

## Farm workers fear coronavirus infection as they labor to keep US fed during COVID-19 pandemic

While millions of Americans shelter in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19, farmworkers on California's cool central coast move from row to row, carefully picking fat strawberries and packing them into boxes to ship country-wide.

Farmworkers have been labeled essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, critical to keeping the U.S.'s food supplies flowing. But they are worried. Their communities are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of the disease, and for many of them, information and protection from the disease has not been forthcoming.

So far, there are no reports of infected farmworkers. But the entire supply chain for fresh produce could be endangered if the virus sweeps through rural agricultural communities with as much force as it has elsewhere.

Many farmworkers are poor, with little or no access to health care. Many suffer from respiratory diseases that make them more susceptible to COVID-19, the illness caused by the coronavirus. Many live in crowded households and commute to work together, providing them with little opportunity for social distancing. All of these things make them targets for illness.

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