

FARMWORKERS AND WILDFIRES

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INTRODUCTION:

Every year, wildfires threaten our communities, homes, and lands.

At the forefront of these wildfires are Sonoma County farmworkers, who are the backbone of our agricultural system and play an essential role in supporting our communities in times of crisis.

At the same time, farmworkers often face disproportionate exposure to:

- **Smoke and poor air quality**
- **Unsafe working conditions**
- **Housing and work insecurity**

WHAT IS THE AG PASS?

In response to these wildfires, Sonoma and other counties have developed “Ag Pass” and “Livestock Pass” programs.



The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors approved the Ag Pass in 2022. This program allows **approved** farm owners/operators, supervisors, and full-time workers to go back into evacuation zones to complete agricultural activities.

Sonoma County was one of the first regionsto approve harvesting as an authorized activity under the Ag Pass program.

While intended to support continued agricultural operations during disasters, it also raises concerns about farmworkers’:

1. **Health**
2. **Physical safety**
3. **Economic security**
4. **Data privacy**

WHY DID WE CONDUCT A STUDY?

Our goal is to understand the effects of the Ag Pass and find ways to make it safer for farmworkers.

Research Aims:

- Evaluate farmworkers’ experiences working during wildfires
- Examine implications of the Ag Pass program for farmworker health and safety
- Develolp policy recommendations

With the help of a community engagement team led by Zeke Guzman, community health workers, advocates, and UC Berkeley students, we administered surveys to 1,011 full-time farmworkers in Sonoma County.



(Community Engagement Team pictured above)

“...Even though we’re in danger from the fires, the smoke, or the poor air quality, we still have to work. We have no other way to earn money.”

— Farmworker Survey Participant

WHAT DID WE FIND?

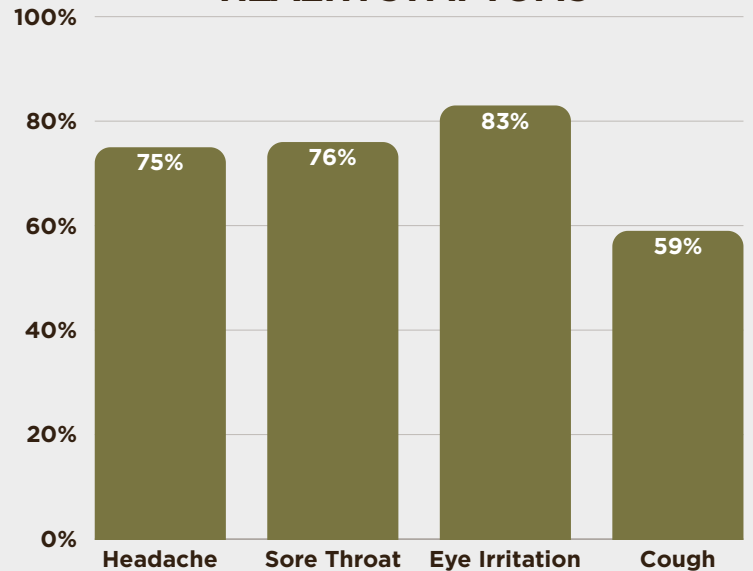
75% of farmworkers had worked in a wildfire in Sonoma County since 2017

91% were concerned about the risks of wildfire smoke to their health

35% received information on the health impacts of wildfire smoke and how to protect themselves

98% were concerned about paying rent if they could not work due to a wildfire

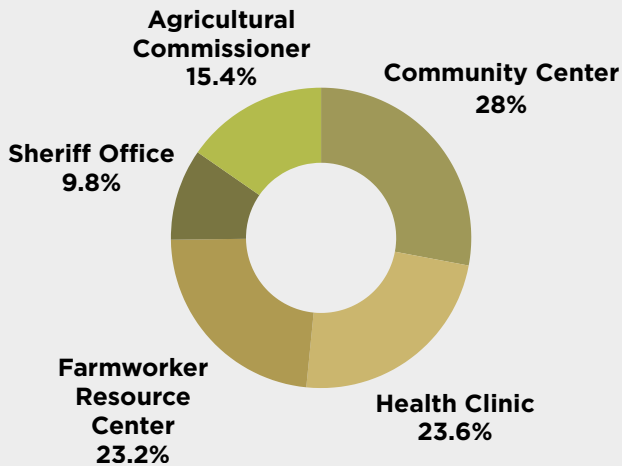
HEALTH SYMPTOMS



[View all survey responses](#)

They also faced many difficulties in finding help due to factors such as **lack of health insurance, high consultation costs, inability to miss work, and limited clinic hours**

TRUSTED SOURCES OF INFORMATION



RECOMMENDATIONS

Our team created a list of recommendations that considers the voices of farmworkers, community organizations, and government officials:

1. **Improve emergency notification systems**
2. **Remove the Sheriff from the registration process**
3. **Collaborate with community organizations and health clinics**
4. **Increase access to personal protective equipment**
5. **Establish a resource center for farmworkers**
6. **Offer additional economic resources for workers during wildfires**

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE AG PASS:

<https://lawhrctsg.wpengine.com/projects/california-wildfires/>

RESOURCES FOR FARMWORKERS:

<https://camposeguro.ucdavis.edu/en>

QUESTIONS?

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