Hispanic workers in the U.S. dairy industry: A professional inside view

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Hispanic worker contributions depend on two variables:

- Size of Farm
- Region of the country
Key points

• Hispanic dairy workers tend to work on the larger more modern dairies

• Their influence has been greater in the South and West. In the last 17 years the influence has grown dramatically in the Midwest and Northeast
Some good stats to reflect around immigrant labor

• More than half of dairy workers are immigrants, according to a 2015 industry-sponsored study, with farms that employ immigrant labor producing 79 percent of the nation’s milk.

• Dairy farms employed an estimated 150,418 workers in 2013. An estimated 76,968 of those are immigrants.
  - It is estimated that U.S. dairy farms employed an average of about 5.1 workers, with 2.6 being immigrants and 2.5 domestic.

Some good stats to reflect around immigrant labor

- Eliminating immigrant labor on dairy farms would reduce U.S. economic output by $32.1 billion and reduce employment by 208,208 jobs.
  - Approximately 64 percent of the losses noted above would occur in input supply sectors and services provided to U.S. dairy farms

*The Economic Impacts of Immigrant Labor on U.S. Dairy Farms. Flynn Adcock, David Anderson, and Parr Rosson
Eliminating immigrant labor would reduce:

- U.S. dairy herd by 2.1 million cows
- Milk production by 48.4 billion pounds
- Number of farms by 7,011
- Retail milk prices would increase by an estimated 90.4 percent

The new Agricultural Guest Worker Act

- A guest worker program that would allow up to an additional 500,000 non-residents to work year round on American farms and ranchers.
- The Ag Act would replace the H-2A program, which is another guest worker program proven impractical for dairy farms because it only offers 9-month visas.
- Details of the new H-2C program are still being worked out.

http://docs.house.gov/meetings/JU/JU00/20171004/106479/BILLS-115pih-HR___theAgriculturalGuestworkerAct.pdf
Let’s talk about employee management
How do I get people to do their job with minimum oversight?
Dairy labor development and training
(K + A) x Att = V

(Knowledge + Ability) x Attitude = Value

• Personal change
• Energy transfer… tired of this statement? I am…
• Discourage staff… you lost the best of the person
• Do not assume it will happen .. Like the lights in your house
• Methodical approach to training
• Do things or do things that are important
“Dialogue is the basic unit of work in an organization.”

– Ram Charan

Conquering a Culture of Indecision

Overcoming the Language Barrier
Milking procedures
Procedimientos de ordeño

Iodine pre-dip
Aplique el desinfectante de yodo

Fore Strip
Pre-ordeño (despunte)

Wipe dry
Clean teat ends
Limpie y seque
Limpie la punta de las tetas

Attach and adjust machines
Pegue y ajuste las maquinas

Post dip
Sellante y/o yodo de salida

Después de cada paso siempre vuelva a la primera vaca
After every step always go back to the first cow.
The Dairy Team Foundation

We should have our priorities straight: first, cows; second, human resources; and third, management.

Can your employees count on you?

Your cows depend on your employees

You depend on your cows.
Developing cross-culture understanding

• All humans have purposes (for), concerns (against) and circumstances (facts)

• When people perceive you are unaware of\or opposed to their purposes, concerns and circumstances they resist, producing waste

• When people perceive you are aware of their purposes, concerns and circumstances they communicate and collaborate, producing value
Job activities performed as reported by workers*

*N = 204-205 workers

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Job activities performed as reported by employers*

It is all about education and performance

- Have you and your dairy adviser really observed what is happening on your farm?
- Likewise, have you addressed those issues correctly and promptly?

Why? Before How?
Performance vs. training

- While farm owners and managers place all responsibility on human resources available to achieve higher productivity and performance of the dairy farm,
- The main thrust of the dairy business – animal handling, milk quality and milking efficiency is held by a staff that has received little or no training to perform the various tasks within their job
When employees cannot do what is asked of them or what is expected, it is usually because:

- They do not know how to do the job properly because they have not been given training for effective implementation
- They do not understand why they have to do certain tasks
- They think they are doing well, but receive no feedback to confirm this
- They face obstacles beyond their means
- They do not think that new standard procedures work and have no explanation for change
Put your expectations in writing

• The point is to reduce uncertainty
  – Job Descriptions: This is your job
  – Protocols/SOPs: This is how you do your job
  – Policies/Rules: You need to follow them, you need to enforce them

• A direct conflict between what you say in one situation and what you say in another (lying, withholding information) can create lost of conflict
Accountability is important

• Follow through and follow-up with what you say you’re going to do… be consistent and predictable.
  - Milking Routine: Correct ‘procedural drift’ as soon as you see it starting
  - Cleaning Stalls/Pens: Walk through pens to check if stalls are clean and follow up with employee
  - Parlor/Maternity Boards and Sheets: Leave a quick note to acknowledge that you’re checking this info

• Hold everyone responsible for doing their work… start with yourself
To share knowledge and experiences to promote good communication with employees in the dairy, consider the following ideas:

• Fabian’s top 10 ideas to consider:
Top 10 ideas to consider:

1. Once you have hired a new employee, offer them induction: show the property, introduce them to other employees and answer any questions about the rules at the farm. Review the responsibilities verbally and in writing. Have them translated if necessary.

2. Use different forms of communication. Remember that reading abilities can be a challenge, too. Include messages, photos, posters, videos, etc. Be creative!
Top 10 ideas to consider:

8. When possible, show them the impact of the proper performance on the overall productivity (milk production, SCC, PI, animal health, etc.)

9. Ask their opinion. Nobody wants to be the last to know about a plan or idea. Include employees. Give them a sense of value

10. Say “thank you.” You expect a good job from your employees, but when they go that extra mile, show them your appreciation

Most milk producers are good leaders that understand the importance of human resources.

For others, this is one of the most difficult tasks when managing their dairy business.

Anyone who wants to improve in this aspect can, as long as their priorities are right (cows, human resources and management).
Questions

Thank you.