



**Identifying Barriers that Prevent Hispanic/Latino
Farmers & Ranchers in Washington State from
Participating in USDA Programs and Services**

**Rural Community Development Resources (RCDR)
Center for Latino Farmers, Yakima, WA**

“Investing in Equity to Prepare the Next Generation of American Farmers”

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Investing in Equity to Prepare the Next Generation of American Farmers

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Introduction and Summary:

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has often referred to the Spanish, Hispanic and Latino farmers and ranchers as the largest and fastest growing ethnic minority group in the nation based on data obtained from the 2002¹ and 2007 Census of Agriculture. Interestingly, based on current USDA data, Hispanic/Latino farmers & ranchers appear to have the lowest participation rate of USDA programs when one compares them to other socially disadvantaged farmer and rancher groups, and proportionately, are underrepresented on USDA boards, committees and grants allocations to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers within USDA agencies.

The Rural Community Development Resources, Center for Latino Farmers (Center) applied for a USDA Outreach and Assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (OASDFR) Competitive Grant Program – Round 2 RFA in an effort to enhance the coordination of outreach, education, and technical assistance efforts for the Socially Disadvantaged Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers in Washington State. On October 28, 2010, the Center was awarded an OASDFR grant to collect Hispanic/Latino farmer and rancher data that would identify barriers to accessing USDA services and programs. Through surveys, focus groups, workshop training sessions and individual interviews. The primary purpose of the grant is to enhance the coordination of outreach, technical assistance and education efforts to reach socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers by USDA.

The overall goal of the project was to define the barriers, whether real or perceived, on equitable participation and utilization of USDA programs and services by Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers, beginning at the local USDA service centers in Washington State. It is the intent of the research study, that the data could be used to develop recommendations to USDA that would result in a better outcome of service to the Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers and rural communities of Washington State.

A review of literature was conducted attempting to identify past studies that defined the barriers of Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers on equitable participation and utilization of USDA programs. The most recent studies that are pertinent to our study included *A Snapshot of Missouri and Nebraska Latino Farmers and Ranchers* by Bailey² from the Center for Rural Affairs. The study focused on farmer rancher demographics and current situations. The Center for Rural Affairs continued the study with an in depth report called *Barriers and Challenges faced by Latino Farmers and Ranchers - Report examines barriers to starting and sustaining a*

¹ Dougherty, E. (2005). *Hispanic Farmers Represent a Growing Sector of U.S. Agriculture*. October 13, 2005. USDA NASS. Newsroom. Retrieved from: http://www.nass.usda.gov/Newsroom/2005/10_13_2005.asp

Western Farm Press. (2005). *Hispanic farmers represent a growing sector of U.S. agriculture*, Oct. 31, 2005. Retrieved from: <http://westernfarmpress.com/hispanic-farmers-represent-growing-sector-us-agriculture>

² Baily, J. (2011). *A Snapshot of Missouri and Nebraska Latino Farmers and Ranchers*. Center for Rural Affairs. Retrieved from: <http://files.cfra.org/pdf/mo-ne-latino-farmer-report.pdf>

farm or ranch by Martinez³. The study identified barriers encountered by the Latino farmers and ranchers interviewed in the study. Recommendations to overcome these barriers were not included at this time in the report. The University of Florida conducted a national survey *Hispanic-Latino Farmers and Ranchers Project* by Swicher⁴. The study focused on identifying the research and extension needs of Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers nationally, as they are the largest and fastest growing minority group in the country. The most recent study was conducted by Jackson Lewis LLP, *USDA Independent Assessment of the Delivery of Technical and Financial Assistance, "Civil Rights Assessment" Final Report*⁵. This report was commissioned by USDA to identify barriers within USDA agencies and how they provide outreach and assistance to socially disadvantaged producers through their services.

The five project objectives in Washington State include the following: a one day Stakeholder and Partner Listening Session/Small Farm Conference; a 30-hour, five week Conservation Education series for 30 target producers; a 30-hour, five week Personal Financial Responsibility educational series for 30 target producers; a 30-hour, five week Agriculture Leadership educational series for 30 target producers; and a one day Small Farm Conference and Listening Session that included a preliminary overview of project research outcomes.

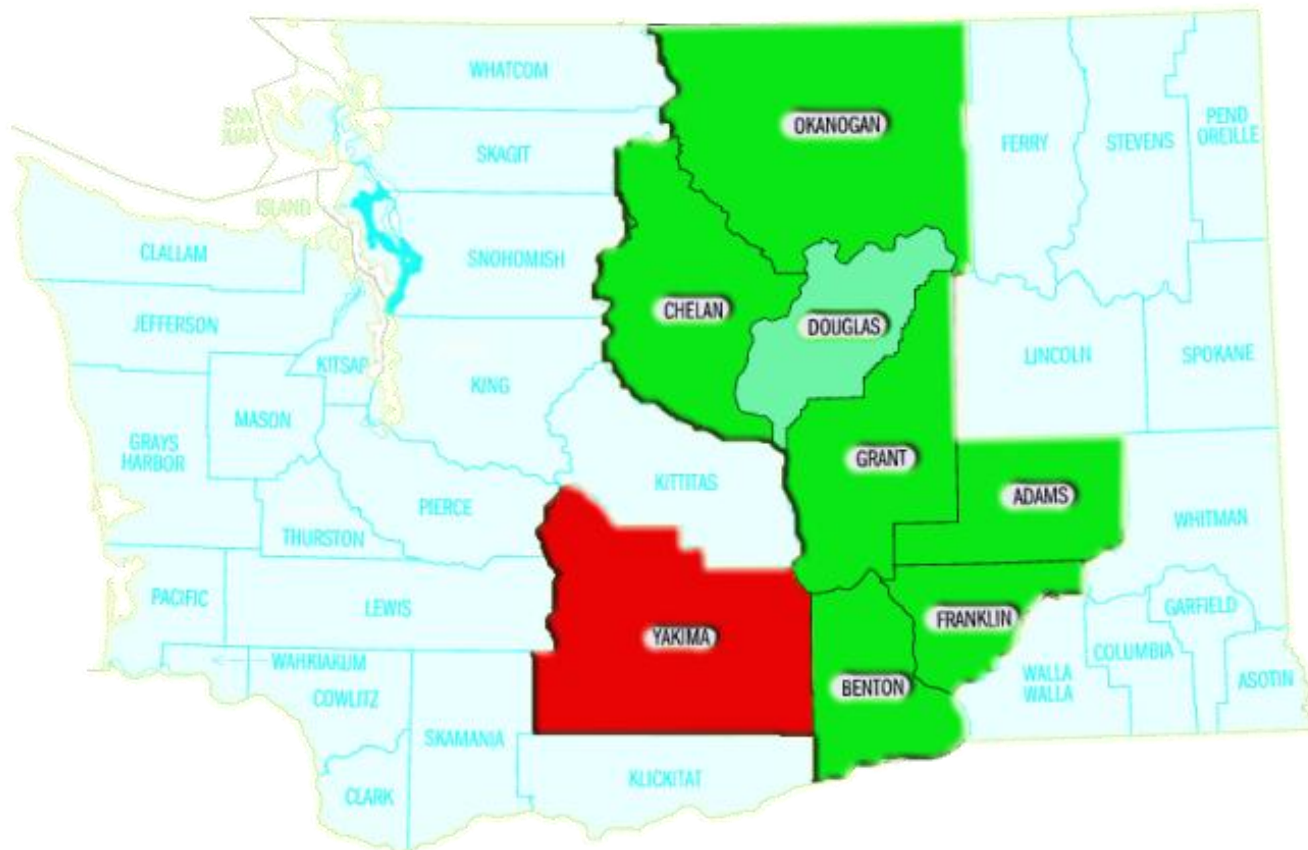
The project study target audience was identified as all USDA service providers, and the Hispanic/ Latino farmers, ranchers and farmworkers with special focus on the Mexican immigrants, and new and beginning farmers and ranchers from the following counties in Washington State: Yakima, Benton, Adams, Okanogan, Grant, Chelan, Douglas, and Franklin. The Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers targeted for this study present unique characteristics as they are an immigrant, first-generation, mono-lingual community who have settled in Washington State over the past years and have become a vibrant entity within Washington State agriculture. The mentioned counties along with the farmers and ranchers selected for the study represented, proportionately, the most current 2007 agriculture census data of Hispanic/Latino farmer and rancher county concentrations and would represent the target audience statistically.⁶ These counties also have a very strong agriculture based economy and are experiencing a great number of Hispanic/ Latino farmworkers transitioning into farm ownership.

