

## “La Vida Diaria: Historias de Trabajadores Agrícolas en Carolina del Norte”

Thank you so much for your interest in screening “La Vida Diaria.” This nine-minute documentary film is freely available for educational purposes, and we ask that you include the information listed in the “Notes on the Film” section of the Discussion Guide to provide necessary context for the piece.

We have also included a list of “Take Action” steps you can participate in to support farmworkers. Background information for each of the “Take Action” steps is available on the blog *Cosecha Countdown: U.S. Farmwork by the Numbers* at [www.cosechacountdown.wordpress.com](http://www.cosechacountdown.wordpress.com).

For more information about farmworkers in North Carolina and throughout the United States, please visit Student Action with Farmworkers’ website at [www.saf-unite.org](http://www.saf-unite.org).

If you have any further questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at [Robyn.n.Levine@gmail.com](mailto:Robyn.n.Levine@gmail.com).

Thank you,

Robyn Levine

2011 Sowing Seeds  
for Change Fellow

## Discussion Guide

### **Notes on the film**

- “La Vida Diaria” was produced over a five-month period in Boone, North Carolina. However, the farmworkers in the film at times speak about their experiences as migrant agricultural laborers throughout other regions of North Carolina and the United States.
  - For example, Victor was denied permission to return to Mexico following his son’s death while working in the tobacco fields in eastern North Carolina.
- The film points out that approximately 150,000 farmworkers labor in North Carolina each year.<sup>1,2</sup>
  - Eighty-five percent of fruits and vegetables produced in the United States, including those in North Carolina, are harvested by hand.<sup>3</sup>
  - Major crops harvested by farmworkers in North Carolina include tobacco, greenhouse and nursery plants, vegetables, fruits, and pine trees.<sup>1,2</sup>
  - Each farmworker’s labor contributes over \$12,000 in profits to North Carolina’s economy each year.<sup>2</sup>
- The film notes that approximately 140 farmworkers with temporary agricultural work visas (H2A visas) live in Watauga County during the nine-month pine tree season.
  - It is estimated that an additional 400 farmworkers who may be undocumented, U.S. citizens, or permanent residents work in the fields in Watauga County as well.<sup>4</sup>
- Farmworker housing and working conditions vary widely by region and employer
  - The film represents only the experiences of this particular group of H2A-contracted farmworkers.
  - The farmworkers in the film expressed that work in eastern North Carolina, especially in the tobacco fields, is much more challenging due to the heat, risk of nicotine poisoning and pesticide exposure, and often unsanitary and overcrowded housing conditions.
- The farmworkers in the film played a large role in guiding the development of the project.
  - They informed my decision to focus on the “daily life” theme, organized their roommates to participate in filming, and selected the final title and music used in the piece.

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<sup>1</sup> NC Dept. of Ag. and Consumer Services, 2004

<sup>2</sup> Larson A., Farmworker Enumeration Study, 2000

<sup>3</sup> Oliveira, V., Hired Farm Labor Use on Fruit, Vegetable, and Horticultural Specialty Farms, 1993

<sup>4</sup> Agricultural Employment Services, North Carolina Employment Security Commission, 2009

## Guiding Questions

- Share your initial reaction to the film.
  - What did you anticipate?
  - What surprised you?
- Which story or theme impacted you the most?
- Share your experiences with migrant and seasonal farmworkers in your own community.
  - In what ways are the experiences of the pine tree workers in the film similar?
  - In what ways are they different?
- How can you advocate for farmworkers in your own community?
  - What resources are available?
  - What resources are missing?
  - Suggestions:
    - Contact one of these national support organizations linking the broader community with farmworkers:
      - *National Farm Worker Ministry (NFWM)*: [www.nfwm.org](http://www.nfwm.org)
      - *Student Action with Farmworkers (SAF)*: [www.saf-unite.org](http://www.saf-unite.org)
    - Participate in the “Take Action” Steps steps listed on the next page
    - Share “La Vida Diaria” with your friends, family, and any organizations in which you participate!

## “Take Action” Steps

For more information, please visit the blog *Cosecha Countdown: U.S. Farmwork by the Numbers* at [www.cosechacountdown.wordpress.com](http://www.cosechacountdown.wordpress.com)

- [Send a letter](#) to supermarket corporate executives asking them to support the Coalition for Immokalee Workers’ Campaign for Fair Food.
- [Sign](#) the United Farm Workers’ petition to end the use of methyl iodide in the fields. The UFW currently has over 40,000 signatures and needs your voice to reach their goal of 200,000.
- Skip the grocery store and shop at local farmers’ markets. Follow the link to shopping tips and a fair [buyer’s guide](#) for farmworker union-approved food labels.
- Donate to your local food bank or launch a [Farmworker Food and Clothing Drive](#), as students from Valdosta State University did this past October. Encourage classmates, community members and all your friends to buy culturally appropriate items from the grocery store and donate them.
- Participate in or make a donation toward the [Building Hope Project](#), a project which helps build chicken coops and small greenhouses for farmworker families throughout North Carolina.
- Support farmworkers in the struggle for fair wages by [participating](#) in FLOC’s campaign against RJ Reynolds. Learn more and consider [making a donation](#) at their website.
- Screen the 30-minute documentary [Harvest of Dignity](#) for your family and friends. Then, [endorse the Harvest of Dignity campaign](#) or upload a [group photo postcard](#) explaining why you support farmworkers.
- Contact your state representatives and senators to tell them to oppose the [American Specialty Agriculture Act](#), a federal bill that would essentially strip farmworkers of the few protections they have under U.S. law.
- Encourage Congress to pass the [CARE Act](#), which would ensure that children who work in agriculture have the same protections as children in every other industry.
- Check out the Coalition of Immokalee Workers’ [Anti-Slavery Campaign](#), then write a letter to the editor of your campus or local newspaper demanding a fair guestworker program.
- Educate yourself and connect with local farmworker organizations in your area. It could be a [farmworker unit](#) of a legal service organization, a [migrant headstart program](#), a [migrant health clinic](#), or a [farmworker union or community organization](#).
- Student Action with Farmworkers works to raise national awareness in the farmworker ally community about farmworker issues in the Southeast. If you’re a college student in North Carolina, check out SAF’s [Student Organizing School](#) and learn to be an effective advocate for farmworkers in North Carolina and the region.
- Learn more about and support the [AgJOBS](#) bill, (Agricultural Jobs Opportunities, Benefits, and Security Act) which would ensure the fair treatment of farmworkers. Click on these links to find your [Senators](#) and [Representatives](#). Contact them and tell them to support AgJOBS, and pledge to support the AgJOBS on the [UFW website](#).
- Keep yourself updated on farmworker issues by [joining the SAF listserv](#). Better yet, help SAF celebrate its 20th anniversary by [making a \\$20 \(or more\) donation!](#)