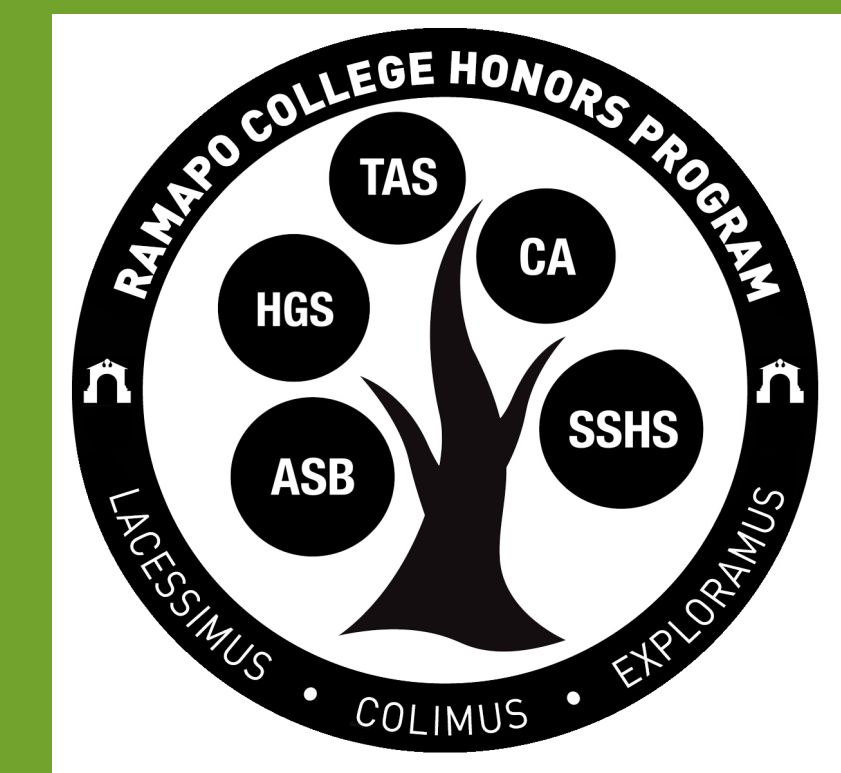




The Value of Migrant Agriculture Farmworkers in the U.S. Economy

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Immigrant Farmworkers in the U.S. Economy

This project explores immigrant farmworkers' contributions to U.S. GDP. Despite the current U.S. President's notions about immigrants, immigrant farm workers are key to maintaining America's agricultural industry effectively running. Hard working Mexican immigrants contribute to the United States economy annually, without access to the fruits they reap. Evidently, without the help of these same immigrant workers, employers face a more difficult challenge of meeting their labor needs from a micro-level and the needs of a sustainable competitive U.S. Agricultural economy from a macro-level scale. Ultimately, this thesis aims to explore further the double standards of the Immigrant farmworker in the United States from the Eisenhower Administration to the current Trump Administration.

Working in the Fields

Among the many types of labor in the US, farm work is one of the most dangerous jobs. While it makes up a little more than 3% of the labor force in the U.S. today, there are almost five times more casualties than the makeup of the labor force. This is due to frequent exposures to pesticides and long hours outside in the sunlight. Although many incidents may occur in these farms, only a small amount is reported. Because of the legal status and lack of information from these employees, they are unlikely to report incidents at the farms. Just as in other social issues, these minority workers tend to be underrepresented because of how restricted their voices are in the U.S. political system. Yet, in 2006, over 75% of U.S. farmworkers were foreign-born. As famous American economist and former Chair of the Federal Reserve of the United States, Alan Greenspan stated, "... the inflationary pressures caused by a tight labor market can be alleviated "if we can open up our immigration rolls significantly." Thus, it is important to realize the vitality of these immigrant farmworkers' participation in the agriculture production for the U.S. economy to sustain its competitive advantage versus other economies.

Typology on Mexican Immigrant Farmworkers in the U.S.

	Immigrant Farmworkers in the U.S. (Bracero Program)	Immigrant Farmworkers in the U.S. (Post-Bracero Program)
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Job Security•Poor economic opportunity•Unsafe•Little to no promising future•Political opportunity<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Protection through working visas (ex: H-2A Bracero Program)•Low border Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Job Security•Poor Economic Opportunity•Unsafe•Social Capital•Low wages
United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Economic Opportunity•U.S. Economic Growth•Limited Labor Laws<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Long hours, Low Wages•Temporary workers•High turnover of production	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Increase in Discrimination towards Immigrants<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Cons outweigh the Pros according to U.S. Government•Immigrants labeled as "Job Stealers" and "Criminals" by U.S. Government<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ No longer is the immigrant needed•U.S. reaches economic growth into the 21st Century
	Accept	Reject

Photographs by: Farmworkerjustice.org & "In the Fields of the North" by David Bacon via Progressive.org



The American Dream

Immigrants coming to the United States is often viewed by mainstream American society as a "... criminal and thus of disputable moral character"; "Here, "American" implies "legal" but excludes a myriad of possible statuses, such as "resident" and "guest worker." Yet, time after time, this concept has been proven nothing but a racist attack against Mexicans and immigrants migrating to the U.S. This country labels itself as a welcoming nation of those willing to work hard and follow a lawful life. However, the U.S. Immigration system has instead utilized these hard-working immigrant farm workers, worked them to their advantage, and ultimately exiled them once done. The maltreatment of these immigrant farmworkers as disposable workers is an inhumane cycle that continues today in the U.S.

National American Free Trade Agreement

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), established on January 1, 1994, aimed to encourage trading between the three North American countries - Mexico, Canada, and the United States. The agreement was to get rid of tariffs on trade between the three countries. However, in August of 2018, after much discussion between the current U.S. President Trump and the then Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto, a new deal was established. In 2001, then Mexican President Fox had asked Congress to grant legal status to Mexicans working in the United States as part of the NAFTA trade. President H. W. Bush had previously spoken about Mexican workers willing to work to facilitate the ability of American employers to legally hire needed Mexican workers, as a means of "... willing employers getting together with willing employees." The necessity of the Mexican immigrant worker is always acknowledged and viewed as a positive resource only when it proves to be a vital asset to the American employer, highlighting the double standards which continue to be evident today. Moreover, President H.W. Bush argued, "If an American employer is offering a job that American citizens are not willing to take, we ought to welcome into our country a person who will fill the job." Despite offering a welcoming message for immigrants in the U.S., he fails to address the root of the problem. Rather than discover the problem that is causing the division between Americans and Immigrants, he simply adds to the issue. He instead enables horrible working conditions through low wages unsafe working conditions, and inhumane work hours, for these immigrants. He rather enables the concept of the "modern slave" in the U.S.

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