³ Martinez, R. (2011). *Barriers and Challenges faced by Latino Farmers and Ranchers - Report examines barriers to starting and sustaining a farm or ranch*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cfra.org/newsrelease/2011/08/04/barriers-and-challenges-faced-latino-farmers-and-ranchers-report-examines-bar>

⁴ Swicher, M., Brennen, M., Shah, M., Rodriguez, J. (2007). *Hispanic-Latino Farmers and Ranchers Project*. University of Florida. Retrieved from: http://www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/ag_systems/pdfs/hispanic_full_report.pdf

⁵ Jackson Lewis. (2011). *USDA Independent Assessment of the Delivery of Technical and Financial Assistance, "Civil Rights Assessment" Final Report*. Retrieved from: http://www.usda.gov/documents/Civil_Rights_Assessment-Final_Report.pdf

⁶ USDA NASS. (2008). 2007 Census of Agriculture – County Data. Table 50. Page 448. Retrieved from: http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_2_County_Level/Washington/st53_2_050_050.pdf



Target Counties⁷

The Stakeholder and Partner Listening Session/Small Farm Conference was held on February 24, 2011 in Yakima, WA with a special interest in inviting Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers from the target counties as attendees. This was the beginning of the series of workshops and programs from which participants were recruited for the remaining project educational activities. At this first session, all of the participants were introduced to *Turning Point*® which is a tool used to conduct surveys. This tool was especially selected for this research study because it offered an ease of response with which the Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers could participate.

USDA service providers in the target region were also identified as part of the target audience. As a major component of the project study, the project made special efforts to survey all USDA FSA, NRCS, RMA and RD service providers in the target counties. The survey instrument selected was *Survey Monkey*® and it had been scheduled to be administered through the internet on the last week of June 2011. (Appendix A) Permission from USDA was requested by the project researchers as a matter of research protocol; regrettably, when the request was sent to an upper administrator at USDA, a barrier at the USDA Office of Civil Rights in Washington, D.C.,

⁷ Center for Latino Farmers. (2011). Home web page. Retrieved from: <http://www.centerforlatinofarmers.com/>

prevented the survey from being administered to USDA service providers in the targeted counties.

Based on the concept that a relationship must have a minimum of two parties, and both must interact, it is only logical that for the research to be complete, both the Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers and the USDA service providers must have a voice in identifying barriers in order for any changes and/or recommendation to have validity to real or existing barriers. If the proposed USDA survey would have been administered to USDA service providers, they would have had an opportunity to provide constructive, yet anonymous input into the process. If barriers would have been discovered through this process, it had been the intent of the researchers to recommend possible solutions to those barriers that had been identified by the USDA service providers in the same fashion that were developed from data collected from the Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers surveyed in this project; thus, regrettably, the study is providing and reporting only half of the data originally proposed.

Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers have been a vital component in Washington State agriculture as far back as the 1920's. According to the U.S. Decennial Census of the period, data in the early years recognizes their presence not only as farmworkers but as farm/ranch owners as well.⁸ Based on the data collected by USDA beginning with the 1987 Census of Agriculture, (first year that Hispanic/Latino farmer and rancher data has been gathered) Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers have been increasing in numbers exponentially in Washington State. In 20 years, based on the USDA NASS data, Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers have increased their numbers by just over **701%** (1987-325 to 2007-2,604) which represents **7%** of the total number of farmers and ranchers in Washington State.⁹ Nationally, Washington State Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers represent over **4%** of the total number and as of the 2007 Census of Agriculture, they are ranked **6th** nationally.¹⁰

Based on NASS data, Washington State Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers are the fastest growing Hispanic/Latino farmer and rancher group outside of the Southern U.S. Border States and the fastest growing farmer and rancher socially disadvantaged group in Washington State.¹¹ As proposed and promised by USDA NASS officials at the project's Small Farm Conference and Listening Session held on August 10, 2011, in Yakima, WA, increased efforts will be made to improve the enumeration process of Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers in Washington State

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau (2011). Census of Agriculture, History. Retrieved from:
http://www.census.gov/history/www/programs/agriculture/census_of_agriculture.htm

⁹ USDA NASS. (2008). 2007 Census of Agriculture – County Data. Table 50. Page 448. Retrieved from:
http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Full_Report/Volume_1_Chapter_2_County_Level/Washington/st53_2_050_050.pdf

¹⁰ USDA NASS. (2008). 2007 Census of Agriculture- Spanish, Hispanic or Latino Origin Operators: 2007. Table 50. Page 633. Retrieved from:
http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Full_Report/Volume_1_Chapter_2_US_State_Level/st99_2_050_050.pdf

¹¹ USDA NASS. (2008). 2007 Census of Agriculture – County Data. Table 50. Page 448. Retrieved from:
http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Full_Report/Volume_1_Chapter_2_County_Level/Washington/st53_2_050_050.pdf

for the 2012 U.S. Census of Agriculture. The researchers anticipate that the data collected in the upcoming 2012 U.S. Census of Agriculture will reinforce this trend of increasing numbers of Hispanic/Latino farmers in Washington State. If this trend continues, Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers could make up the majority of farmers and ranchers in Washington State, and lead the agriculture sector in Washington State in years to come.

