

Health and Safety at Taylor Farms Food Processing Plant in Tracy, CA

**Host organizations:
Working Partnerships USA and Intl. Brotherhood of Teamsters**

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Tracy is located in California's Central Valley

Tracy is just southwest of Stockton, in **San Joaquin County** and is about a one-hour drive from Berkeley, CA



Taylor Farms Tracy Plants



Valpico Plant



Macarthur Plant

Inside the Tracy Plant



Nicole Bengiveno/The New York Times



Taylor Farms: Walmart in a Salad Bowl/LA Progressive

Justice at Taylor Farms campaign

“Taylor Farms workers in Tracy, California are standing up against poverty wages, disrespect and severe violations of their most basic rights”

–Teamsters website



The image is a screenshot of the Teamsters website. At the top, there is a dark blue navigation bar with the Teamsters logo on the left, which consists of two horses flanking a wheel. To the right of the logo, the word "TEAMSTERS" is written in white, followed by a small upward-pointing arrow. Further right are the menu items: NEWS, BLOG, CAMPAIGNS, DIVISIONS, BENEFITS, LOCALS, and ABOUT. Below this bar is a dark grey banner with the text "NORTH AMERICA'S STRONGEST UNION" in yellow, followed by "James P. Hoffa GENERAL PRESIDENT Ken Hall GENERAL SECRETARY-TREASURER" in white. On the right side of this banner is a search bar with the text "Search..." and a red play button icon. In the top right corner of the website, there is a "STORE" link with a shopping cart icon.

Below the navigation bar, the page title is "» JUSTICE TAYLOR FARMS". The main content area features a large photograph of a group of people, including men and women of various ethnicities, standing outdoors in what appears to be a farm or ranch setting. They are holding a large green banner with a black oval in the center. Inside the oval, the word "Teamsters" is written in white, and below it, the Spanish phrase "¡SÍ SE PUEDE!" is written in white. The background of the photograph shows trees and a fence.

At the bottom left of the photograph, the text "Justice at Taylor Farms" is written in white.

Objectives

- Further examine the causes of injury and illness at Taylor Farms food-processing plant in Tracy, CA
- Gain an understanding of the immediate and long-term effects experienced by an injured worker after reporting an injury

Methods

- **Background research**
- **Develop a bilingual questionnaire**
- **In-depth interviews with injured workers**
- **Key informant interviews with Teamsters organizers**
- **Attend worker meetings in Tracy**

