



Agricultural Labor & Immigration Reform

SHOULD WE SECURE OUR BORDERS OR SECURE OUR FOOD SUPPLY?



Las Cruces High School FFA
1750 El Paseo Rd, Las Cruces, NM 88001
(575) 527-9400



NEW MEXICO STATE CONTEST

MAY | 30th | 2023



ISSUE SUMMARY

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- **1866 - US Constitution, Amendment XIV, Section 1** “All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside.”
- **1942 - Bracero Program** A diplomatic accord between Mexico and the United States, allowed for millions of Mexican men to work legally in the US on short-term labor contracts, as in effect from 1942 to 1964 (Library of Congress, 2019).
- **1952 - The Immigration and Nationality Act** Established the H-2 program to allow temporary foreign workers (Library of Congress, 2019).
- **1986- Immigration Reform and Control Act** This established an employment verification system, allowed for civil and criminal penalties to employers who knowingly hired undocumented immigrants or to individuals authorized to work in the U.S. This split the H-2 visa program into the H-2A and H-2B visas for agriculture and non-agricultural seasonal work (Nepal, 2021).
- **1990- Immigration Act of 1990** Increased the annual limits on the total level of immigration to the United States would be increased to 700,000 (Immigration Act of 1990).
- **1996 - Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act** Required the Social Security Administration and US Citizenship and Immigration Services to create an employment verification program (E-Verify, 2018).
- **2022 - Final Rule:** Temporary Agricultural Employment of H-2A Non Immigrants- This was the final rule to the H-2A program which grants immigrants protections against abuse and fraud while modernizing the H2A (Final Rule: Temporary Agricultural Employment of H-2A Nonimmigrants, 2022)



LIST OF COURSES

Agriculture Power and Machinery:

The course includes farm equipment maintenance; including the importance of mechanization in reducing labor needs in agriculture. (49 students)

Metal Fabrication/Agricultural Structures and Construction:

Topics included the importance of worker safety. (83 students)

Introduction to Agriculture Education:

The local, national, and global scope of agriculture in society is covered in this course. It includes development of leadership and communication skills important to Ag Issues contest.(99 students)

Animal Science:

Course includes information on labor safety around livestock. (59 students)

Veterinary Science:

Course imparts basic information about employment as a Veterinary Technician and discussion about the importance of the livestock industry to economy. (16 students)



WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE ISSUE?

Our country faces the choice of importing labor or importing food. Labor shortages are one of the biggest problems U.S. farmers face; a problem intertwined with a need for immigration reform. An estimated 70% of farm workers are foreign born (National Center For Farmworker Health, 2022).

The main program for farmers to legally employ foreign workers is called the H-2A visa. Unfortunately, the H-2A program is expensive to use, has many regulations, and only serves seasonal labor needs. The complicated regulations push many farmers to hire labor contractors. This creates an extra expense, and some of the worst labor abuses have been by these contractors (Soriano, 2020).

American agriculture, food, and related industries contributes about \$1.2 trillion to American GDP (Kassel & Martin, 2023). In Dona Ana County alone, agriculture creates \$375 million in cash receipts each year (Cook, 2023). In addition to the economic contribution, the U.S. food supply is one of the safest in the world (Califf, 2023). This is made possible by the laborers who help harvest crops and take care of livestock. Estimates vary, but more than 40% of these farm workers do not have legal authorization (Castillo and Simnitt, 2023).

Unfortunately, border towns like Las Cruces see first-hand the safety risks of an unsecured border. Many New Mexico ranchers deal with illegal crossings across their ranches. This creates safety issues, cut fences, and broken water tanks.

Immigration is a complex issue with many different aspects and viewpoints. The complexity makes passing immigration reform politically difficult, but it's critical to find a solution that works for our country, our farmers, and the farmworkers who work hard to help feed our country.



WHAT IS THE H-2A VISA PROGRAM?