The research used a mixed method of sequential explanatory design consisting of two phases: quantitative followed by qualitative. Data was collected through descriptive survey instrument *Turning Point*®, focus group discussions, listening sessions and one-on-one interviews. Selected demographic outcomes are:

- 62% of the farmers surveyed were under 50 years of age, while 32% were between 51 and 60 years of age
- 92% of the Hispanic farmers surveyed in Washington have lived in the US for 11 or more years, and of these, 78% have lived in the U.S. 20 or more years
- 58% surveyed are U.S. citizens and 42% are legal residents; this distribution of citizenship reflects that 100% are legal U.S residents
- 75% of the Washington State Hispanic/Latino farmers surveyed are currently farm workers while owning and operating their own farms
- 13% of farmers surveyed, have paid off the farm mortgage, 48% are making mortgage payments, while the others are leasing farm land
- 45% of farmers surveyed have owned their farms for six years or more
- 52% learned their farming practices in Mexico, while 39% learned their skills in the U.S.
- 77% of farmers surveyed had been farm workers before purchasing their own farm
- 49% of Washington State Hispanic/Latino farmers surveyed, own more than 40 acres of farm land
- 39% of farmers surveyed have not received assistance in their farming operations
- 61% of Hispanic/Latino farmers in Washington State surveyed have knowledge of FSA and 22% for NRCS, yet 13% are not aware of any of the USDA agencies
- only 33% of farmers surveyed have been assisted by FSA, 17% assisted by NRCS, 5.7 % assisted by Cooperative Extension Service, while 34% stated that USDA has not assisted them at all
- only 31% of Hispanic/Latino farmers surveyed participated in the 2007 Census of Agriculture

The objectives of the project have led to identifying the reasons, whether perceived or real for barriers that confront Hispanic/ Latino farmers and ranchers when they request service and participation in USDA programs, or why they have not requested USDA services in the past. In addition, the research study identified barriers at USDA that prevented the USDA service providers from fully assisting the Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers in achieving these programs. As barriers were identified, recommendations were formulated based on Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers input on how to overcome these barriers. These barriers and recommendations are provided in a final report to USDA and can be found in the body of this report.

In the true spirit of the grant provided by the USDA Office of Advocacy and Outreach, 2501 Outreach and Assistance for Social Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Program, its specific

intent is to have changes made to existing work practices that could bring about an increased participation and outreach service to Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers in Washington State. These recommendations came directly and indirectly (inferred) from the producers and adhere to the “core values” of the USDA Strategic Plan for 2010-2015.¹² The data collected in this study along with the research recommendations, will allow USDA to develop and implement specific outreach strategies that will better serve the target audience and result in the increased participation by Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers in USDA programs and its activities. This project can also serve as a model for other states and/or regions that have a high concentration of Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers as per USDA NASS census information.

A copy of the full report can be viewed and downloaded at:

<http://www.centerforlatinofarmers.com/>

¹² USDA (2010) USDA Strategic Plan FY 2010 – 2015. Retrieved from:
<http://www.ocfo.usda.gov/usdasp/sp2010/sp2010.pdf>

Investing in Equity to Prepare the Next Generation of American Farmers

History and Trends of Hispanic/Latino Farmers and Ranchers in Washington State:

The United States of America has collected agricultural data, officially and sometimes unofficially, since U.S. marshals inquired about citizen's agricultural operations reported as early as the 1820 decennial census. Then, starting with the 1840 decennial census, U.S. marshals began using separate documents to collect data related to agriculture. This census was the first official agriculture census and was taken as a component of the sixth decennial census of population.¹³

For over one hundred years, from 1840 to 1950 the agriculture census was taken as part of the decennial census. Then, beginning in 1954, and continuing until 1974, the U.S. Census Bureau conducted the census of agriculture in years ending in "4" and "9".¹⁴

In 1976, Congress authorized the census of agriculture to be taken for 1978 and 1982 in an effort to adjust the data reference year so that it coincided with other economic censuses. By making this adjustment, Congress established the agriculture census on a 5-year cycle collecting data for years ending in "2" and "7". In 1997, Congress through the 1997 Appropriations Act, transferred responsibility for the census of agriculture to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Agricultural Statistic Service (NASS). The 1997 Census of Agriculture is the first census conducted by USDA NASS.¹⁵

Over the past 180 years, the census of agriculture has grown to reflect the changes in American agriculture including the need to document changes and trends in the profiles of the American farmers and ranchers. The census of agriculture is taken to obtain agricultural statistics for each county, state and the Nation. Based on census history, USDA NASS started the collection of Hispanic/Latino-origin, and other minority groups data beginning in the 1978 USDA Census of Agriculture.¹⁶

A component of this study is to research the statistical documentation and history of Hispanic/Latino Farmers and Ranchers in Washington State that USDA NASS has collected over the years. Through the use of this data, the researchers will be able to synthesize and analyze the data to determine the current and future trends of these farmers and ranchers as they currently are, and how they are becoming a vibrant entity within Washington State and American agriculture.

Trends of Hispanic/Latino Farmers and Ranchers in Washington State:

The definition of a farm for census purposes was first established in 1850. It has been changed at least nine times since. The current definition established by USDA, first used for the 1974 Census, is "*any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced or*

¹³ U.S. Census Bureau (2011). Census of Agriculture, History. Retrieved from:

http://www.census.gov/history/www/programs/agriculture/census_of_agriculture.htm

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ USDA NASS.(1998). 1997 Census of Agriculture. Introduction VII. Retrieved from:

http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/1997/Rankings_of_State_and_Counties/ac97s-3r.pdf

¹⁶ Ibid.

*sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year.*¹⁷ Since 1974, efforts have been made by various interest groups to change the definition of a farm by increasing the dollar amount. These efforts have failed as discussions always point to the overall purpose of the census; to establish the best picture of U.S. agriculture for that particular year, inclusive of all agricultural production.

Starting in 1900 and prior to the 1954 Census of Agriculture, farm and ranch ethnic data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau was collected as: Native White, Foreign-Born White and Colored farmers/ranchers. Colored farmers/ranchers were defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as: native born Negroes, Indians, and Japanese and/or of Chinese decent.¹⁸ Hispanic/Latino farmers/ranchers in the U.S. were counted either as Native White or Foreign-Born White farmers as interpreted by this definition. Due to this classification, it would almost be impossible to determine how many Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers were in Washington State during this time period.

Both, the 1910 and 1920 U.S. Census of Agriculture provided data by country of birth for the Foreign-Born White farmers to include several European countries (excluding Spain), and only Canada and Mexico from North America. All other countries (of White ancestry), including Central and South America are included in the “other countries” category.¹⁹

In 1920, Washington State, from data obtained by the U.S. Census Bureau, there were as follows:

45,265 Native White Farmers

19,757 Foreign-Born White Farmers (from Latin countries reported: Mexico- 2, Portugal- 33)

1,266 Colored Farmers²⁰

It is unknown how many Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers, native or foreign-born, actually lived in Washington State during this time period due to the U.S. Census Bureau ethnic classification. It is assumed, based on current Hispanic/Latino farmer and rancher profiles living in Washington State, that some of their ancestors may have arrived during and/or prior to this time period.²¹

¹⁷ USDA NASS. (1998). 1997 Census of Agriculture. Introduction VII. Retrieved from:

http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/1997/Rankings_of_State_and_Counties/ac97s-3r.pdf

¹⁸ U.S. Census Bureau (1920). Census of Agriculture. Chapter V. Farm Statistics by Race, Nativity, and Sex of Farmer. Page 293. Retrieved from:

[http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/Historical_Publications/1920/Farm_Statistics_By_Race_Nativity_Sex.p](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/Historical_Publications/1920/Farm_Statistics_By_Race_Nativity_Sex.pdf)

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¹⁹ U.S. Census Bureau (1920). Census of Agriculture. Chapter V. Farm Statistics by Race, Nativity, and Sex of Farmer. Page 319-328. Retrieved from:

[http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/Historical_Publications/1920/Farm_Statistics_By_Race_Nativity_Sex.p](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/Historical_Publications/1920/Farm_Statistics_By_Race_Nativity_Sex.pdf)

[df](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/Historical_Publications/1920/Farm_Statistics_By_Race_Nativity_Sex.pdf)

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Sandsberry, S. (2011). *Sheep Dynasty Imperiled*. Friday, July 8, 2011. Page 1. Yakima Herald Republic.

