

Changing Crop Worker Characteristics: Preliminary Findings from the National Agricultural Workers Survey, 1989-2014

Presented at UC Davis Law School's California Agriculture: Water, Labor, and Immigration Conference, April 2016, Davis, CA

This presentation provided information on changing trends in the demographic and employment characteristics of crop workers from the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS). Between 1989 and 2014, the crop labor force in both California and nationally aged an average of five years and became more settled, with the share of both California and U.S. workers who were migrant decreasing by about one-quarter. Crop workers became more experienced, with the average number of years doing U.S. farm work increasing from 11 to 16 years in California and 10 to 14 years nationally, and the average number of years working for the current farm employer increasing by two years in both California and nationally. Between 2000 and 2014, the crop labor force became increasingly comprised of workers with children (from 49% to 63% in California and 47% to 57% nationally). The share of workers who were foreign-born newcomers declined sharply, comprising just two percent of California crop workers and one percent of U.S. crop workers in 2014.