The H-2A visa is a temporary visa, it only allows immigrants to stay for a few months at a time and generally not more than a year. (U.S Department of Labor, 2022) This means both immigrants and their employers have to apply for the H2-A each year. The majority of H-2A workers are employed in fruits & nuts production and vegetables production (Catillo, Simnitt, Astill, and Minor, 2021).



WHO IS INVOLVED IN THIS ISSUE?

Agricultural Producers:

Farmers and Ranchers do not have enough help. New Mexico has over 40,000,000 acres of farmland and over 10,000 cattle ranches (USDA/NASS 2022 State Agriculture Overview for New Mexico, 2023)

Border Security:

Customs & Border Patrol (CBP) and the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement are both under the Department of Homeland Security. The CBP patrols the border to prevent illegal entries, while ICE inspects violations. The El Paso Border Patrol Sector has 2,200 agents patrolling the U.S. Mexico Border. U.S. Customs provided 5,849 total jobs at the Santa Teresa Port of Entry in 2020. (El Paso Sector Texas, 2023)

U.S. Department of Labor:

The Office of Foreign Labor Certification is in charge of administering the H-2A program (U.S. Department of Labor, 2023).

U.S. Department of Agriculture:

Offers support for farmers to navigate the H-2A application process, researches farm labor issues, and is administering a grant program to improve H-2A housing (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2023).

New Mexico Educators:

Teachers oftentimes have undocumented students or students whose parents are undocumented. An estimated 98,000 undocumented students graduate from high schools in the U.S. every year (Zong & Batalova, 2023). Teachers often have a front-line view of the challenges our society is facing.

Labor Contractors:

Labor Contractors help find workers for farmers and ranchers. Only a person holding a valid certificate issued by the Secretary of Labor may engage in farm labor contracting activities. As of right now there are 14,611 certified Farm Labor Contractors nationwide. (U.S. Department of Labor, 2023)

Farm Laborers:

U.S. agriculture needs almost 2 million farm workers, but approximately 50 percent are here illegally. Of the U.S. workers referred to farmers by state employment agencies, only 5 percent stayed through the season (O'Brien, Kruse, and Kruse, 2014). The hard working people feeding our country deserve a seat at the table.



WHAT ARE SOME MISPERCEPTIONS AROUND THE ISSUE?

- Some people think all foreign farm workers are undocumented. But, approximately 10% of *all* U.S. agricultural workers are employed with H-2A visas (Castillo, Martin, and Rutledge, 2022). Participation in the program is increasing.
- People say that immigrant workers bring drugs over as part of their payment to smugglers, in 2022 the Border Patrol seized 14,104 pounds of fentanyl at Ports of Entry, 2,200 pounds was seized from migrants (Sganga and Montoya-Galvez, 2023).
- Most immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers eventually join the workforce after entering the United States, but a portion of our immigration system is intended to bring people here expressly for work.
- Many people believe the migrants are paid low wages, but wages for H-2A workers in New Mexico are \$15.62 for the rate set by U.S. Department of Labor, which is the "Adverse Effect Wage Rate" (US Dept. of Labor - FLC, 2023).



WHAT TYPES OF SOLUTIONS HAVE BEEN PROPOSED?

The current proposed solution is an act called the Farm Workforce Modernization Act. Farm Workforce Modernization Act (HR 1603) is a bipartisan bill, initially proposed in 2019. (Connecticut Department of Agriculture, 2020). The bill was developed with input from United Farm Workers, the United Farm Workers Foundation, and Farmworker Justice, along with agribusiness representatives. The goal of this bill is to create a pathway to legalization for current unauthorized agricultural workers, including an option to eventually become a lawful permanent resident. Additionally, the bill would reform and modernize the existing H-2A temporary agricultural worker visa program. Lastly, the bill would require all agricultural employers to implement a reformed "E-Verify" program, an improved system for employers to verify the identity and authorization status of their employees. (National Immigration Forum, 2019).



