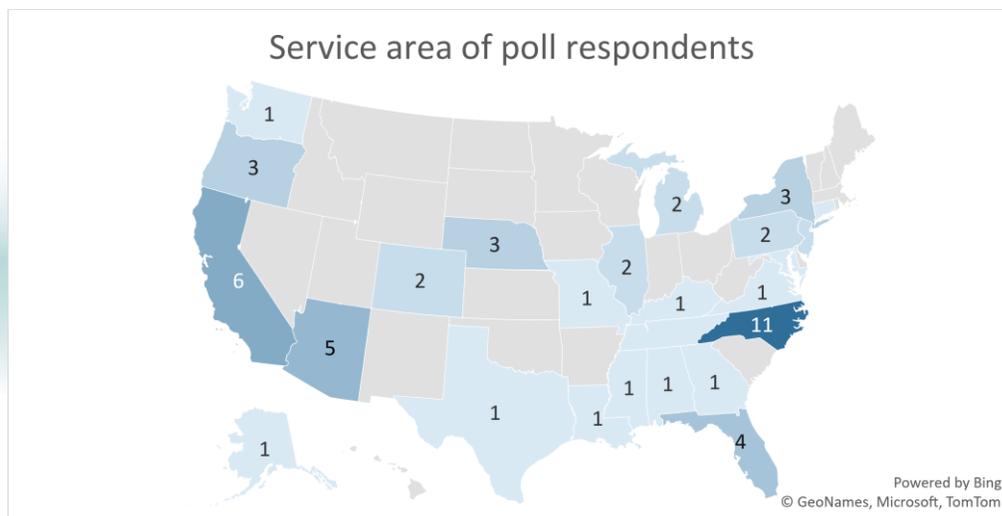
*November Edition 2022: Influenza*

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. This edition 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 November 2022, NCFH circulated a short poll in English and Spanish via email to a total of 179 network contacts. These contacts include executive and outreach staff of Migrant Health Centers, farmworker-serving non-profit organizations, and health department staff. A total of 52 recipients participated in the poll, who serve farmworkers in 24 states across the country. The topic of this month's poll was Influenza (the flu).

