

## **Needs Assessment for Prospective Hispanic Farmers and Ranchers**

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## **Needs Assessment for Prospective Hispanic Farmers and Ranchers**

### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify the needs and interests of prospective Hispanic farmers and ranchers in the target counties in order to improve outreach programs. The results will help outreach programs to mitigate the barriers identified by study participants and focus on the needs of Hispanic farmers. The methodology used was basic qualitative research using focus group interviews, observational analysis, and literature review of previous studies. Three focus group interviews with 6-14 people in each group were used for data collection. Interviews were conducted in Spanish and recorded. Comparisons were made within groups and among groups. The information was analyzed to identify patterns or trends in discussion. The categories found included family support, education, culture, communication, economic stability, immigration status, services, agriculture, fear, language, vision and opportunities, how to start and maintain a business, and community opinion leadership.*

### **Introduction/Conceptual Framework**

Hispanics are the fastest growing ethnic group in farm ownership and operations in the United States of America (García-Pabón & Lucht, 2009). There is a need to increase the services to Latino farmers and ranchers, who are contributing to the future of agriculture and support their potential role as industry leaders (Marinez & Gomez, 2011). A review of the literature available on Hispanic farmers and ranchers revealed that there are certain barriers for Hispanic farmers to start their own business in agriculture. Due to these barriers, outreach programs have difficulty reaching this part of the population to identify their needs and interests. As the U.S. becomes more diverse, extension programs must continue to expand the ability to serve people from different cultures, and the staff should be prepared to use new perspectives and new ways of doing business (Hobbs, 2004).

Texas is one of the most popular immigrant gateways to the U.S. and due to its proximity to Mexico, many of the state's immigrants are Hispanic. Texas has many advantages that attract immigrants along with U.S. natives, such as rich natural resources, abundant land, central location within the U.S., and it has a business-friendly environment. These advantages present challenges for the fast growing, young, and diverse state (Petersen & Assanie, 2005). Without changing socioeconomic conditions, Texas population could become less educated, less competitive, poorer, and in greater need of state services (Petersen & Assanie, 2005).

The agricultural sector is dependent on undocumented immigrants that conduct repetitive tasks, with no career development and low wages (Callan, 2011). Hispanics tend to have average wages 40% below of those of natives (Petersen & Assanie, 2005). However, there is evidence that Hispanics' socioeconomic status improves with time spent in the U.S. It is more likely for Hispanics to work in farming, construction, and production jobs than professional occupations. In 2000, Hispanics represented 12% of the labor force, but they made up more than 40% of workers in farming occupations (Kochhar, 2005).

Hispanics are not a homogenous group, meaning that one educational model may not be applicable to all Hispanic farmers (Lopez Ariza & Suvedi, 2009). It is a reality that most Hispanics come to the U.S in search of the "American Dream" (Garcia-Pabón & Lucht, 2009).

According to Warrix and Bocanegra (1998), it is very important to understand the Hispanic culture, values and attitudes to be able to work successfully with them. Personalism and familism are key to reach Hispanics successfully. Personalism refers to the faith in person-to-person contact (face-to-face interaction). Familism refers to the importance of the family in an individual's life. According to Romero (2004), the family is the most important vehicle for the transmission of values and beliefs among Hispanics. Due to the rapid growth of the Hispanic population in the U.S. workforce, it is important to understand the level of acculturation and how to effectively integrate them in teams, leadership positions, and other organizational roles.

### **Census Data**

According to Passel, Cohn, and Lopez (2011) the 2010 census accounted for 50.5 million Hispanics in the U.S., which represents 16.3% of the entire population. Over a decade, from 2000 to 2010 the Hispanic population grew 43% (Passel, Cohn, & Lopez, 2011). The U.S. Census Bureau projects that the Latino population will comprise 30% of the U.S. population by 2050 (Martinez & Gardner, 2011).