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FORUMS

AUDIENCE	WHERE	WHEN	NUMBER
New Mexico Chile Association	Zoom	May 4, 2023 at 4:00 pm	2
La Mesa Lions Club	La Mesa, NM	May 10, 2023 at 6:00 pm	26
Invited agricultural industry at Farnesilla	Mesilla, NM	May 11, 2023 at 5:00 pm	19
NM Farm & Livestock Bureau	Las Cruces, NM	May 12, 2023 at 10:00 am	3
New Mexico Farm Credit	Las Cruces, NM	May 15, 2023 at 8:00 am	10
Sunrise Lions Club	Las Cruces, NM	May 18, 2023 at 7:00 am	18
NMSU Ag Science Center Directors	Las Cruces, NM	May 22, 2023 at 2:15 pm	15
New Mexico Dept of Agriculture	Las Cruces, NM	May 22, 2023 at 4:30 pm	12
American Legion, Post 10	Las Cruces, NM	May 22, 2023 at 6:00 pm	5
Casa de Peregrino	Las Cruces, NM	May 23, 2023 at 4:00 pm	2
NMSU C.A.M.P.	Las Cruces, NM	May 24, 2023 at 8:00 am	5
KTAL Community Radio	Southern NM	May 24, 2023 at 5:00 pm	7,000 live 7,000 replay
Congressman Vasquez	Zoom	May 25, 2023 at 7:30 am	3

INTERVIEWS

- Omar Terrones & Willie Joe Koenig - Produce farmers
- Debbie Hughes, Rancher in Eddy County, New Mexico
- Erica Valdez, Rancher in Hidalgo County, New Mexico
- Michael Valenzuela - NM Department of Workforce Solutions
- Lorenzo Castillo, H2-A Work Crew Supervisor Adams Produce
- Leah Romero, Las Cruces Sun News, interviewed our team about our issue and about the FFA Ag Issues contest in general

I never realized that it's not just people coming from border cities, and that they have jobs in Mexico, but come here because of how much money they can make in a short time.
Team Member
Yamili Terrones





New Mexico Chile Association

PO Box 3411
T or C, NM 87901



May 12, 2023

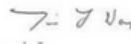
Dear Honorable Judges,

The Las Cruces FFA team presented their Agricultural Issues presentation on Agricultural Labor Issues specifically federal migrant worker programs such as the H-2A to the leadership of the New Mexico Chile Association on May 4th via zoom. The Las Cruces FFA members did an exceptional job in highlighting all aspects of the current immigration issue, how they impact New Mexico agriculture, and the political climate surrounding the topic.

The New Mexico Chile Association has a thorough understanding of federal migrant worker programs and was impressed with the student's strong research ability and acknowledgment for the need of these migrant worker programs. Each member exhibited their skillset in presenting complex federal issues that are impacting New Mexicans daily and were able to formulate discussions of different ideologies on immigration while citing state and federal laws to make their arguments.

The New Mexico Chile Association greatly appreciated the opportunity to hear the presentation and extends our highest remarks to the Las Cruces FFA team for their dedication to this critical issue impacting our industry. We look forward to hearing of their success in this event and their futures.

Sincerely,



Travis Day
Executive Director
New Mexico Chile Association



We learned about the impact the H-2A has on small operations. Mr. Duggens quit farming because of the regulatory hassles of the program and because he couldn't find local workers.

Team Member Jayden Miller



La Mesa Lions Club

Friday, May 26, 2023

Dear Honorable Judges:

The La Union Lions Club was delighted to host the Las Cruces High School FFA Ag Issues Team and their presentation about agricultural labor, immigration reform, and border security. The 7 students attended our meeting on May 10th at 6:30 pm, which was held in the iconic Chope's Café in La Union, New Mexico. The kids presented to an audience of 26 people.

At the end of their skit, one member stated, "I just finished a two day meeting with local government representatives from the Borderplex region of Las Cruces, El Paso, and Ciudad Juarez. I learned more in 15 minutes listening to this group."