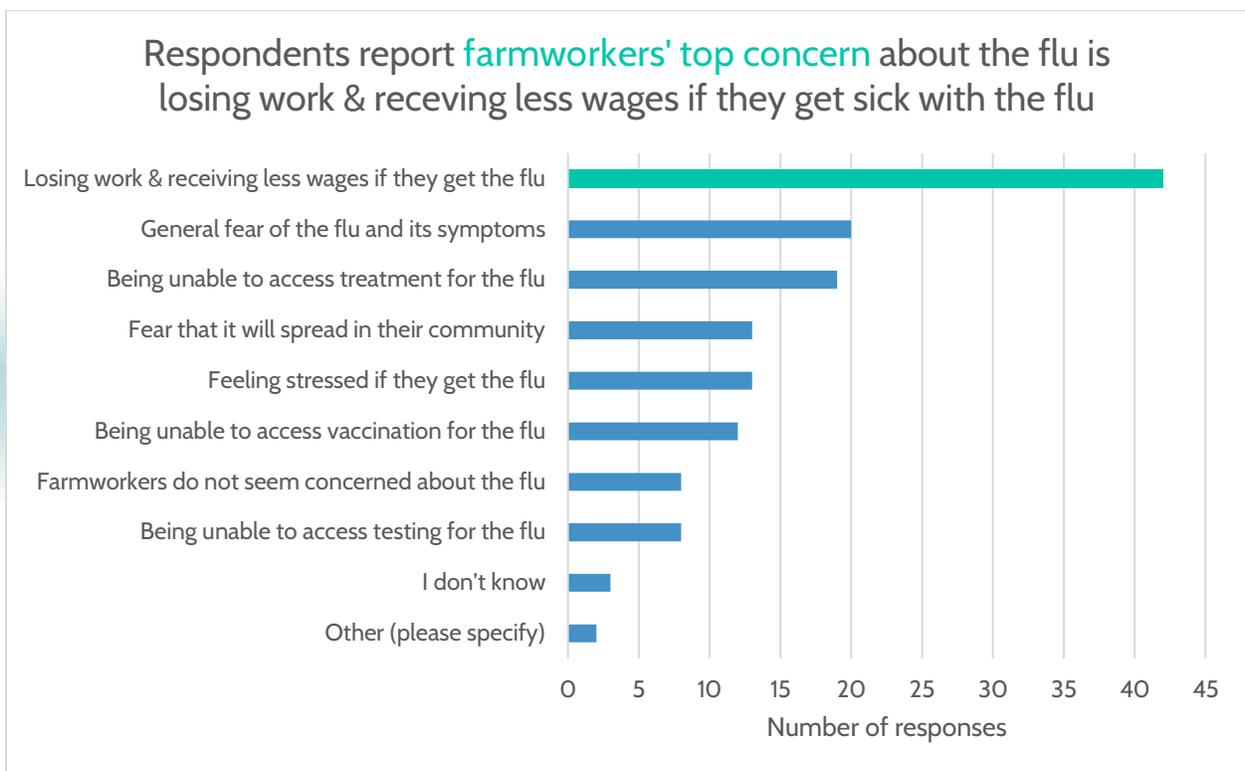


*96% of respondents work directly with farmworkers*

78% of poll respondents are somewhat or very concerned about the flu. Based on their work with farmworkers, respondents identified top concerns about the flu among farmworkers in their communities. The most common concerns were

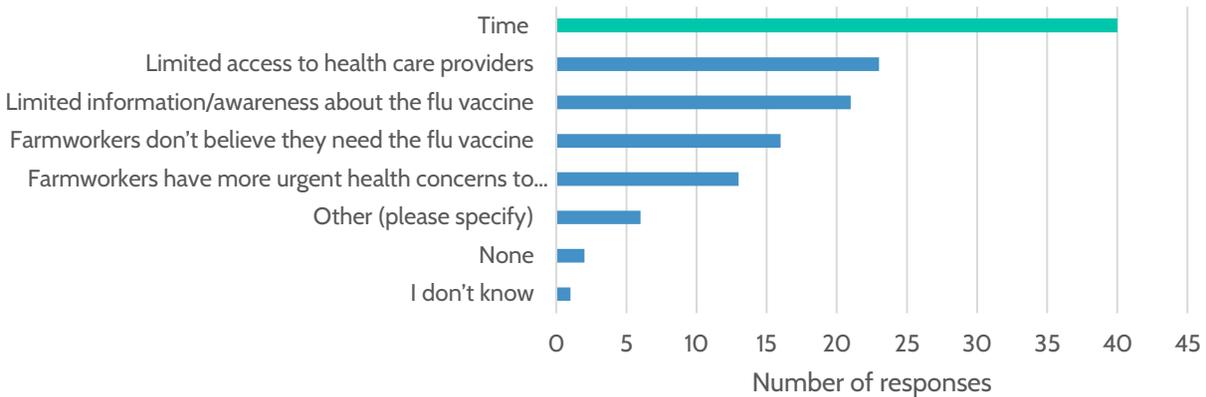
- 1) losing work and receiving less wages if they get the flu,
- 2) general fear of the flu and its symptoms, and
- 3) being unable to access treatment for the flu.

Respondents who selected “other” noted the concerns of 1) farmworkers’ children getting sick, and being unable to stay home to care for them because they still have to go to work, and 2) spreading the flu to those most vulnerable in their community.



Respondents identified “time” as the primary barrier for farmworkers to get the flu vaccine in their communities, including lack of time, being unable to take time off work, limited clinic hours, among other time constraints. Following time, limited access to health care providers and limited information/awareness about the flu vaccine (e.g. unaware who should get the flu vaccine) were also common responses. Several respondents wrote in several other barriers including: 1) lack of transportation to clinics, 2) concerns about vaccine side effects, and 3) the cost of the vaccine for uninsured farmworkers.

## Time is the largest barrier for farmworkers to get the flu vaccine (e.g. lack of time, unable to take time off work, limited clinic hours, etc.)