1987 U.S. Census of Agriculture:

The 1987 U.S. Census of Agriculture, the first official agriculture census to include Hispanic/Latino statistics, stated that there were **325*** Hispanic/Latino farmers/ranchers in Washington State, representing **1 %** of the total number of farmers/ranches (33,559) in Washington State and **2%** of all (17,476) Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers nationally.²² Individual Washington State county Hispanic/Latino farmer numbers were not available for the 1987 Census of Agriculture.

*Shortly after the 1987 Census of Agriculture was published, and continuing through the 2007 Census, several community based organizations, farmer/rancher groups and Extension agents from across the country challenged U.S. Census Bureau and USDA NASS on the validity of Hispanic/Latino farmer/rancher numbers as well as other minority farmer/rancher groups. Academic studies conducted within the past 10 years have contributed to the debate, questioning USDA NASS's ability to count "all" Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers in the past.²³ Without having an accurate starting point, it is very difficult to gauge and measure growth. These questions will always be asked, "Are the numbers correct and are the trends valid? Have the Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers been traditionally undercounted? And, as a result of focused attempts in the past (2007 Census of Agriculture) to count them, how fast is this segment of U.S. agriculture actually growing?" Based on Washington State's history, current data available and efforts to accurately count Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers by USDA NASS, Center for Latino Farmers and Ranchers and others, Washington State will serve as a national model to determine true growth and trend of current Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers in the U.S..

²² USDA NASS (1993). 1992 Census of Agriculture – County Data. Table 38. 332. Retrieved from: http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/1992/Volume_1_Chapter_2_County_Tables/Washington/wa2_34.pdf

²³ Brownrigg, L. A & Martin, E. A. (1992, April). *Proposed study plan for the ethnographic evaluation of the behavioral causes of undercount*, Paper prepared for the Census Advisory Committee on Population Statistics at the Joint Advisory Committee Meeting, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC.

Garcia, V. (1992). Results from an alternative enumeration in a Mexican and Mexican American farm worker community in California: Ethnographic evaluation of the behavioral causes of undercount. *Final coverage report for Joint Statistical Agreement 89-29*. Center for Survey Methods Research, Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce, Washington, DC

Garcia, V. & Martinez, J. (2002). *Farmworkers transition to farm ownership: Lessons from Mexican origin farmers in Southwestern Michigan*. Final Report, Office of Outreach, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC

Garcia V. & Martinez, J (2005). *Does the Agricultural Census Include All Hispanic/Latino Farmers?*. October 2005. Volume 43. Number 5. Journal of Extension.

1992 U.S. Census of Agriculture:

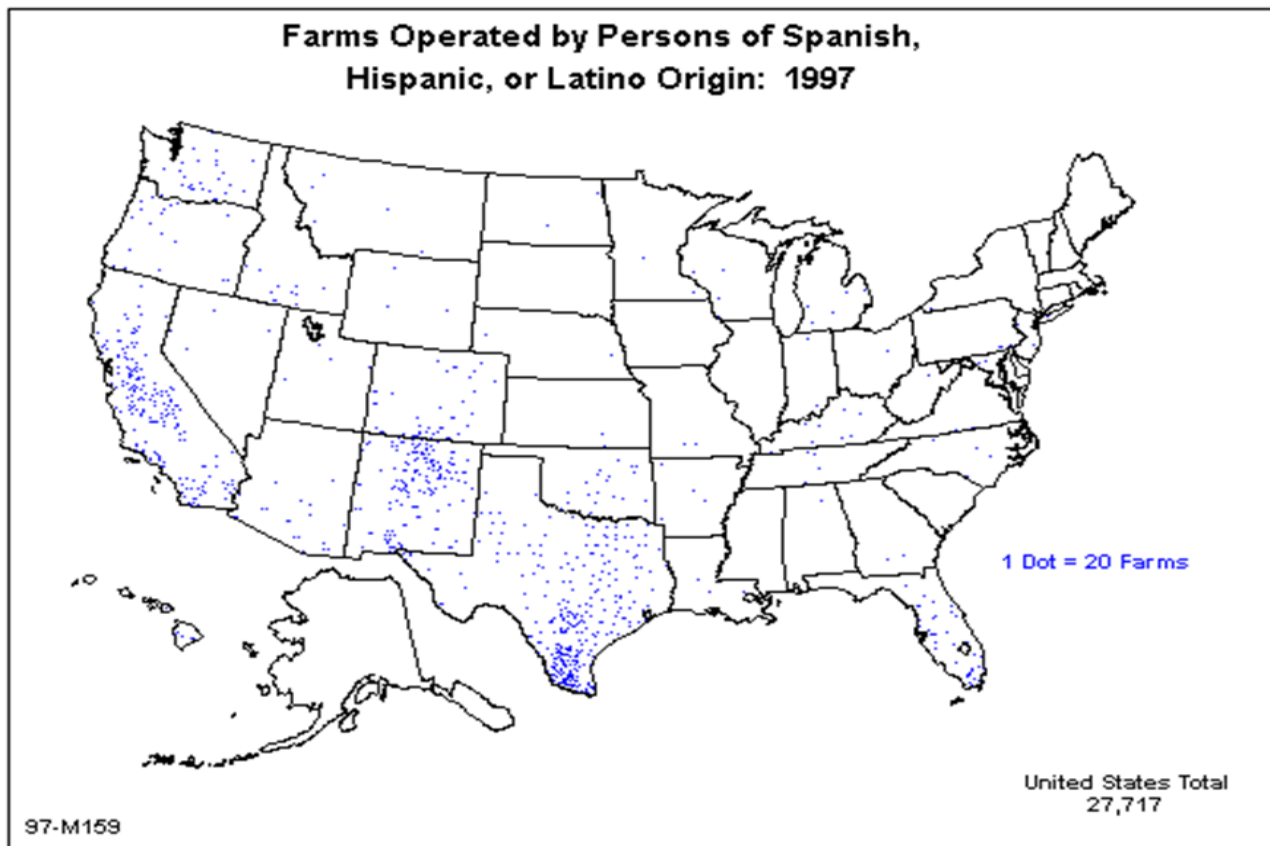
The 1992 U.S. Census of Agriculture reported that there were 378 Hispanic/Latino farmers/ranchers in Washington State, representing 1% of the total farmers/ranchers (30,264) in Washington State and increased by 14 % over the 1987 Census. The Washington State Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers represented 2% of all (20,956) Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers nationally. The top eight Washington Counties with Hispanic/Latino farmers/ranchers in rank of numbers in the U.S. Census of Agriculture are: Yakima (129), Grant (28), Franklin (26), Benton (18), Okanogan (16), Whatcom (16), Adams (12) and Clark (12).²⁴