We understand this was the group's first live forum, but they did an exceptional job. We have members from lots of different backgrounds and political ideologies, but we were all so impressed by the thoroughness of their presentation. As the kids stated, "it's a complex issue" but they managed to explain many of the issues in a very succinct and professional manner.

We wish these kids all the best. The issue they are discussing is nationally important, but it is locally critical. We were really proud of these kids for having the courage to discuss this sensitive topic in a public forum.

Sincerely,



Greg Groves, President
La Mesa Lions Club



FARMESILLA AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY INVITATIONAL FORUM

MAY 11, 2023



This is *THE* issue facing our borrowers today.

Warren Russell, Ag New Mexico Farm Credit

The amount of competition that American agriculture faces is intense. Labor is an incredibly important aspect of staying competitive on the global agricultural market.

Edward Avalos, Former Undersecretary USDA-Ag Marketing Service



I hadn't thought about how this issue affects my dad since farm labor is so difficult to obtain.

Team Member Yamili Terrones



THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING!

LAS CRUCES HIGH SCHOOL FFA - AG ISSUES FORUM
THURSDAY, MAY 11, 2023 AT 5:00 PM
AT FARMESILLA FARM STORE

NAME	SIGNATURE	ORGANIZATION
Don Duggins		NMSU - NEAB
Clay Lively		NNOA
Tony Miller		Texas Farm Credit
Berkent Anderson		Lower River Ranch
Lori Anderson		Yamaha
Susana Burke		Supporter
Mary Ervinger		Lens
Johnny McLaughlin		Supporter
Carol Maly		Supporter
Charles Romin		NMSU
Madhav Regmi		NMSU
Tamara Herold		Supporter
Johnny McKeith		Supporter
Edward Avalos		Retired

NAME	SIGNATURE	ORGANIZATION
Teresa Boberg		Supporter
John Boberg		Supporter
Angie DeRuyter		Supporter
Brian Head		Supporter
Joselyn Marquez		Supporter
Warren Russell		ABNM Farm Credit
Brennan Vaz		Ag NM Farm Credit
Elida Miller		NM FFA State Officer
Brian McLaughlin		SUPPORTER
Chris Terence		Carters
Danille Poirier		Pioneer Seeds
Wilke Poirier		Farm Credit
Mike Poirier		Young Poirier LLC
Mike Poirier		Supporter



NEW MEXICO FARM & LIVESTOCK BUREAU

MAY 12, 2023



I learned how many workers are coming across the border every day to work in the United States. This was something that wasn't covered in our reading and an example of why talking to people in the agricultural industry is an important part of research.
Team Member Cady McVaugh



New Mexico Farm & Livestock Bureau

2220 N. Telshor Blvd • Las Cruces, New Mexico 88011 • (575) 532-4700 • Fax (575) 532-4710

May 12, 2023

Las Cruces FFA
Ag Issues Team

Thank you for coming and presenting on your topic of immigration and labor needs for New Mexico agriculture. We appreciate the time you have taken to research an important issue facing our industry.

Good luck as you compete at the state level.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Foster
Elizabeth Foster
CEO
New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau



NEW MEXICO FARM CREDIT

MAY 15, 2023

May 15, 2023

This forum really opened my eyes to how much even a bank can be affected by the farm labor issue.
Team Member Paisley Anderson

Dear Honorable Judges:

It was our pleasure to host the Las Cruces High School FFA Ag Issues Team and their presentation about agricultural labor, immigration reform, and border security. The team presented to 10 of our employees on May 15th at 8:30 am at our Las Cruces office.

- Farm Credit of New Mexico is an agricultural lender with a portfolio that covers all aspects of agriculture within the state on New Mexico.
- The issue of agricultural labor is one of major concern and affects all of the industry no matter what product is being produce. We see every day the struggles with our customers no being able to hire labor and how it impacts their operations day in and day out.
- Great presentation on such a important topic facing our agricultural industry. Remember the importance of food security and what that encompasses.

