



WORKING WITH AGRICULTURAL STAKEHOLDERS TO UNDERSTAND AND ADDRESS LABOR CHALLENGES

500+

participants at Michigan-based Extension farm labor presentations.

\$1.4 MILLION

in grant funding to support agri-food system labor research.

PRIORITY

A R E A S

Michigan State University (MSU) and MSU Extension work together to help Michigan's agriculture industry strengthen the state's agricultural workforce by:

- Finding solutions to workforce shortages.
- Investigating the causes of rising labor costs.
- Understanding factors that incentivize employee commitment to agricultural work.
- Identifying policy solutions to address labor challenges for employers and employees.

IMPACTS



5,000

participants at national agricultural labor presentations.



55

media articles covering MSU Extension labor research.

“ *Wanted to let you know that we will be utilizing your work as part of our [Capitol] Hill efforts around labor. Can't thank you enough for all your work. Hoping we can gain some traction, maybe even momentum!* ”

• *agricultural industry stakeholder*

For additional information, contact:
Zachariah Rutledge, rutled83@msu.edu



MSU Extension specialist Zachariah Rutledge meets with U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack.

MSU EXTENSION SPECIALIST MEETS WITH U.S. SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE TO DISCUSS LABOR ISSUES

MSU Extension met with the United States Secretary of Agriculture during the 2023 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Outlook Forum. Approximately 5,000 people attended in person and online. MSU Extension provided information about the extent to which labor shortages are prevalent throughout U.S. agriculture, as well as the implications of not finding solutions to the problem. The U.S. Secretary of Agriculture asked MSU Extension to provide opinions about proposed farm labor legislation that would make changes to the minimum wages paid to H-2A visa agricultural guest workers and legalize undocumented farm workers. Highlights of the meeting can be found at <https://vegetablegrowersnews.com/news/31433>.

“ Thank you for joining the panel earlier this year because it really helped to contribute to our thinking on the [USDA farm labor pilot] program! ”

• government staff member

MSU EXTENSION HOLDS FIRST FARM LABOR CONFERENCES

MSU Extension held its first annual farm labor conference in 2023 with 90 people attending in person free of charge. The conference featured a dozen local and national farm labor experts from academia, industry and government to discuss the topic “Understanding and Addressing Agricultural Labor Challenges in the United States.” The conference hosted the director of Michigan’s Department of Agriculture and Rural Development as well as national advocacy groups representing employer and employee viewpoints. Similar conferences are planned for 2024 and 2025. The conference report can be found at <https://ageconsearch.umn.edu/record/342307?ln=en&v=pdf>.

MSU EXTENSION EDUCATORS ORGANIZE LABOR SESSIONS AT GREAT LAKES EXPO

MSU Extension organized a labor session at the 2023 Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable, and Farm Market Expo (GLEXP) and Michigan Greenhouse Growers Expo, with the goal of providing local stakeholders with timely information about addressing labor challenges in the region. Panelists included the U.S. Department of Labor’s Wage and Hour Division, the National Council of Agricultural Employers, industry stakeholders and experts from academic institutions. Conversations focused on the rising costs of labor, the methodology used for calculating minimum wages for the H-2A visa program, and policy options to address labor shortages in U.S. agriculture.

“ We are pleased that you are joining this meeting as a speaker of the Michigan State University team. Thank you for your time and expertise presenting for this group. ”

• agricultural industry stakeholder