*“Si no tienen seguro médico les cuesta muy cara.” – Participante de la encuesta*

*“If they don't have health insurance, it is very expensive for them.” – Poll respondent*

Respondents ranked **the top types of resources that farmworkers need to get the flu vaccine.**

1. Interpretation services
2. Transportation
3. Health education
4. Medical bill coverage

Other respondents noted that employers should provide paid time off for farmworkers to get the flu vaccine as well as having access to extended clinic hours in order to address farmworkers' concerns about time constraints.

Respondents also ranked **the top types of resources that organizations need about the flu vaccine.**

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

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

- Education on how the influenza virus acts in the body
- Benefits of the flu vaccine
- Difference between the symptoms of COVID-19 and the flu
- How to respond to farmworkers' frequently asked questions and common concerns



# NCFH

National Center for Farmworker Health, Inc.

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*“No pueden perder días de trabajo, se sienten inseguros de no ir a trabajar y van a trabajar aun estando enfermos porque si no lo hacen no les alcance para cubrir sus gastos.” – Participante de la encuesta*

*“They can't lose days of work, they feel insecure about missing work and they even go when they are sick because if they do not, they would not be able to cover their expenses.”  
– Poll respondent*

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## Farmworker COVID-19 Community Assessments (FCCAs)

Over the past year, NCFH collected surveys from 2,504 farmworkers across 10 communities as part of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the FCCAs. The community reports for Atlantic and Cumberland counties in New Jersey and the Yakima County, Washington will be released over the next couple of weeks along with an executive summary of data from the five communities in Phase 2. The FCCA project will launch Phase 3 in 2023.

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



## Media & Research

### Media Articles

[Coronavirus Stimulus Checks To Farm Workers: USDA Selects 15 Organizations To Administer FFWR Program](#)

Value Walk, October 10, 2022

[\\$3.7M NIH Grant to Fund Study of Structural Racism, Pandemic Effects on Farmworkers](#)

Maryland Today, October 19, 2022

[Vt.'s housing health & safety system didn't protect farmworkers, so they created their own program](#)

Connecticut Public Radio, October 31, 2022

[DOL watchdog: OSHA 'did not sufficiently protect' workers from COVID-19 pandemic risks](#)

Midwest Center, November 2, 2022

[COVID-19 Working Paper: Migration, Local Mobility, and the Spread of COVID-19 in Rural America](#)

USDA, Economic Research Service, November 2022

### Research Articles

[Essential agriculture, sacrificial labor, and the COVID-19 pandemic in the US South](#)

Journal of Agrarian Change, October 24, 2022

This paper is a commentary on how the political and economic environment of the pandemic exacerbated working conditions for farmworkers in the south, with a focus on H-2A workers in Georgia. The author argues that the U.S. agricultural system is based on racial capitalism and devaluing laborers.

[“We left the crop there lying in the field”: Agricultural worker experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic in a rural US-Mexico border region](#)

Journal of Rural Studies, October 12, 2022

This study was conducted along the US-Mexico border in Imperial County, California. The objective of this study was to understand farmworker's experiences during the pandemic. Findings suggest that farmworkers faced significant economic and mental health impacts from work stoppages, stress, contracting COVID-19, as well as other factors.

[Characteristics Associated With a Previous COVID-19 Diagnosis, Vaccine Uptake, and Intention to Be Vaccinated Among Essential Workers in the US Household Pulse Survey](#)  
American Journal of Public Health, October 12, 2022

This study was conducted from May to July 2021 among essential worker groups across the United States. Results found that workers in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting had the lowest vaccination rates at 67.5% among these essential worker groups surveyed, and those without health insurance were much less likely to be vaccinated.

[Digital Inclusion for Farmworkers in a Pandemic: The North Carolina Farmworker Health Program Internet Connectivity Project, 2020–2021](#)

American Journal of Public Health, October 12, 2022

Abstract: “The North Carolina Farmworker Health Program (NCFHP) implemented an emergency program in response to North Carolina migrant and seasonal farmworkers’ urgent need for Internet access for health information, family connections, and telehealth services during COVID-19 isolation and quarantine. This article describes the NCFHP Internet Connectivity Project implementation and evaluation from June 2020 to December 2021. The project placed 448 devices across the state and provided Internet access to more than 3,184 farmworkers during the 2021 peak farming season.”



**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.