1997 U.S. Census of Agriculture:

The 1997 U.S. Census of Agriculture (first year USDA NASS is responsible for the Agriculture Census) reported that there were 625 Hispanic/Latino farmers/ranchers in Washington State, representing 2% of the total farmers/ranchers (40,113) in Washington State and increased by 65% over the 1992 Census and 92% over the 1987 Census. The Washington State Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers represented 2% of all (27,717) Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers nationally. The top eight Washington Counties with Hispanic/Latino farmers/ranchers in rank of numbers are: Yakima (179), Grant (53), Chelan (44), Benton (44), Franklin (41), Douglas (31), Okanogan (24), Adams (20), and Whatcom (17).²⁵

²⁴ USDA NASS (1993). 1992 Census of Agriculture – County Data. Table 38. 332. Retrieved from: http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/1992/Volume_1_Chapter_2_County_Tables/Washington/wa2_34.pdf

²⁵ USDA NASS (1998). 1997 Census of Agriculture – County Data. Table 38. 339. Retrieved from: http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/1997/Vol_1_Chapter_2_County_Tables/Washington/wa2_38.pdf



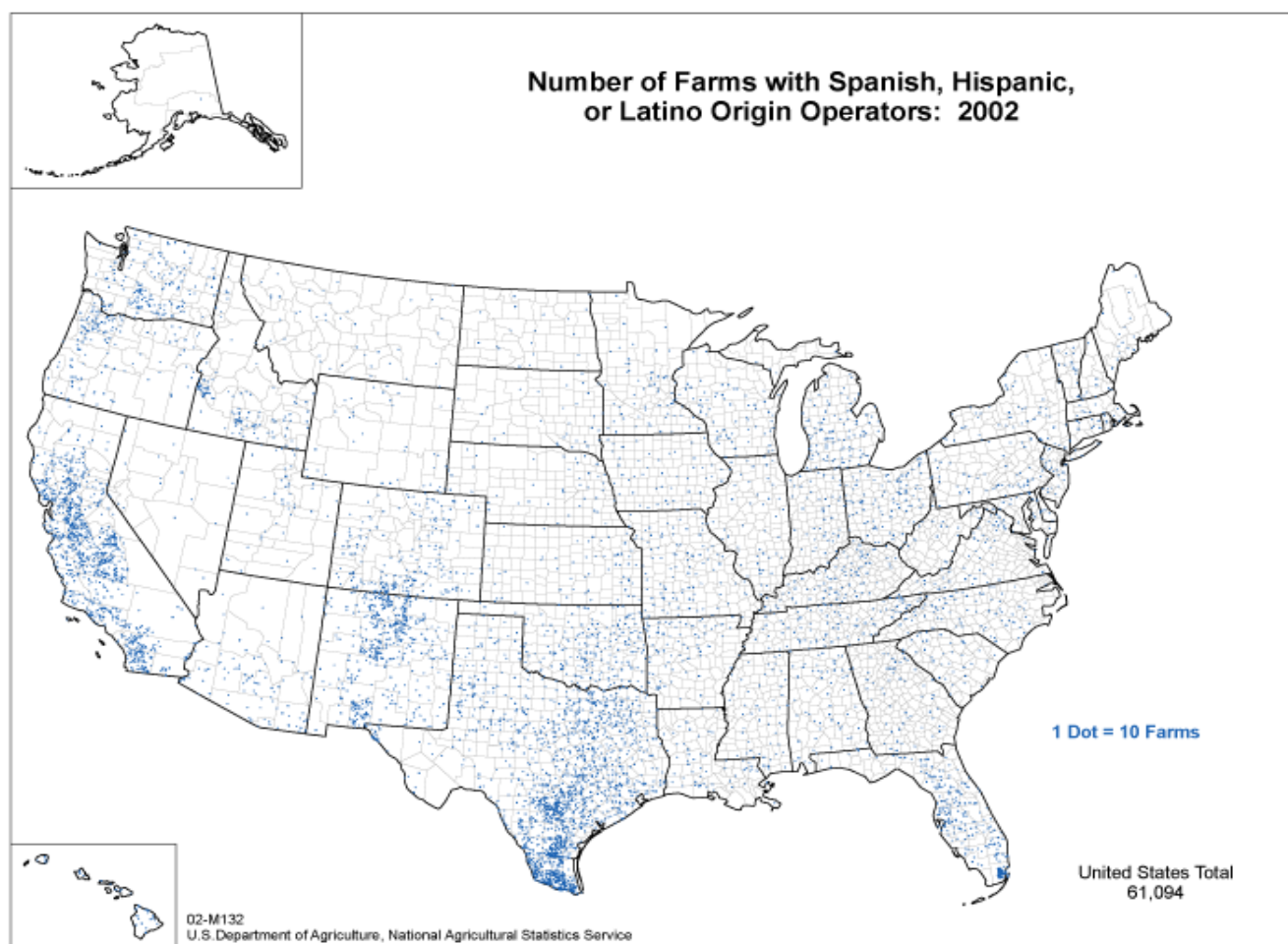
2002 U.S. Census of Agriculture:

The 2002 U.S. Census of Agriculture reported that there were **1,821** Hispanic/Latino farmers/ranchers in Washington State, representing **5%** of total farmers/ranchers (35,939) in Washington State and increased by **191%** over the 1997 Census and **460%** over the 1987 Census. The Washington State Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers represented **3%** of all (72,349) Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers nationally ranking **seventh (7th)** ²⁷ overall in numbers of Hispanic/Latino farmers. The top eight Washington Counties with Hispanic/Latino

²⁶ USDA NASS (1997). 1997 Census of Agriculture, Agricultural Atlas Maps, Farms Operated by Persons of Spanish, Hispanic or Latino Origin: 1997. Table 97-M159 Retrieved from: http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/1997/Ag_Atlas_Maps/Operators/map159.gif

²⁷ USDA NASS (2003). 2002 Census of Agriculture- Spanish, Hispanic or Latino Operators: 2002. Table 50. Page 560. Retrieved from: http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2002/Volume_1_Chapter_2_US_State_Level/st99_2_050_050.pdf

farmers/ranchers in rank of numbers are: Yakima (576), Grant (152), Benton (137), Okanogan (120), Chelan (100), Douglas (85), Franklin (69), Adams (47), and Whatcom (30).²⁸