Sincerely,

Megan Schuller
Megan Schuller
Senior Relationship Officer
Farm Credit of New Mexico

When we import food from other countries, this food is coming from places with lower quality standards than what we have in the US. I hadn't thought about how this issue affects our food safety.
Team Member Aubri Kehoe



Albuquerque Tel: 800.451.5997 Clovis Tel: 800.451.5997 Las Cruces Tel: 800.755.6432 Roswell Tel: 800.451.5974 Tucuman Tel: 800.824.6403



We see every day the struggles with our customers not being able to hire labor and how it impacts their operations day in and day out.
Megan Schuller, Senior Relationship Officer, Farm Credit of New Mexico



SUNRISE LIONS CLUB

MAY 18, 2023



This group asked questions about the role of labor contractors that made us reconsider the impact of regulations.
Team Member Zia Miller



May 26, 2023

The Las Cruces Sunrise Lions Club was proud to host the Las Cruces High School FFA Ag Issues Team at our 7 am, May 18, 2023 meeting at the Las Cruces Mission Inn. Their presentation was outstanding and brought a better understanding of agricultural labor, immigration and border security to the 18 club members and guests present.

The presentation was logical, informative, and well organized. The audience consisted of local business men, retired NMSU ag faculty, realtors, teachers, bankers, and retired military. Most asked questions of the team and were impressed with the team's depth of knowledge and understanding of the complicated and timely topic.

Our membership wish the team much success in their endeavors not only with the team activities but with their chosen career paths.

Sincerely,

Tim Ross
Tim Ross, Secretary
Las Cruces Sunrise Lions Club





AMERICA LEGION AUXILLARY MAY 22, 2023



ALA Auxiliary Unit 10 @ Post 10, 1185 E. Madrid Avenue, Las Cruces, NM 88001
Mailing Address: ALA Auxiliary Unit 10, P.O. Box 2331, Mesilla Park, NM 88047

May 22, 2023

Dear Honorable Judges:

The American Legion Auxiliary Unit 10 hosted the Las Cruces High School FFA Ag Issues Team at Post 10 today at 6:00 p.m. Their presentation about agricultural labor, immigration reform, and border security really peaked people's interest and made them really see various sides of the issues they presented. The attendees were genuinely interested in the topics and asked many questions as well as making comments from their own experiences.

It appeared that the students did an extensive amount of research on the topics. They also responded very well to all the questions that were asked of the group and the comments that were made by them. If they did not know the answer fully, they said they were going to do additional research.

The students from the Las Cruces High School FFA made a great presentation. It was good for them to experience the perspectives of our group. It is our understanding they have presented to other groups which has also helped them perfect their presentation. We wish them the best of luck. It was a great pleasure to have them at The American Legion Post 10.

Sincerely,

Patricia Torres

Patricia Torres
Auxiliary President



Our presentation about immigration was met with very mixed emotions from war veterans.
Team Member Jayden Miller



CASA DE PEREGRINO MAY 22, 2023



Casa de Peregrinos
Food for today...hope for tomorrow

May 24, 2023

Dear Honorable Judges:

It was our pleasure to participate in the online forum with the Las Cruces High School FFA Ag Issues Team and their presentation about agricultural labor, immigration reform, and border security. The Las Cruces FFA team presented to Casa de Peregrinos on May 23, 2023, at 4:00 pm, with 2 of our staff in attendance. Our team members were Teresa Sanchez, Volunteer Coordinator, Bianca Menchaca, Development coordinator, and our Executive Director Lorenzo Alba.

Our executive director serves on the Governor's Food, Hunger, Water, and Ag Policy Workgroup, and has since the beginning of the pandemic. He is also an advocate for ag policy as it pertains to food insecurity and food systems in our state. He has spoken publicly about these issues alongside NMDA Secretary Jeff Witte.

There are more than forty counties that sit along the Mexican border with the United States. Because of those counties, the poverty level in the U.S. increases by nearly fifty percent. This issue itself is definitely a reason to begin looking at labor issues in agriculture and definitely immigration reform. Border security is a much larger issue that must be addressed through different departments on a federal and state level. It affects our economy, safety, as well as community development.

