

Health and Safety Conditions on Vermont Dairy Farms

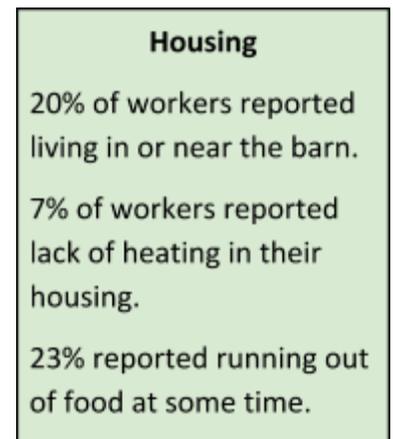
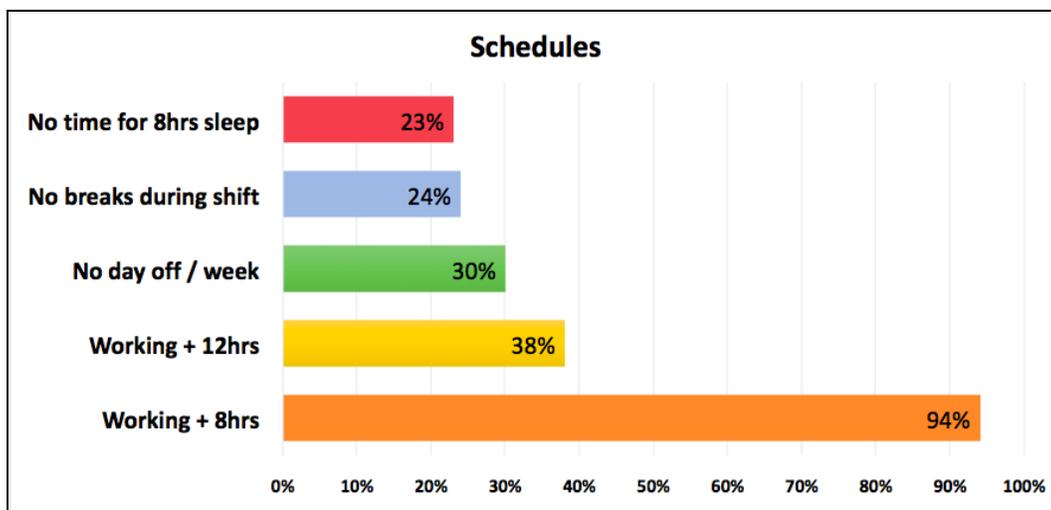


Migrant Justice farmworker leaders designed and carried out a survey between 2018 and 2019 with **over 100 dairy farmworkers across Vermont** to collect detailed information about the working and living conditions faced by **workers outside the Milk with Dignity Program**. The survey was designed in collaboration with a researcher in the Tufts Friedman School of Nutrition, Science, and Policy and the Tufts School of Public Health; results were then analyzed by the Columbia Law School Human Rights Clinic.

The surveys posed a series of questions to workers about their working and living conditions, including their exposure to various health and safety risks, training and safety precautions, access to medical services, the adequacy of housing, their relationship with their employer, equal treatment on the farms, and mental health concerns. The results of this survey **show high rates of workplace injuries and illnesses and a severe lack of safety equipment and training**.

HOURS, REST, LIVING CONDITIONS

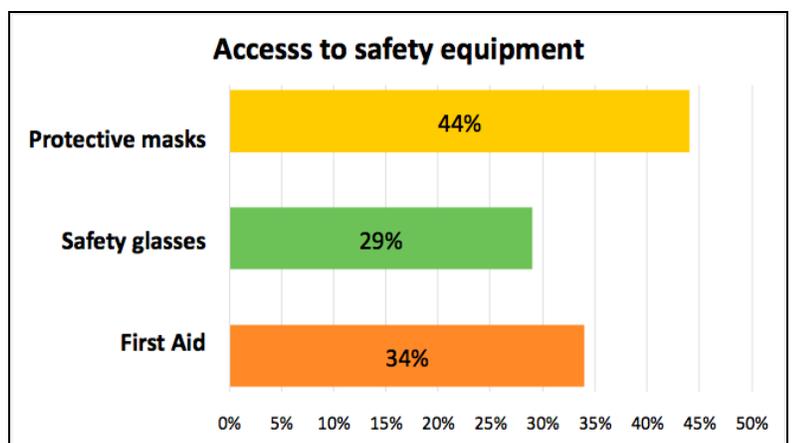
Many workers reported inadequate rest and living conditions.