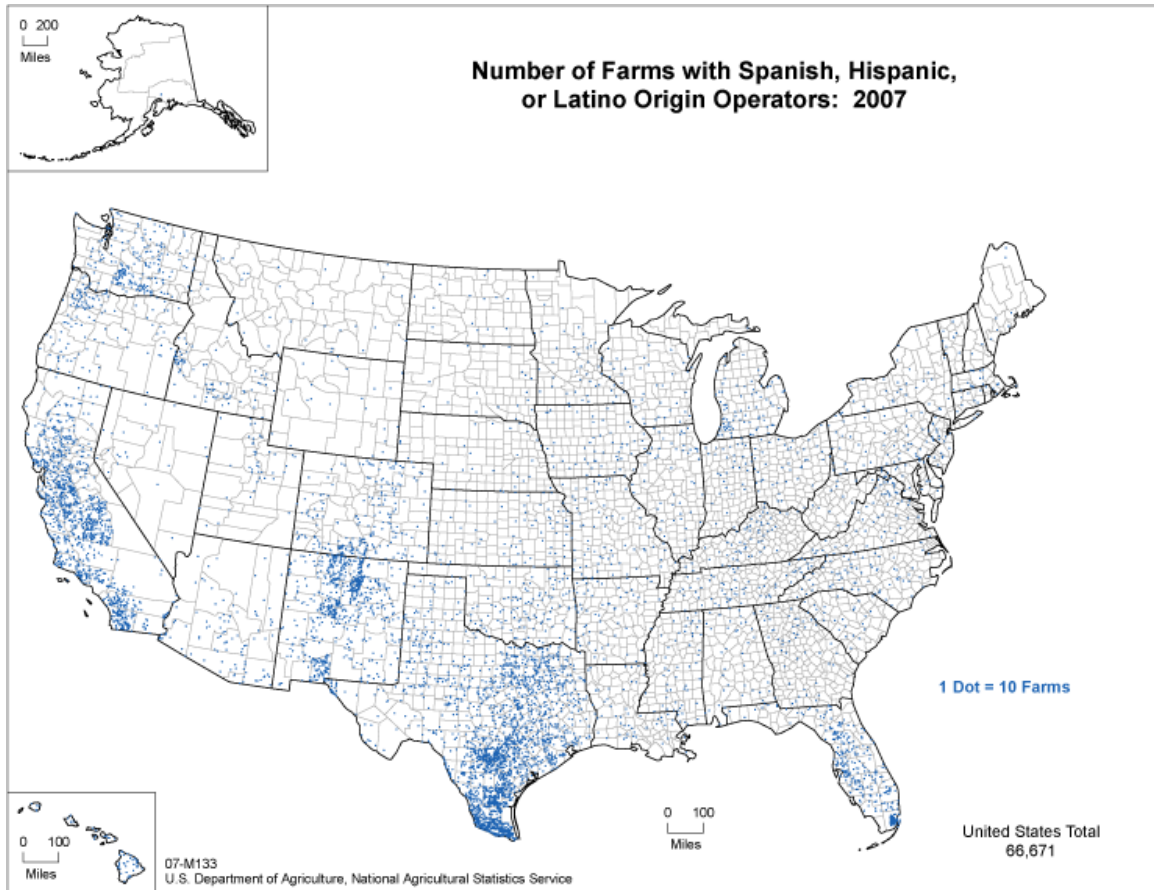


2007 U.S. Census of Agriculture:

²⁸ USDA NASS. (2003). 2002 Census of Agriculture – County Data. Table 80. Page 381. Retrieved from: http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2002/Volume_1_Chapter_2_County_Level/Washington/st53_2_050_050.pdf

²⁹ USDA NASS. (2003). 2002 Census of Agriculture- Agriculture Atlas- Number of Farms with Spanish, Hispanic or Latino Origin Operators: 2002. Retrieved from: http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2002/Ag_Atlas_Maps/Operators/Race-Ethnicity/Number%20of%20Farms%20with%20Spanish,%20Hispanic,%20or%20Latino%20Origin%20Operators.gif

The 2007 U.S. Census of Agriculture reported that there were **2,604** Hispanic/Latino farmers/ranchers in Washington State, representing **7%** of total farmers/ranchers (39,284) in Washington State and increased by **43%** over the 2002 Census and **701%** over the 1987 Census. The Washington State Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers represented **4%** of all (82,462) Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers nationally ranking **sixth (6th)**³⁰ overall in numbers of Hispanic/Latino farmers. The top eight Washington Counties with Hispanic/Latino farmers/ranchers in rank of numbers are: Yakima (840), Grant (192), Benton (266), Okanogan (168), Chelan (133), Douglas (96), Franklin (82), Whatcom (73), and Pierce (59).³¹

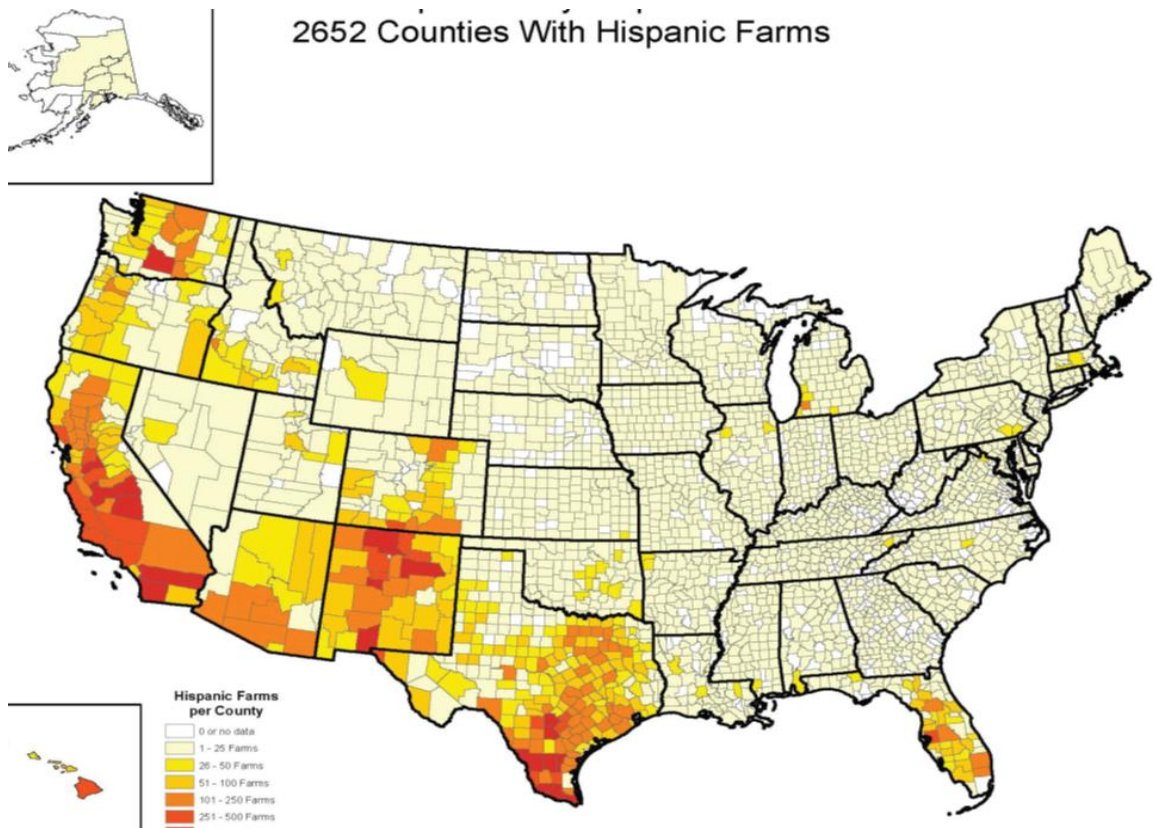


³⁰ USDA NASS. (2008). 2007 Census of Agriculture- Spanish, Hispanic or Latino Origin Operators: 2007. Table 50. Page 633. Retrieved from: http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_2_US_State_Level/st99_2_050_050.pdf

