

Pesticide Laws and Michigan's Migrant Farmworkers: Are They Protected?

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ABSTRACT

Until very recently, little attention has been paid to the occupational safety of the huge migrant and seasonal workforce which provides our nation with fruits and vegetables. This paper describes the new Worker Protection Standards, federal regulations put into effect in 1995, which are intended to provide increased measures of safety to farmworkers against pesticide poisoning on the job. Specifically, the Worker Protection Standards mandates employers to provide pesticide safety training. This paper explores the complex issues surrounding state implementation of these federal pesticide laws, and how that interaction works in Michigan. Finally, this paper looks at what is known and what is not known about the condition of the farmworker population in Michigan while focusing on the dearth of information on the occupational injury and illness rates of farmworkers.