According to Garcia and Marinez (2005), having an accurate Agricultural Census count is important so extension agents know the size and growth of this part of the population. Otherwise, it is hard to plan or advocate for Hispanic farmers. Possible barriers for the participation of Hispanics in the Agricultural Census are (1) missing from USDA mailing list, (2) limited or no knowledge of Agricultural Census, (3) language and illiteracy problems, (4) apprehension about the USDA, (5) immigration status, (6) name borrowers (presta nombres-family members with good credit get a loan for them, so really the owner of the farm is someone else), (7) informal farming arrangements, and (8) farmers as farmworkers. Many Hispanic farmers are losing money, have large debts, and they do not take advantage of the programs the USDA has to offer. With an accurate census, programs can be justified and developed to better serve the needs of Hispanic farmers (Garcia & Marinez, 2005). Furthermore, the USDA should also assist in basic agricultural training for Latino farmers and ranchers (Starkweather, Bailey, Preston, Jeanetta & Gonzalez, 2011).

### **Hispanics Role in Agriculture**

Hispanics represent a potential substitute for the aging white and African American producers whose families no longer want to continue working on the family farm and prefer non-farm careers (Garcia & Marinez, 2005). Many of the American farmers are growing older and do not have another family member to take over the operation. Latino farmers represent a good opportunity for development as a new and dynamic part of the community development (Garcia-Pabón & Lucht, 2009).

According to Lopez and Suvedi (2009), Hispanics become farm owner-operators because they consider agriculture a profitable activity. Working on a farm is also part of their heritage, involves family values, allows them to be their own boss, and have a better lifestyle. Starkweather et al. (2011) reported that Latino farmers come from agricultural backgrounds, and they see farming as a desirable lifestyle with most of their knowledge learned from experience.

### **Cultural Barriers Faced by Hispanics**

Warrix and Bocanegra (1998), identified five cultural barriers to conducting successful programs with Hispanics. These include level of education, language barriers (78% of Hispanics speak Spanish at home), poverty (23% of Hispanics families live below the poverty line), lack of understanding of the business system (marketing, tax laws, record keeping), and misunderstanding of cultural values (personalism, familism, and machismo) by program providers. Warrix and Bocanegra (1998) suggest strategies to increase participation of Hispanics in extension and USDA programs which include partnering with Hispanic institutions and community organizations to develop credibility with the clientele, translating materials, organizing focus groups with Hispanic facilitators to determine topics for future programs, utilizing bilingual staff to present training, and adhering to non-discrimination practices and procedures.

### **Barriers faced by Hispanics to participation in USDA programs**

Hispanic farmers and ranchers are classified as socially disadvantaged individuals (SDA), which includes members who have been subject to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard of their individual qualities (Martinez-Feria, 2011). Hispanics appear to have the lowest participation rate of USDA programs compared to other SDA farmer and rancher groups (Garcia & Marinez, 2005; Marinez & Gomez, 2011). According to Marinez and Gomez (2011), Hispanic participation in USDA programs within one state was limited because USDA agencies had not adequately marketed their programs to Hispanics, language barriers existed, and there was difficulty understanding program eligibility and services.

### **Barriers faced by Hispanics to start their own farm**

Barriers identified for Hispanics wanting to start, develop, and sustain farming and ranching are many. These include: limited access to land, high prices of land, limited economic resilience, limited access to machinery and equipment, limited financial literacy or access to financial resources, limited education, lack of knowledge and understanding of various government farm programs, absence of financial records, and misconception that USDA programs are only for large operations (Martinez-Feria, 2011). Latino/Hispanic farmers start their businesses with personal savings, mostly because they have a limited knowledge of USDA programs and are suspicious of the government. Limited interaction with the USDA can also be attributed to language barriers (Starkweather, Bailey, Preston, Jeanetta, & Gonzalez, 2011). Reasons identified by Latinos for quitting farming or ranching include the lack of information about USDA programs, price of land, low profits, aging, and lack of a business plan formulation (Starkweather et al., 2011).

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, needs are addressed in order, starting with the base of the pyramid, which looks at physiological needs. Moving up the pyramid, the needs start to become more complex and include safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and finally self-actualization (Poston, 2009). Brown (2002) writes: "Without a clear understanding of needs, training efforts are at best randomly useful and at worst, useless. The trainer will only be successful and perceived as such to the extent that needs are carefully assessed, and programs developed and carried out that meet those needs" (p.577).