³¹ USDA NASS. (2008). 2007 Census of Agriculture – County Data. Table 50. Page 448. Retrieved from: http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_2_County_Level/Washington/st53_2_050_050.pdf

³² USDA NASS. (2008). 2007 Census of Agriculture- Agriculture Atlas- Number of Farms with Spanish, Hispanic or Latino Origin Operators: 2007. Retrieved from:

Based on the data collected by USDA NASS beginning with the 1987 Census of Agriculture, Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers have been increasing in numbers exponentially in Washington State. In 20 years, based on USDA NASS data, Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers have increased in numbers by **701%** (1987-325 to 2007-2,604) and represent **7%** of the total number of farmers and ranchers in Washington State. Nationally, Washington State Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers represent over **4%** of the total number and as of the 2007 Census of Agriculture, and are ranked **6th** overall in total numbers. Based on this data, Washington State Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers are the fastest growing Hispanic/Latino farmer and rancher group outside of the Southern U.S. border and the fastest growing farmer/rancher minority group in Washington State. As efforts are made to improve the enumeration of Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers in Washington State, data collected in the upcoming 2012 U.S. Census of Agriculture should reinforce this trend.



**Number of Farms with Spanish, Hispanic or Latino Farmer and Rancher Operators
USDA NASS 2007 Census of Agriculture ³³**

http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Online_Highlights/Ag_Atlas_Maps/Operators/Characterists/07-M133.asp

³³ USDA NASS. (2008). 2007 Census of Agriculture – Hispanic Farmers Fact Sheet. Retrieved from: http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Online_Highlights/Fact_Sheets/hispanic.pf

Barriers Identified

Summary of Barriers:

The overall goal of the project was to define the barriers, whether real or perceived, to equitable participation and utilization of USDA programs and services by Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers, beginning at the local USDA service centers in Washington State. It is the intent of the research study that the data could be used to develop recommendations to USDA that would result in an improved outcome of service to the Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers and rural communities of Washington State.

As the study progressed, the researchers realized that there were two distinct sets of barriers that prevented or contributed to the lack of equitable participation and utilization of USDA programs and services by Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers in Washington State. The study identified barriers within USDA agencies and their service centers as well as within the Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers as identified by the Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers interviewed in the study. In addition, the researchers encountered an obstacle in attempting to access data from USDA service personnel and have included it in this report as noted below.

Obstacle Encountered:

- 1. USDA prevented an internal and external review of its staff's efforts to provide optimum outreach and service to Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers as experienced by the researchers in their attempt to interview the local USDA service personnel through this study.**

The following are a summary of barriers this study has identified:

USDA Barriers:

- 1. USDA agencies, including: FSA, NRCS, NASS, RD, RMA and Cooperative Extension Service have not made adequate efforts in marketing their specific programs and services to the Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers.**
As evidenced by study questions 26, 27, 30, 31, 33 and statements made by Francisco Ponce and other farmers and ranchers surveyed during focus group discussions and individual interviews.
- 2. USDA NASS has not captured the true count of "all" Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers over the past 20 years.**
As evidenced by study question 32 and from conversations with farmers and ranchers during focus group discussions and individual interviews.

Hispanic/Latino Farmer and Rancher Barriers:

3. Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers have difficulty reading, writing and comprehending the English language.

As evidenced by study questions 3, 4, 5, 6, by requests from individual farmers and ranchers to have translators present during study activities and with conversations with farmers and ranchers during focus group discussions and individual interviews.

4. Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers have difficulty in comprehending agriculture policy and USDA program eligibility.

As evidenced by conversations with farmers and ranchers during focus group discussions and individual interviews and individual interviews.

5. Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers have difficulty in finding, understanding and receiving assistance from USDA programs and services.

As evidenced by study questions 27, 30, 33, 34, and with conversations with farmers and ranchers during focus group meetings and individual interviews.

6. Most Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers have difficulty with expressing their needs and comprehending educational material presented at workshops, seminars and conferences in the English language, and in most cases, they also lack USDA cultural competency skills.

As evidenced by results from pre and post-test scores taken during the educational series workshops, requests from individual farmers and ranchers to have translators present at educational programs and with conversations with farmers and ranchers during focus group meetings and individual interviews.

7. Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers have difficulty in completing appropriate USDA program applications.

As evidenced by study question 34 and with conversations with farmers and ranchers during focus group meetings and individual interviews.

8. Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers have a difficult time in accessing capital for purchasing farms and/or operation loans.

As evidenced by individual interviews with Mr. Jose Ramirez, Ms. Maria Carrillo, and with conversations with other farmers and ranchers during focus group meetings.

9. Hispanic/Latino farmers have not acquired the skills to monitor plant, soil, insect, and pest conditions on their farms, and therefore, they have become dependent on the purchasing contract companies to determine the chemical application of fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, etc., to their fields which may present economic and environmental hardships in the future.

As evidenced by conversations with farmers and ranchers during focus group meetings and individual interviews with farmers during farm visits.

10. The FSA purchasing and operating loans take too long to process and close.

As evidenced by study question 34 and with conversations with farmers and ranchers during focus group meetings and individual interviews with Mr. Jose Ramirez and Ms. Maria Carrillo and others.

11. Most Hispanic farmers and ranchers do not have knowledge of USDA FSA disaster programs and what records they must keep to apply or qualify for them.

As evidenced by study question 34 and with conversations with farmers and ranchers during focus group meetings and individual interviews with Mr. Jose Ramirez and Ms. Maria Carrillo

12. The Hispanic farmers and ranchers lack the understanding and importance of advocacy due to their lack of leadership opportunities and language barriers.

As evidenced through conversations with farmers and ranchers during focus group meetings and individual interviews with farmers during farm visits.

13. Most Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers are not enrolled members of established farm organizations; therefore, do not have a voice on matters of farm policy and advocacy.

As evidenced through conversations with farmers and ranchers during focus group discussions and individual interviews and individual interviews. Few farmers interviewed had any working knowledge and/or understanding of the “USDA Farm Bill”, past or future, this became evident during the workshop session presented on the Farm Bill during the session pertaining to farmer leadership.

14. Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers in Washington State are experiencing difficulties in maintaining a reliable and stable workforce and having to compete for any available farmworkers with larger farms who can afford to pay higher wages and ultimately, due to the stringent immigration policies that farmers are facing today.

As evidenced by conversations with Mr. Jesus Valencia and Mr. Leon Loza, and other farmers and ranchers during focus group discussions and individual interviews.

