



September 3, 2013 —

Farm Labor

The relationship between agriculture and illegal immigrant labor is a complicated one, but what's clear is that America's food system depends heavily on undocumented workers.

Large farms claim that Americans aren't willing to take the jobs because the work is too hard. They say US citizens wouldn't even take farm jobs during the recession. The point we take from this isn't that Americans are lazy, it's that the standard compensation for agricultural labor is not adequate for the level of skill and hard labor that farm jobs require. If US farms didn't have ready access to illegal workers then the price of food might rise in order to more accurately reflect the labor involved in growing food.

But the heart of this topic really lies in the stories of the undocumented workers. These immigrants pay lots of money and risk their lives to get smuggled across the border (it often takes multiple tries) in hopes of bettering themselves and their families. Many of them end up working in agriculture, where they labor incredibly hard, with skill and speed, to get food to our supermarket shelves.

The government estimates that more than half of hired farm workers

are here illegally. Social justice organizations representing migrant farm workers claim that more like 90% are illegal; census numbers rely on self-reporting, and what illegal immigrant is going to fill out a survey from the government? (To be fair, the census does claim to adjust for this dynamic.)

The most important thing to realize is that undocumented farm workers don't have rights, they don't have a support system, and they are not always treated fairly by their employers. Pesticide exposure is common in conventional fields. Illegal farm workers live in fear of being picked up by the cops or getting deported. When they're working the pay can be \$8 an hour, but in the off season or between harvests they have no income at all. The National Center for Farmworker Health reports that the average migrant farm worker family makes \$17 to \$20 thousand per year—less than the poverty level.

And most people have no idea that the cucumber they pick up in the grocery store may have been picked by a 12 year old. In fact, it's legal in America for children to work alongside their parents in the fields. We love seeing kids on family farms, but it's not a pastoral pastime for migrant kids—long days spent picking, bending and carrying heavy loads take a toll on young bodies.

Our goal isn't to take a stand on immigration issues one way or another. Rather, we think it's important to encourage dialog about this hidden part of agriculture. In order to create a more just and sustainable food system we need to be aware that our nation's current model often exploits illegal farm workers in order to bring the public cheap food.

We think food is valuable and so are the workers who grow it. We're not saying we have all of the answers to this complex issue, but we do believe in the local food movement's ability to better care for farm laborers.

Full Share:

- Green Peppers
- Cherry Tomatoes
- Basil
- Potatoes
- Pears
- Summer Squash
- Carrots
- Asian Pears & Peaches
- Cucumbers, Lemon & Green

Half Share:

- Snap Beans
- Carrots
- Spring Mix
- Slicer Tomatoes
- Peaches & Asian Pears
- Beets

What Grows Where:

DAWN GARDENS

summer squash, basil, cherry tomatoes, pears, slicer tomatoes, peppers

GRASSFED GARDENS

carrots, snap beans, potatoes

SIERRA VALLEY FARMS

spring mix, carrots

GREENVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

cucumbers, bell peppers

GREEN CEDAR FARM

peaches, asian pears

THE STUMP FARM

beets

HARMONY ACRES

potatoes

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Bread Share Flavor

Walnut and Herb

Pasta Share Flavor

Garlic Parsley Linguine

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Beet Salad with Goat Cheese, Green Apple & Honey

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds red beets, tops removed and scrubbed
Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper
2 tablespoons grapeseed or safflower oil
3 tablespoons pure honey
5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 lemon plus 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice, divided
1 green apple
4 ounces fresh goat cheese, coarsely crumbled (about 3/4 cup)
2 cups sprouts or microgreens, for garnish

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place beets in a baking dish just large enough to hold them in a single layer and add enough water to come three quarters of the way up sides of beets. Sprinkle with 1 tablespoon salt and drizzle with grapeseed oil. Cover with foil and bake until tender and easily pierced with a knife, about 1 hour. Transfer beets to a cutting board. When just cool enough to handle, remove skins, cut into 1/4-inch slices, and transfer to a bowl. Whisk together honey, olive oil, and 3 tablespoons lemon juice; add 1 teaspoon salt and season with pepper. Reserve 1/4 cup dressing; divide remaining dressing between bowls of warm beets; toss beets to coat. Halve lemon and squeeze juice into a bowl of cold water; drop lemon halves in it. Peel apple, cut into small pieces (you should have about 1 cup), and submerge in lemon water. When ready to serve, drain apple and blot dry. Arrange beets on a serving platter and drizzle with reserved dressing. Top with apple, goat cheese, and sprouts and serve immediately.



Source: www.marthastewart.com

CUCUMBERS, MEET THE BLENDER

We just tried throwing a lemon cucumber in a smoothie (along with frozen berries and melon from the Quincy Farmers' Market, Sierra Valley Farms' spring mix, juice, coconut milk and almonds—yum!). Now we're all excited about putting cucs in smoothies. Try out a couple of these recipes and let us know what you think.

STRAWBERRY CUCUMBER SMOOTHIE

The author of this smoothie concoction says, "I realize that this might seem like an odd combination of ingredients for a smoothie. It is. It's the cucumber. Weird, right!? Believe it or not, cucumber thickens the smoothie! It also adds lots of hydration and potassium. It's a total secret weapon. This smoothie has just a hint of sweetness... and it doesn't take like a big bunch of vegetables. Strawberry sweet with creamy almond milk, and mellow mellow cucumbers."

Ingredients

a heaping 1 1/2 cups frozen strawberries
1 cup cold almond milk
1 cucumber, deseeded and chopped into large chunks
1 to 2 tablespoons honey
a squeeze of lemon if you'd like

Source: www.joythebaker.com



CUCUMBER MELON SMOOTHIE

It's not too late to buy some melons at the Quincy Farmers' Market and freeze them!

Ingredients

1/2 ripe cantaloupe
1 cucumber, peeled
1 cup watermelon
1 tsp lime juice
1 cup leafy green (spinach or kale)
1 cup water as needed

Source: www.all-smoothie-recipes.com

Crop Updates

Beets

This week's beets are coming from Abby Edwards at The Stump Farm, who has also been growing our onions this season. Go Abby!

Potatoes

We have potatoes coming from both Harmony Acres and Grassfed Gardens this week. They escaped the gophers just in the nick of time!

Snap Beans

These have been on our crop plan for weeks, but we're just now getting enough of a harvest from Grassfed Gardens to supply your shares. Let's hope the bean plants crank up production for a couple of weeks before the cold sets in! Eat them raw or sauté with a little garlic, olive oil, salt and pepper. So good!

Visit our **Facebook** page for this link:

MIGRANT FARM WORKERS; FIELDS OF TEARS
ARTICLE BY THE ECONOMIST

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