Taking on such a complex issue with so many dimensions and opinions is very commendable. You have done your research and understand the many aspects of what is needed and how it impacts our economy, county, citizens, migrants, and our country. You presented with confidence, clarity, and professionalism. Ag policy should always be at the forefront in a state like ours.

Sincerely,

Lorenzo Alba

Lorenzo Alba
Executive Director
Casa De Peregrinos

Casa de Peregrinos, Inc. - 9
EN: 85-0312057 - Em



Taking on such a complex issue with so many dimensions and opinions is commendable. You have done your research and understand the many aspects of what is needed and how it impacts our economy, county, citizens, migrants, and our country.
Lorenzo Alba, Executive Director



NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE MAY 22, 2023

Their passion and professionalism shined through their presentation on such difficult and complex issues. Agriculture has a bright future with these students!

Anthony J. Parra,
Deputy Director/Secretary
New Mexico Department of Agriculture



New Mexico Department of Agriculture

Office of the Director/Secretary
MSC 3189
New Mexico State University
P.O. Box 30005
Las Cruces, NM 88003-8005
575-646-3007

May 26, 2023

Dear Honorable Judges:

New Mexico Department of Agriculture hosted the Las Cruces High School FFA Ag Issues Team and their presentation about agricultural labor, immigration reform, and border security on May 22, 2023 at 4:00 pm, with twelve NMDA staff in attendance. The representation from the agency was varied across several divisions in areas such as Marketing, Governmental Affairs, Regulatory, Biosecurity, Food Safety, Human Resources, and Policy.

As the state's department of agriculture, we encounter immigration issues on a regular basis, whether being related to immigration and labor shortages or impacts on food safety in relation to undocumented immigrants working in production and processing. These issues have an impact on the agriculture industry in New Mexico and across our nation.

The team from Las Cruces High School FFA presented the issues to NMDA in an organized and professional manner. Their passion and professionalism shined through their presentation on such difficult and complex issues. Agriculture has a bright future with these students!

Sincerely,

Anthony J. Parra
Anthony J. Parra
Deputy Director/Secretary

AJP/hvrr



This forum had the toughest, most profound, questions for each and every one of us. It made me think more about how many people and roles are involved in this controversial issue. Before this contest I had absolutely no idea about the extent of this issue's impacts.
Team Member Brennan Castillo



NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY AG SCIENCE CENTERS

MAY 22, 2023



College of Agricultural, Consumer
and Environmental Sciences
Agricultural Experiment Station
Office of the Associate Dean and Director
MSC 3BF
New Mexico State University
P.O. Box 30003
Las Cruces, NM 88003-8003
575-646-3125, fax: 575-646-2816

May 24, 2023

Dear Honorable Judges:

On May 22nd at 2:15 pm, the Las Cruces High School FFA Agricultural Issues team presented a skit about agricultural labor, immigration reform, and border security to our monthly meeting of NMSU Agricultural Science Center Research Directors. The meeting was held both virtually and in person, with faculty in attendance who manage farms and ranches that conduct crop, livestock, and rangeland research throughout New Mexico. Because of their role in supporting these farms and livestock research centers, the Research Directors of the Agricultural Science Centers are keenly aware of the shortage of agricultural labor. We had 13 faculty and staff from the Agricultural Experiment Station attend the meeting and 2 college of ACES administrators.

The Las Cruces High School FFA members did a great job presenting the complex issues that surround agricultural labor and immigration issues. They thoughtfully described the multiple sides of the problem in a creative way, giving voice and perspective to the different stakeholders through their skit while communicating the complex interconnections. This included perspectives from both a farm and a ranch owner, a border patrol agent, a farm worker, a student/citizen and a legislator. We appreciated their consideration of possible solutions and the pros and cons of implementing them. We were very impressed by their presentation and they were well prepared to answer our questions.

We wish them the best of luck in their competition.