Low participation in an outreach program oriented toward beginning Hispanic farmers and ranchers developed by Texas A&M University-Commerce resulted in the need to identify current and prospective participants' needs and interests for future training. The need also existed to identify potential barriers to community acculturation and engagement by Hispanics as well as incentivizing support services.

### **Purpose/Research Questions**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify the needs and interests of prospective Hispanic farmers and ranchers in East Texas in order to improve outreach programs. The study was guided by the following research questions:

- (1) What are the needs, interests, and concerns of prospective and beginning Hispanic farmers and ranchers?
- (2) What are the types and preferences of training or outreach that are relevant to prospective and beginning Hispanic farmers and ranchers?
- (3) Who are local opinion leaders among Hispanic communities?
- (4) What Hispanic family needs are relevant to current and future training and outreach?
- (5) What are the relationships of prospective Hispanic farmers and ranchers with agencies and services in the community?

This research is related to Priority 5 of the 2016-2020 National Research Agenda of American Association for Agricultural Education, which focuses on efficient and effective agricultural education programs (Roberts, Harder, & Brashears, 2016).

### **Methods/Procedures**

#### **Design of the Study**

According to Barbour (2007), focus groups allow the researcher to generate and analyze interaction between participants. Focus groups have a unique potential to combine structure and spontaneity. The focus group method was used in this study because, according to the literature, focus groups are an excellent way of identifying the needs of under-served populations, and this method can give voice to silent immigrant groups. In addition, Malek (2001) states: a focus group is an assessment tool that provides a comfortable approach, which allows obtaining direct information from the target population. They share information without feeling compelled or driven to specific answers. The focus group is a technique in which participants are directly involved in gathering information.

It is imperative to transcribe verbatim in the language in which the interview was conducted. This is necessary to capture the richness of the participants' narrations as they give them. Qualitative researchers should ensure representation of participants' beliefs, words, and behaviors during data collection (Esposito, 2001).

The methodology used for this study was basic qualitative research using focus group interviews. Combining the analysis of focus group responses with observational analysis and a review of relevant prior studies allowed data triangulation to increase internal validity. Peer

examination by members of the research team contributed to the consistency of the study (Merriam, 2009).

### Focus Group questions

Focus group questions were adapted from a prior study (Malek, 2001) which focused on Hispanic family needs that could be addressed through extension programs and other questions were developed by the research team to collect information to answer the research questions as well as provide direction for future programming with this audience that might reach beyond their interests in farming or ranching. Malek (2001) adapted prompts included:

1. What would make your life and your family’s life better?
2. Which of the ideas you shared need the most urgent attention?
3. Please suggest what you would like agencies to do differently to better assist Hispanic families. If you can, name the agency and what you would like them to do differently.
4. What do you think you and your family could do to help accomplish the suggestions you have made?
5. What would be your preferred way or your family’s preferred way of learning about the issue (s) you have mentioned?

Four additional questions were developed by the research team. Responses to these questions provided context regarding potential barriers preventing assistance and strategies that could possibly increase the number of current and prospective Hispanic farmers and ranchers in targeted counties.

6. Do you have any experience in farming/ranching?
7. Do you have your own farm? If no, would you be interested in having your own farm in the future?
8. What do you consider some of the challenges that Hispanics face when trying to establish their own farm or small business?
9. What kind of training or educational activities would interest you?

### Selection of participants

The target population consisted of current and prospective Hispanic farmers and ranchers with limited resources located in various community based-settings in three counties in East Texas. The majority of the participants in the focus groups were prior attendees at the informational sessions for Hispanics interested in starting their own farms given by Texas A&M University-Commerce. The recruitment method was verbal, using a script and through distribution of flyers for recruitment. The participants were invited to a meal in one of the targeted counties. Table 1 shows the profile information for each focus group.