Investing in Equity to Prepare the Next Generation of American Farmers

Barriers Identified with Selected Recommendations

When USDA Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack took office in January of 2009, he promised to make the USDA more efficient, transparent and overall, more effective. And, most importantly, Secretary Vilsack claimed to make civil rights a top priority by taking definitive action to improve the Department's record and to move USDA into a new era as a model employer and foremost service provider. Based on his vision, Secretary Vilsack and the Department developed the USDA Strategic Plan for 2010-2015 and are "*determined to administer by and adhere to the Strategic Plan*" as reported by a USDA news release.³⁴ The USDA Strategic Plan for 2010-2015³⁵ was showcased at the USDA 2010 Cooperators Conference which was targeted at the U.S. Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers and the organizations and universities that assist them.

The overall goal of the project is to define the barriers, whether real or perceived, for equitable participation and utilization of USDA programs by Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers, beginning at the local USDA service centers in Washington State, and by utilizing this data, develop recommendations for USDA to better serve the Hispanic/Latino community. This study has identified the following barriers that prevent or reduce participation and utilization of USDA programs by Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers in Washington State. These barriers were identified directly and indirectly (inferred) from the Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers the project surveyed, interviewed and through focus group meetings conducted in Washington State starting in February 2011 through August 2011.

Based on the USDA Strategic Plan for 2010–2015 and the Secretary's commitment to improve USDA; USDA and the Secretary are given a golden opportunity through this study to reach out to the Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers in Washington State. This study is offering recommendations for USDA to improve their outreach efforts to assist Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers to become equitable participants in USDA programs in Washington State. These recommendations were developed within the "Core Values" of the USDA Strategic Plan for 2010-2015 which include:

"Transparency- Making the Department's management processes more open so that the public can learn how USDA supports Americans every day in every way.

Participation- Providing opportunities for USDA constituents to shape and improve services provide by the Department.

Collaboration- Working cooperatively at all governmental levels domestically and internationally on policy matters affecting a broad audience.

³⁴ USDA Biographies. (2009) Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. Retrieved from: http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=bios_vilsack.xml&contentidonly=true

³⁵ USDA (2010) USDA Strategic Plan FY 2010 – 2015. Retrieved from: <http://www.ocfo.usda.gov/usdasp/sp2010/sp2010.pdf>

Accountability- Ensuring that the performance of all employees is measured against the achievement of the Department's strategic goals.

Customer Focus- Serving USDA's constituents by delivering programs that address their diverse needs.

Professionalism- Building and maintaining a highly skilled, diverse, and compassionate workforce.

Results Orientation- Measuring performance and making management decisions to direct resources to where they are used most effectively.”³⁶

The following are the barriers with recommendations this study has identified:

USDA Barriers

- 1. USDA agencies, including: FSA, NRCS, NASS, RD, RMA and Cooperative Extension Service have not made adequate efforts in marketing their specific programs and services to the Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers in Washington State.**

Recommendation: USDA must identify a local target advisory committee to determine the effectiveness of their current outreach efforts. Resources must be included to provide adequate outreach efforts and strategies to overcome the current outreach deficiencies.

- 2. USDA NASS has not captured the true count of “all” Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers in Washington State over the past 20 years.**

Recommendation: USDA NASS needs to make every effort to count “all” Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers in Washington State in the 2012 Census of Agriculture. This could be accomplished by developing contacts with local NGO's, CBO's and hiring local enumerators.

Hispanic/Latino Barriers:

- 3. Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers have difficulty in comprehending English and with reading and writing the English language.**

Recommendation: USDA needs to make an effort to provide translators who are versed in the Mexican dialect, and when translating USDA material, keep in mind the educational level of the target audience.

- 4. Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers in Washington State have difficulty in comprehending agriculture policy and USDA program eligibility.**

³⁶ Ibid.

Recommendation: USDA needs to simplify programming policy to Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers in Washington State in an effort to inform and educate them on USDA agriculture policy, program eligibility, production, management and marketing strategies.

5. Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers have difficulty in finding assistance from USDA programs and services.

Recommendation: USDA needs to ask the Hispanic/Latino farmers what is the best course of reaching out to them that would allow easy access to USDA programs and services.

6. Most Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers have difficulty with expressing their needs and comprehending educational material presented at workshops, seminars and conferences in the English language, and in most cases, they also lack USDA cultural competency skills.

Recommendation: USDA must recruit Hispanic/Latino service providers from within the target area that possess the skills to adequately assist the Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers.

7. Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers have difficulty in completing appropriate USDA program applications.

Recommendation: USDA must re-evaluate the need of complicated and comprehensive program application documents. With the assistance of local advisory committees, NGO's, Extension Service, FSA, NRCS, and RMA education specialists, appropriate application documents could be developed that would meet USDA requirements and be "producer friendly".

8. Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers have a difficult time in accessing capital for purchasing farms and/or operation loans.

Recommendation: USDA must develop strategies within FSA that reach out to Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers in Washington State in an effort to provide capital resources to purchase and/or provide for operation loans. The administrative rules need to be reformed and become more flexible in order to insure that these farmers and ranchers can obtain the desired loans to purchase farms.

9. Hispanic/Latino farmers have not acquired the skills to monitor plant, soil, insect, and pest conditions on their farms, and therefore, they have become dependent on the purchasing contract companies to determine the chemical application of fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, etc., to their fields which may present economic and environmental hardships in the future.

Recommendation: USDA NRCS and Cooperative Extension Service should re-evaluate and develop effective outreach production and management educational programs (i.e. IPM, private pesticide application, soil testing and interpreting results, cost of production, etc.) that target the Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers in Washington State.

10. The FSA operating loans take too long to process and close.

Recommendation: It is imperative that access to working capital be made available on timely bases in order to achieve a successful operating year. Therefore, producers need to know when and how to access the application process so that working capital is at hand when it is needed.

11. Most Hispanic farmers and ranchers do not have knowledge of USDA FSA disaster programs and what records they must keep to apply or qualify for them.

Recommendation: In partnership with USDA and Latino farmer NGO's, there needs to be a program that develops educational workshops that attend to the subject matter and the process of how disasters are declared, how the sign-up process for these programs works, and the overall application process. Hispanic/Latino farmers lack the education on how to advocate for themselves. If farmers can be taken on a step-by-step process on what types of records they need to have on hand, it would expedite assistance to them.

12. The Hispanic farmers and ranchers lack the understanding and importance of advocacy due to their lack of leadership opportunities and language barriers.

Recommendation: A working partnership needs to be created by USDA consisting of Hispanic/Latino farmer NGO's, HSI's and other colleges and universities who work with Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers. The partnership can be charged with the development of an educational workshop series on how programs are authorized, developed, and implemented.

13. Most Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers are not enrolled members of established farm organizations; therefore, do not have a voice on matters of farm policy and advocacy.

Recommendation: Both in-reach and out-reach efforts from farm agriculture organizations and by individual Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers to one another is desirable. This effort will achieve both representation and positive outcomes to this new and emerging American farmer and rancher population.

14. Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers in Washington State are experiencing difficulties in maintaining a reliable and stable workforce and having to compete for any available farmworkers with larger farms who can afford to pay higher wages and ultimately, due to the stringent immigration policies that farmers are facing today.

Recommendation: The Secretary of Agriculture should work closely with Congress to expedite the immigration reform process in the country to insure that a reliable and stable farm worker workforce will be made available not only to Washington State Hispanic/Latino farmers and ranchers, but nationally as well.