

SUCCESS in MAINE

ATHLETES IN OVERALLS: MOVEMENT HEALTH + WELLNESS FOR INJURY PREVENTION, INCREASED EFFICIENCY AND CAREER LONGEVITY

Project Director: Cynthia Flores, Labor-Movement LLC



Photo from www.labor-movement.com.

Yes, I've gained valuable knowledge about how to move better and picked up some new exercises and stretches, but the most important lesson I've learned is that farmers must prioritize our health if we want to sustain this work, rather than burning out or wearing down our bodies.

– Farmworker, Maine

Situation: After a 2023 risk management survey, across four states, **Maine, Connecticut, New York and Rhode Island**, Labor-Movement LLC targeted beginning farmers, women producers, and socially disadvantaged groups to learn injury prevention, increased efficiency, and career longevity. The training aimed for participants (farmers and workers) to understand the importance of sound body mechanics for injury prevention and self-advocacy and the economic implications of injury versus avoidance. A six-month survey (with a 40% response rate), showed 91% reporting the implementation of: self-advocacy practices for physical well-being, using movement variations to enhance efficiency, and reducing fatigue and injury risks.

Outcomes: This project, led by **Cynthia Flores** and her team at Labor-Movement LLC, helped beginning farmers, women producers, and socially disadvantaged groups across a total of nine states learn injury prevention by focusing on body mechanics and movement pattern coaching. Among 679 unique participants across nine states of Maine, Connecticut, New York, Vermont, Massachusetts, West Virginia, Maryland, New Hampshire and Rhode Island – 82% were beginning farmers, 74% identified as female, and 47% belonged to disadvantaged groups (LGBTQ+, BIPOC, migrant workers). Additionally, as a result of 18-month coaching, all participating farms established Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for injury prevention with a strong focus on heat-related practices, injury reporting, and emdical form usage. The successful outcomes stemmed from small group, in-person training connecting individual well-being with injury avoidance, ultimately supporting career

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longevity and farm viability. With a change in attitudes (individual and farm's culture) two farms had an increase in non-emergent workers compensation claims the first season (2023), with a decline below pre-2023 WC claims in 2024.

Impacts: Producers (farm owners and farm crew) learned the difference between environmental and systemic labor risks, and how to safely modify their movement strategy or the situation. Producers developed a network list of local resources and providers for pre-injury consultation and bodywork (ex. massage, acupuncture, chiropractor.) Farm owners and managers developed and implemented use of an employee medical form.

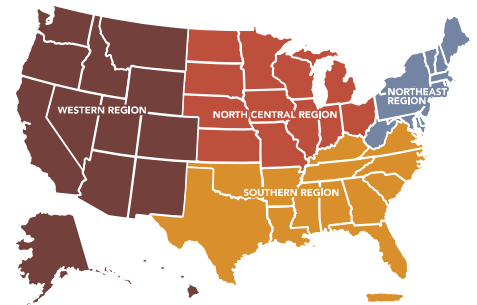
SUCCESS in EVERY STATE

Extension Risk Management Education

Extension Risk Management Education is delivered through four regional centers that provide grant funding and leadership within their regions.

Projects are producer-focused, outcomes-based and encourage public-private partnerships. Funded projects must identify targeted outcomes that will help producers manage risk and then describe how the project will measure those outcomes.

Extension Risk Management Education has funded innovative programs that have generated tangible outcomes for producers in every state. Commitment to funding outcomes, providing transparent accountability, and encouraging collaboration allow you to view the accomplishments of all funded projects on our website: ExtensionRME.org



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