ACCESS TO SAFETY EQUIPMENT AND HEALTHCARE

Only **51%** of workers reported being able to talk to their boss about health and safety concerns, and only 63% of workers reported having access to a doctor/medical services. Significantly, only **16%** of workers reported being covered by insurance.

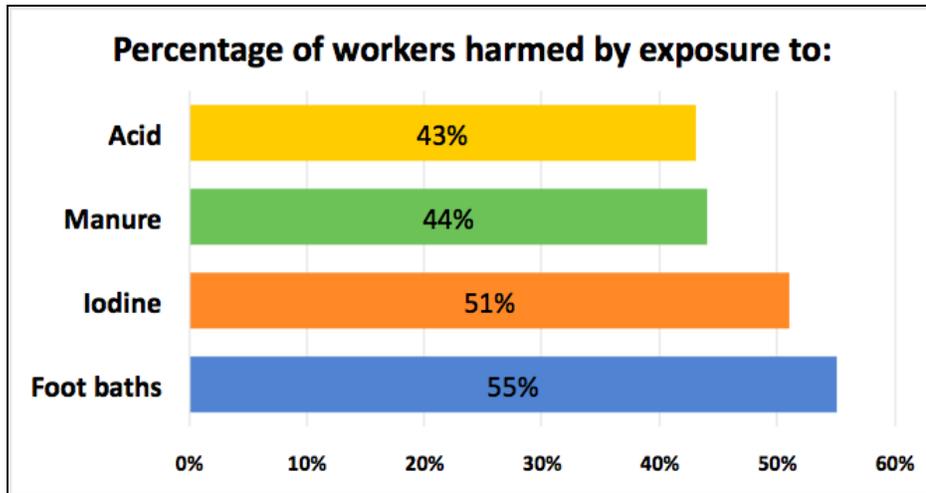
Workers also reported a significant lack of safety equipment for all categories of risks:



CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL RISKS

83% of workers reported experiencing harm from a chemical or biological risk while working on the farm.

The most prevalent health conditions workers reported that are associated with exposure to chemicals commonly used on dairy farms are itchy eyes (49%), cough (47%), and headaches (50%). Workers also reported skin rashes (36%), difficulty breathing (27%), and vision problems (22%).



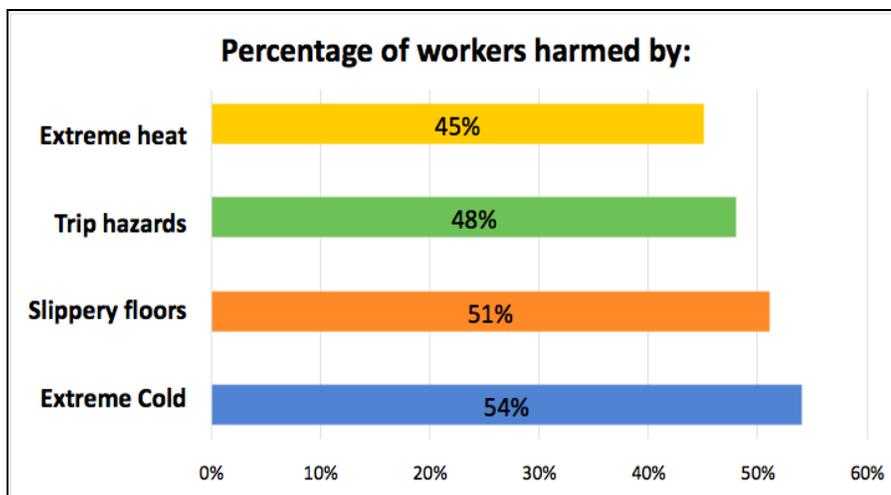
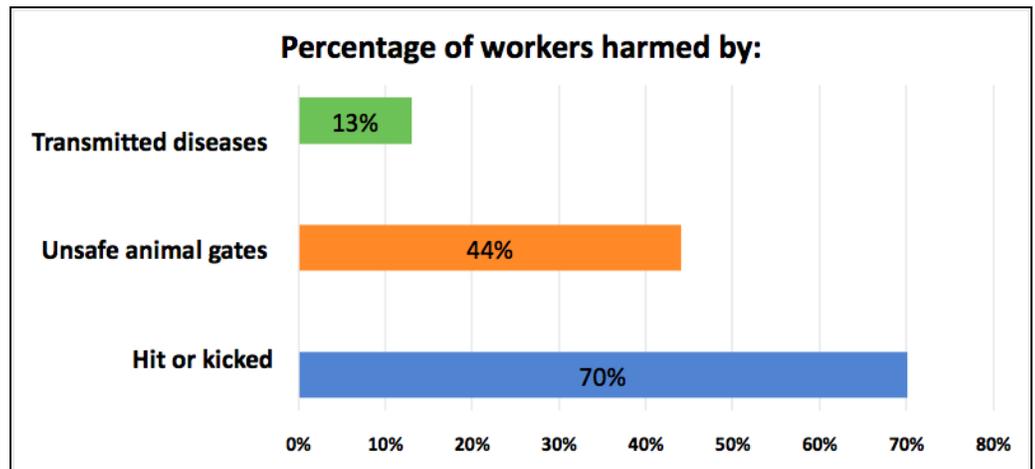
Only 25% of workers reported having received training in relation to chemical risks.

