

Pesticide Safety Knowledge among Michigan Migrant Farmworkers

Ann V. Millard, Isidore Flores, Nancy Ojeda-Macias, Laurie Medina, Lawrence Olsen, Sandy Perry

Working Paper No. 55

May 2004

ABSTRACT

A survey of residents of farm labor camps in Michigan shows that they bring different kinds of knowledge to bear on issues of pesticide safety. A survey of 188 migrant agricultural workers shows that those who are the most knowledgeable are specialists in farm work, favor Spanish over English, and participate in out-of-state migration to jobs in Florida and Texas. Those who know less about pesticide safety had worked outside agriculture as well as on farms in Michigan. Education and gender were not related to knowledge of pesticide safety, but they were dimensions of variation in different parts of the migrant stream. Statistical analysis and ethnographic information suggest that both formal and practical knowledge create the differences among workers in their levels of knowledge of pesticide safety.