Sincerely,

Lara Prihodko

Dr. Lara Prihodko
Associate Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station

I've learned so much through this contest. I didn't think I had a big part as a bilingual kid, but I learned how important speaking Spanish is in agriculture.
Team Member Yamili Terrones



They thoughtfully described the multiple sides of the problem in a creative way, giving voice and perspective to the different stakeholders through their skit while communicating the complex interconnections.
Dr. Lara Prihodko
Associate Director Agricultural Experiment Station



NMSU COLLEGE ASSISTANCE FOR MIGRANTS PROGRAM

MAY 24, 2023

The lady who worked there told us how an 8-month pregnant mom with two little kids was planning to walk to Utah. This was absolutely heartbreaking, a mother was taking on so much, I can't imagine what all she went through. The fact that she was risking it all to make a better life for herself and her kids makes me realize how many things I take for granted.
Team Member Zia Miller

The topics presented by the Ag Issues Team are of the utmost importance to our community as we are firsthand witnesses to the struggles farmworkers face.
Martha A. Estrada,
Director of CAMP



College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP)
MSC CAMP
New Mexico State University
P.O. Box 30001
Las Cruces, NM 88003-8001

May 24, 2023

Dear Honorable Judges,

This letter is to confirm that the NMSU College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) hosted the Las Cruces High School FFA Ag Issues Team on Wednesday, May 24th at 8:00 AM at the CAMP office. NMSU CAMP serves the post-secondary educational needs of migrant and seasonal farmworkers, dairy workers, and ranch workers from across New Mexico. Our mission is to recruit, retain, and graduate farmworker students at NMSU.

The FFA team conducted their presentation in front of four CAMP staff who later provided feedback on their presentation. The topics addressed were agricultural labor, immigration reform, and border security. These topics touch on issues that CAMP students face daily. Our CAMP students' experiences and unique challenges provide us with an understanding of the problems they face in the border region, including agricultural labor, immigration reform and border security. This is why it is vital for the Ag Issues Team to continue learning and sharing different viewpoints to make their arguments stronger.

As a program, NMSU CAMP also serves as an advocate to farm working students and their families. The program partners with local agencies, non-profit organizations, and public entities to provide overall support to the farmworker community of this region. The topics presented by the Ag Issues Team are of utmost importance to our community as we are firsthand witnesses to the struggles farmworkers face.

We congratulate the Las Cruces High School FFA Ag Issues Team for the thorough research they continue to conduct and wish them the best of luck! We believe their voices need to be heard at the national level and hope they will get the opportunity to share their research on a national stage.

Thank you for your time and if there is anything we can do to support the team, please reach out to us at camp@nmsu.edu or 575.646.5081.

Sincerely,

Martha A. Estrada
Martha A. Estrada
Director

Ricardo Trejo
Ricardo Trejo
Outreach & Recruitment Coordinator

I learned that Mr. Trejo's grandfather was part of a lawsuit against Wells Fargo for their role in never paying a group of Bracero workers.
Team Member Cady McVaugh





KTAL 101.5 FM COMMUNITY RADIO

MAY 24, 2023

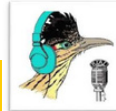
Doing any kind of live radio takes coordination and preparation, and this was an exciting project for us...it was also great radio produced entirely by LCHS students in the FFA chapter themselves. We intend to rebroadcast the program several times in the coming weeks.

**Nan Rubin,
Executive Producer**



This was my favorite forum. It was crazy that 7,000 people were listening to us talk about immigration.

Team Member Paisley Anderson



KTAL-LP 101.5 FM
121 Wyatt Drive #9
Las Cruces, NM 88005
lccommunityradio.org
LasCrucescommunityradio@gmail.com
May 24, 2023

Dear Honorable Judges:

My name is Nan Rubin and I am the Executive Producer at KTAL Radio, 101.5 FM, an all-volunteer community radio station in Las Cruces, New Mexico. We have a broadcast radius of approximately 15 miles and reach 150,000+ residents of Las Cruces, the Mesilla Valley, and the outskirts of El Paso.