Only 8% of workers reported having received training in relation to biological risks.

RISKS WITH ANIMALS

78% of workers reported being hurt or affected by an animal-related risk.

There is a general lack of training in relation to animal risks, with **only 50% of workers reporting receiving such training.**



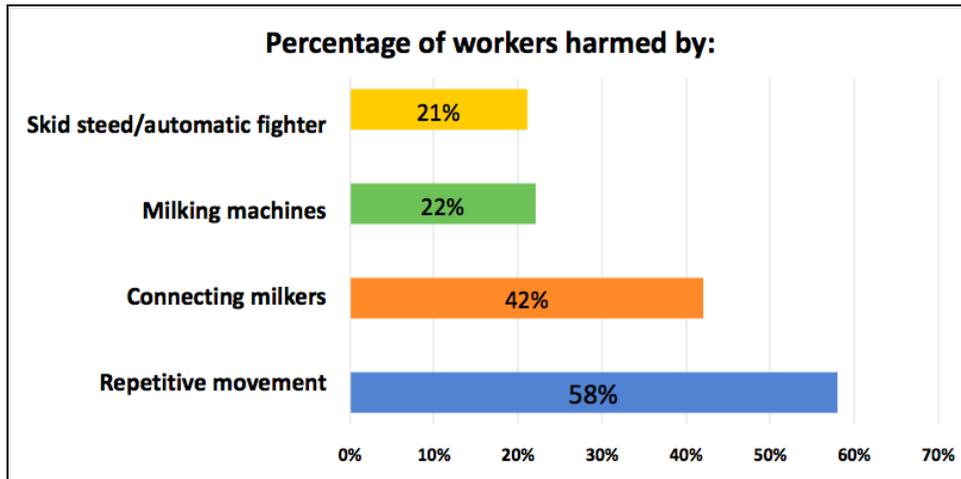
ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

85% of workers report harm to themselves or a colleague arising from an environmental risk.

There is significant lack of training in relation to environmental risks, with **only 12% of workers reporting receiving such training.**

MUSCULOSKELETAL AND MACHINERY RISKS

77% of workers reported harm to themselves arising from a musculoskeletal or machinery risk. 82% of those who report harm from carrying or moving heavy things also reported having pain in the back or neck and 73% of those who report harm from repetitive movement reported having pain in the back or neck.



Only 45% of workers reported having received training in relation to musculoskeletal or machinery risks.

Of those receiving training, only 58% reported that their training was sufficient.

Mental health; and Responses to health and safety issues

67% of workers report one or more concerns related to mental health. The most prevalent concerns are feeling stressed (64%) or feeling depressed or sad (40%). 29% of workers reported concern about losing their job, and 37% reported concerns that their boss will call immigration. Reports of mental health concerns were generally high among workers that reported harm from different risks, for example, 72% of those who reported harm from musculoskeletal/machinery risks also reported one or more mental health concerns.