Table 1  
*Focus Groups Profile Information*

Focus group	Background	Total number participants	Female	Male
1	Students members of the Latino	6	4	2

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	Agricultural Student Speakers Outreach (LASSO)			
2	County 1- Participants of “Breaking Barriers” program	6	5	1
3	County 2- 4 participants of “Breaking Barriers” program, others recruited by opinion leader in the group	14	8	6

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## Data Collection

Three focus group interviews with 6-14 people in each group were carried out for data collection. The primary investigator served as the moderator and the support of an assistant moderator was available. The moderator kept the conversation flowing and maintained a non-threatening environment (Fuhrman & Rohs, 2011). The assistant moderator took notes and observations of each focus group. A non-Spanish-speaking team member was also present to observe activities and interactions of the participants, physical setting, participant conversations, and moderator behavior. Merriam (2009) suggested that having a thick description of the setting and participants contributed to the transferability of the findings to future outreach initiatives. Interviews were conducted in Spanish and recorded. Afterwards they were coded and translated into English. The data collection procedures were approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Both English and Spanish examples of the Informed Consent Form accompanied the IRB protocol.

After each focus group interview, there was a debriefing between the moderator and assistant moderator to capture first impressions and highlights. At the end of each focus group session, the assistant moderator provided a summary of key points to the participants for verification. The recordings were transcribed and analyzed in Spanish, and then translated into English by the primary investigator whose first language is Spanish. The translation was reviewed and edited, if needed, by the assistant moderator who is also fluent in English and Spanish. The transcripts were open coded to identify categories and then an axial coding was used to identify relationships and connections between the final categories.

The analysis was inductive and comparative, where the researcher immersed in the data collection. This means comparing other things that were coded the same way, thus maintaining a close connection between categories (Merriam, 2009). Comparisons were made within groups

and among groups. The information was then analyzed to identify patterns or trends in discussion. The analysis continuum followed recommendations by Morgan and Krueger (1998), which included raw data, description, interpretation, and recommendation. Data management included preparation, identification, and manipulation, as prescribed by Merriam (2009).

## **Data analysis**

The coding of data followed a systematic and structured process, which included a verbatim transcript of recordings of focus group sessions in Spanish, open coding in Spanish, translation into English, and finally, axial coding of categories. The translation was conducted by the principal investigator whose first language is Spanish. Translations were also reviewed and edited, if needed, by the assistant moderator who is also fluent in Spanish and English.

The open coding resulted in categories for each question, followed by supporting quotes; this was done for each focus group. Once the open coding was translated in English, the axial coding was done to make connections and look for relationships among categories. The axial coding allowed unifying certain common categories into one category, keeping consistent with the format for each question in each focus group interview. This process was also supported by the assistant moderator and observer notes as well as debriefing recordings and notes.

Finally, the repetitive categories from each question for each focus group were combined with their consolidated supportive quotes. This resulted in overall categories for each focus group. At the end, there were twelve themes that emerged among the three focus groups plus one relevant category in the third focus group (number 13).

## **Researcher Subjectivity Statement**

Reflexivity refers to “the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, the human as instrument” (Lincoln and Guba, 2000, p.183, as cited in Merriam 2009). In this case the researcher was the main instrument for data collection. This gives an opportunity for a researcher to explain potential biases regarding the study an interpretation of the data (Merriam, 2009). The researcher is of Hispanic background and is passionate about working with Hispanic population, specifically on the role of culture in agricultural aspects. Some of the participants of the study were involved in grant project funded by USDA “Breaking Barriers”, where the researcher was a team member of the project. The inherent interest of the researcher in this population and involvement in the project provide potential bias, however, the main objective was to identify the needs and barriers that exist to improve the services provided. It is expected that the researcher will be careful when collecting data in a way that any personal biases will not influence their observations (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 2009).

## **Results/Findings**

### **Emerging Themes**

*Family support* (importance of the family union and support provided as an individual and as a whole unit). Among the three focus groups, with one group being young Hispanic agriculture students, it was observed that familism, the importance of the family in an individual’s life, is reflected clearly in their answers. They highlighted the importance of education and family support. One participant said: “The most important thing is family union,



what is the purpose of having a separated family?, it is like having a house, if a wall is out of place, it is going to fall.” The young Hispanic group focused most of their responses on the needs and concerns they had towards their parents, as expressed “My parents can’t go to school and they didn’t study in Mexico (...) technology is also advancing and they need to learn a little bit more.” On the other hand, the adult group focused their responses on concerns they had for their children, one participant said, “My children need to be better than me, for their future, that is what you want as a parent, for them to live better than us.”

