



Latino Agricultural Entrepreneurship Project

About

Research

- Assets Project Site
- Integration Project Site
- Other Projects

Latino Agricultural Entrepreneurship Project

- Objectives
- Models & Methods
- Project Sites
- Research Team
- Publications

Outreach

Services

Publications

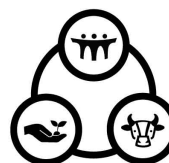
Search Publications: [Cambio Center Digital Library](#)

LAEP Home

The Latino Agricultural Entrepreneurship Project

What is the Latino Agricultural Entrepreneurship Project?

The Latino Agricultural Entrepreneurship Project is designed to explore the needs of Latino farmers, to understand their unique livelihood strategies, and better prepare agencies to work with Latino farmers. The project is led by faculty from the University of Missouri, Michigan State University, and Iowa State University. This three-year integrated research and extension project will study the diversity of Latino agricultural livelihood strategies—from established farmers to emerging farmers, and those interested in becoming farmers—and the agricultural networks that support farming, to identify the capacities needed to improve access to existing knowledge and financial resources in Iowa, Michigan and Missouri.



Latino Agricultural Entrepreneurship Project

Why this project is important

While the number of the nation's farmers and total farmland are decreasing, there has been a growth in the number of Hispanic operators nationally and in the Midwest. It is important to the nation's agricultural production to ensure a stable or growing population of farm operators with sustainable livelihoods, and Latino farm-entrepreneurs are a growing sector of that population.

Given the Latino population growth in the Midwest, and especially in rural areas, **we seek to understand how Latinos move into farming, the nature of their connections to the existing institutions and organizations that support the agricultural system, and the particular capacity needs that must be addressed by key stakeholders to actively engage them.** As the nation's agricultural industry continues to undergo demographic changes, it is critical that we increase our understanding of how Latino farmers seek to improve the success of their farms and develop bridges to the resources they need to be successful.

Figure 1. National trends in number of farm operators and land dedicated to farming.

	Total Farmers	Hispanic Farmers	Total Farmland	Average Farm Size
2007	2,205,000	82,462	922 million acres	441 acres
2012	2,109,303	99,734	915 million acres	434 acres
Percent change	-4.3%	+20.9%	-0.7%	-1.6%

What this project aims to do

In understanding the multiple strategies Latinos pursue in agriculture, and how the context of rural communities and supporting networks and institutions shape their agricultural entrepreneurship, we contribute to understanding how wealth creation activities promote the growth and sustainability of small and medium sized farms. We will develop a baseline of key opportunities and challenges service providers face serving Latinos by engaging them in focus groups. Case studies, focus groups and a household survey with Latino farmers/entrepreneurs will help us understand the role of agricultural entrepreneurship in the livelihood strategies of Latinos, their networks of support, and their relations with mainstream organizations in agriculture. The Agriculture Entrepreneurship Readiness Tool will be developed from this research and tested with service providers and Latino farmers to determine how the tool adjusts to different contexts. The extension objective addresses training needs of service providers in the field, tools to serve established and emerging Latino farmers, and the need to connect stakeholders to communities of practice across the Midwest.

Latino Agricultural Entrepreneurship Project

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- Publications

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The **MU Cambio Center** leads [research](#) and [outreach](#) on Latinos and changing communities. The [Mission Statement](#) guides the Center's work to help understand the demographic changes in our communities and to provide knowledge and best practices to facilitate a smooth integration of newcomers and immigrants of all backgrounds.

Our [Fellows and Student Fellows](#) work in diverse fields to understand these complex, multifaceted changes, and to contribute to community wellbeing.

We provide services such as organizing the annual [Cambio de Colores Conference](#), creating [publications](#) for non-specialist audiences, and providing translation through the [Language Services Program](#).

Donate to the Cambio Center Student Research Fund.

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The Cambio Center is supported by the Division of Inclusion, Diversity & Equity.

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