When the Las Cruces High School FFA Ag Issues Team approached us about the possibility of broadcasting their skit about agricultural labor, immigration reform, and border security, we were very enthusiastic. These are critical issues here in Southern New Mexico and of great interest to our listeners, so we agreed immediately to broadcast their skit live.

The team had prepared an excellent script highlighting complex and inter-related problems, and their dialogue reflected different voices each explaining their particular perspective on these difficult questions. The research they had done on each topic was extensive, and all we had to do was help them with some minor revisions to the dialog to make it more "radio friendly".

On May 17, a week before the broadcast, the whole team came to our radio station so we could show them around the studio and prepare them for the broadcast. They were able to see the technical setup, and together they did several read-throughs of the script and recorded a short announcement that we used as an on-air promotion for the upcoming broadcast.

The original production of "Farm Labor or Border Security" was broadcast live today, May 24 at 5:00 PM MDT with all team members behind the microphones in our studio. The dialog ran for about 20 minutes, and afterwards we invited listeners to call in with their comments and questions. The estimated listenership of KTAL is roughly 6,000 over the air and 1,000 from online streaming, and we got four callers right away. The students then spent another 25 minutes responding live to the calls over the air.

It was a great success! Doing any kind of live radio takes coordination and preparation, and this was an exciting project for us. Not only did it support the KTAL mission of providing radio programming relevant to the Las Cruces community, it was also great radio produced entirely by LCHS students in the FFA chapter themselves. We intend to rebroadcast the program several times in the coming weeks.

We were extremely impressed with the excellence that the team demonstrated bringing important but complicated issues to our audience in such a creative fashion. We had a great time working with them and were totally delighted that they contacted us about sharing their effort on radio. They thoroughly enjoyed working with us as well and found it highly educational.

The LCHS FFA Ag Issues Team can be very proud of what they accomplished, and we encourage you to give them strong consideration to recognize the broad impact their project has had reaching the Las Cruces community.

Sincerely,

Nan Rubin

Nan Rubin, Executive Producer
KTAL Community Radio, Las Cruces NM



CONGRESSMAN GABE VASQUEZ

MAY 26, 2023

Wow, you all did a great job of bringing in the many different viewpoints on this issue. These are exactly the things that we discuss every day in our office.

**The Honorable Gabe Vasquez
New Mexico Representative
District 2**

GABE VASQUEZ
2nd District, New Mexico

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3102

May 26, 2023

Dear Honorable Judges:

Today, at 7:30 am, we hosted the Las Cruces High School FFA Ag Issues Team and heard their presentation about agricultural labor, immigration reform, and border security. They presented eloquently to two of our staffers that work in Congressman Vasquez's office and the Honorable Gabe Vasquez.

Congressman Gabe Vasquez chose to run for Congress to find solutions to the local problems that our District faces including those within in our rural communities. He understands the importance of hearing the diverse perspectives throughout our District. That is why he spent the first few months of his time in the district listening intently to the needs of our agricultural producers, workers, and small business owners, to find ways to add good-paying jobs and grow our economy.

In response to these important conversations, Congressman Vasquez introduced a bipartisan package of bills earlier this month that will support our local economies. One of these bills is the Bipartisan Farm Workforce Support Act introduced with Rep. Juan Ciscomani (AZ-06) which calls on the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to report to Congress the deficiencies of the H-2A visa program, paving a path to H-2A visa reform that works for New Mexico's farmers while ensuring farmworkers are paid fair wages and have adequate housing conditions, among other reforms.

Congressman Vasquez was impressed by the caliber of research and diversity of viewpoints presented during today's meeting on essential agricultural workers and the need for immigration reform and wishes them the best on their presentation!

Sincerely,

Cynthia Hull
Cynthia Hull



I am so proud of all the work our group has done. It means a lot that Congressman Vasquez and his staff were willing to take time out of their day to listen to us, it really shows how important this topic really is.

Team Member Zia Miller