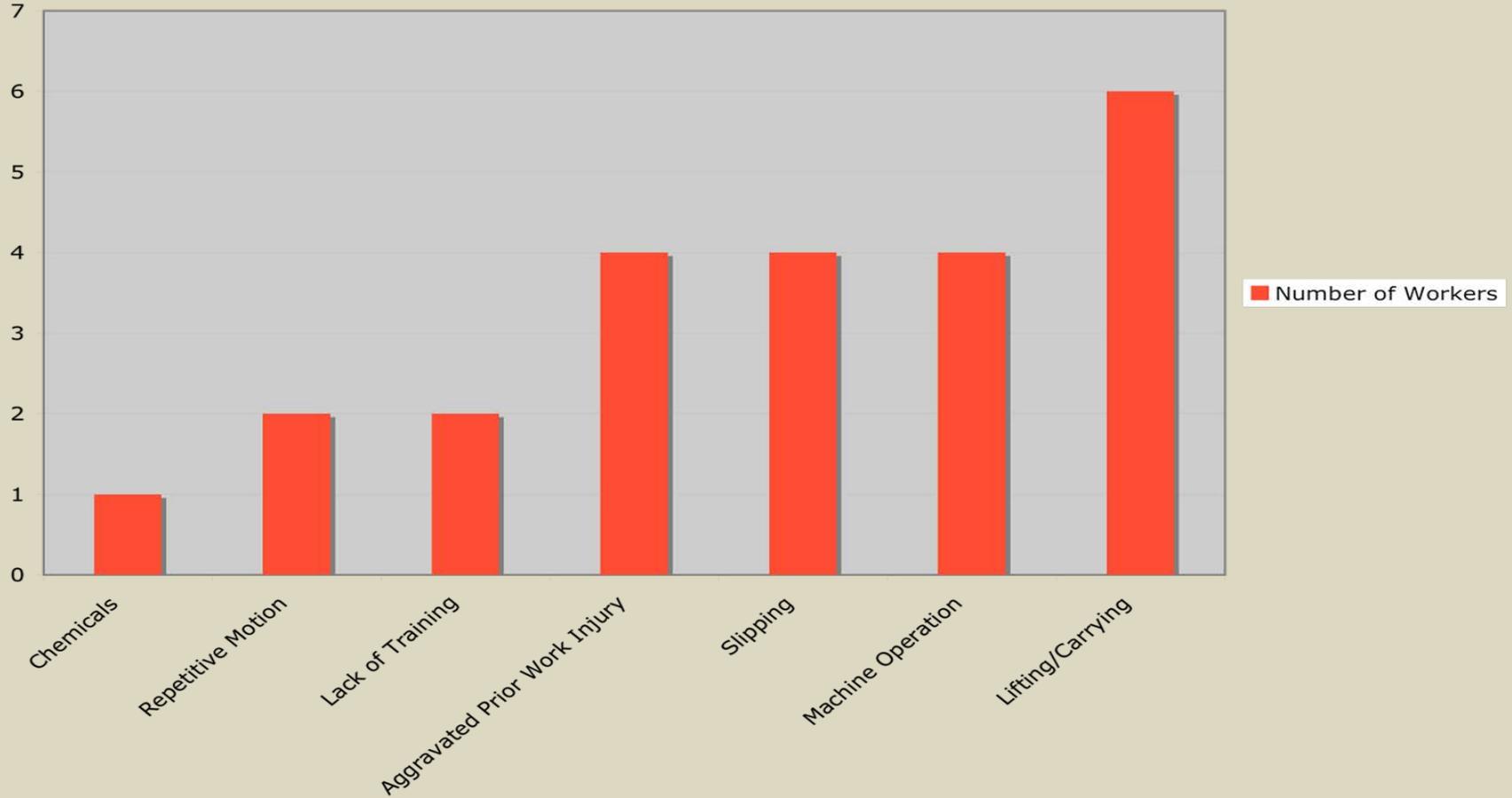


Community center in Tracy, CA where Teamsters worker meetings are held

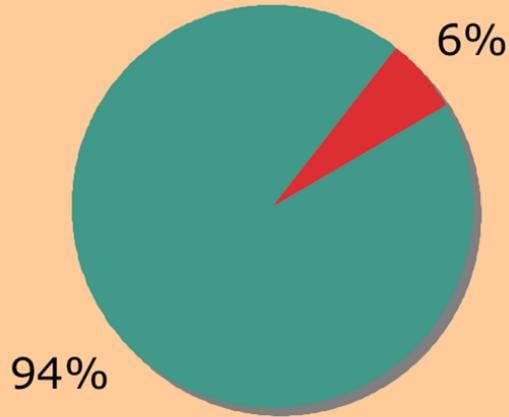
Methods: Questionnaire Development

- **“Can you describe how you were injured or got sick while working at Taylor Farms? What caused this injury/illness? A specific task?”**
- **“Please describe the medical treatment that was provided after your injury. Did you feel like your problem was resolved?”**
- **“What kind of safety equipment do you use at work? Who provides it? Do you think it is enough?”**

Results: Causes of injury



Results: Health and Safety Trainings



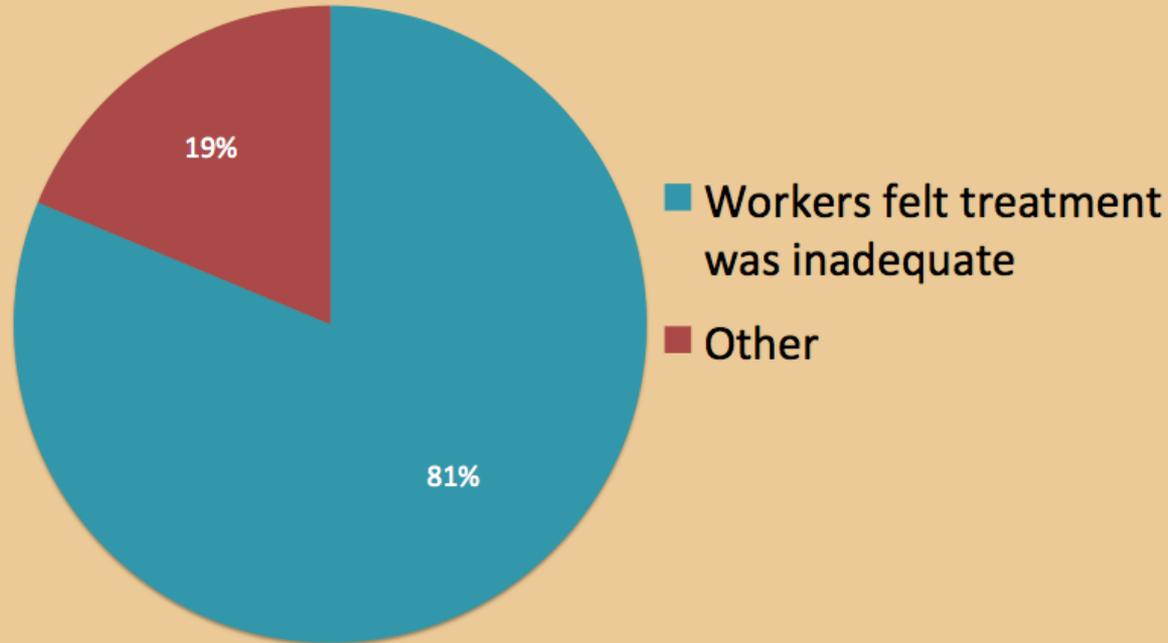
■ Received no Training

■ Received Inadequate Training

“New people starting at the company...don’t get the necessary information to do their work...If you put someone new in a job without training, everyone is at risk.”

*--Injured Taylor Farm Worker
[translated from Spanish]*

Results: Medical Treatment from a Company-Affiliated Doctor after Injury



Results: Long-Term Hardships of Injured Workers

~60% of injured workers we interviewed are still in pain from their injury and have no access to more medical attention

“My problem continues. Sometimes I cannot walk...Sometimes it hurts so much that I can’t stand up...it’s a struggle to sit down and get back up.”

--Worker with work-related back injury

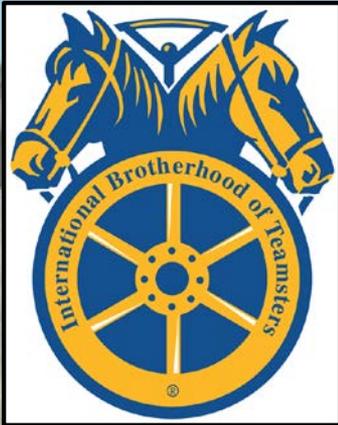
[translated from Spanish]

Results: Other Common Concerns of Injured Workers

- Employer retaliation towards injured workers
- Negative impact of language, socioeconomic status, and immigration status
- Experience of temporary versus permanent workers

Give Back Product

Develop a briefing that presents our findings in the context of health and safety challenges that food-processing workers are facing throughout the Central Valley



WORKING
PARTNERSHIPS
USA

<http://www.blumedisillation.com/food-processing-companies/>

Challenges

- Small sample size
- 20+ hours of travel for interviews/meetings
- Not having access to Taylor Farms Tracy plant

Successes

- Gained workers' trust
- Questionnaire reflects interests and needs of both host organizations
- Findings shed light on common struggles faced by workers at Taylor Farms

Recommendations for Future Research



Taylor Farms workers before a union meeting

- Work-related chronic illness
- Task-specific Health and Safety issues
- Worker vulnerability based on disability, gender, sexual orientation
- Long-term impact of work-related injuries on workers' families

Personal Reflections



**Taylor Farms workers and Teamsters organizers
at a workers' organizing committee meeting**

Acknowledgments

- Mentors: Laura Stock (LOHP), Maria Noel Fernandez (WP USA), Kim Keller (Teamsters)**
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- Site Coordinators: Diane Bush, Nazima El-Askari, David Harrington**
- Fellow SF Bay Area OHIP interns**
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Resources

- “Food Manufacturing in California” (2010). Report compiled by: Northern California Center of Excellence and the Office of Economic Development at Cerritos College. Publisher: Chancellor's Office California Community Colleges Economic and Workforce Development Program.
- Justice at Taylor Farms campaign page: <http://teamster.org/justice-taylor-farms>
- San Joaquin county US Census Bureau statistics: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06077.html>
- San Joaquin County immigration statistics from University of Southern California website: http://csii.usc.edu/documents/SANJOAQUIN_web.pdf