*Education* (higher education is seen as a way to improve their lifestyle, but also the importance of education at home: teaching values and principles). As a priority need, they mentioned education for both youth and adults who have empirical knowledge, but seek more technical knowledge in agriculture. Participants indicated that with education they will be able to overcome challenges and have a better future. This is the main reason why most came to the United States, which they perceive to be a country of opportunities. One participant highlighted, “I always tell my children, we came to this country with a purpose, so they had a better life (...) they have to prepare themselves, they have to move forward (...) even though they challenge me, they tell me, even though you are older you have to prepare yourself, that I have to study.” Education begins and is supported by the family, but with the support of agencies, institutions, and government participants can take advantage of more opportunities. One participant concluded, “Everything came out from education and preparation, but you can’t have that without the support of your family.”

*Culture* (traditions, behaviors, beliefs, values, and the common ground they share with their community, which is transmitted from generation to generation). There was concern for the young generations to preserve and transmit their culture to future generations. One participant said: “For me it is important to educate my son and teach him Spanish, because my husband is an American, but also I need to teach my son not to have the fear my family had, that I had, tell him that there are opportunities and doors to be opened everywhere.” They mentioned gender discrimination in agricultural jobs, a participant stated, “I would have liked to work in a ranch, but it is too bad that they do not give women the same opportunity.”

*Communication* (communication with agencies and among family members). Most participants were not aware of the services available from state and federal agencies. They expressed that communication has not been successful, which could be one of the reasons for the lack of participation of Hispanics in existing programs. One participant said: “Sometimes you do not know the benefits, like in the school they have a lot of benefits, and sometimes you just don’t know.” They considered the form of communication that the agencies should have with older people must be more friendly and face-to-face. One participant expressed it like this: “(...) It is best face-to-face, I think the people that teach them should be common people (...) One prefers to talk with someone of your own race, like they look like them.”

*Economic Stability* (money and economic fluency to meet their basic needs and start their own business). The lack of knowledge in the financial administration and investment analysis made them doubt as well because of the uncertainty of their immigration status. One participant said: “They don’t know how to use that money and they waste it...they don’t know how to manage the money and they lose a lot.” Another participant expressed, “Save and invest in something that will probably not be there tomorrow.”

*Immigration status* (how legal status of individuals in the United States affects their lives). They perceived that a legal status would bring mutual benefits for the individual and for the country's economy. One participant said, "If everyone was fix, they will have more jobs, more money, it will help the economy, so it is a double benefit, because we will feel more peaceful here in the United States, be with all the family without problems, because now like you see a lot of people say, I see a policeman and I go the other way." The difficulties to start their own business were also affected. One participant said: "I think the first thing one thinks as an obstacle is the legal status, and you start saying, I can't do this because they are going to ask for this, I can't get this other thing, I can't do this procedure, we say NO to too many things, and you get stuck."

*Services* (existent relationships with agencies such as schools, health, and government agencies). The participants mentioned the importance of having a Hispanic staff in the agencies to serve them better and break the barriers. One participant suggested, "Maybe right now there are not many Hispanics involved in the agencies of that size and we will need a Hispanic, so they can know our needs, Hispanic needs." Another participant said, "I think Hispanics identify with the needs of other Hispanics, because is the same culture, because sometimes the needs are unknown."

*Agriculture* (interest in agriculture and perceptions of agriculture in their lives). One participant said: "Agriculture is something that unifies the family, because my father and many Hispanics grew on a ranch and that is what they know how to do." They expressed there should be more attention given to the participation of the youth in FFA and guide to take advantage of the opportunities it offers. One participant stated, "I would like more meetings like this, for the FFA, from high schools, Latin kids, there are not many (...) make a curriculum for those that want to get here."

*Fear* (shyness, fear to communicate, or ask for information). They recognized that shyness exists when trying to access information. One participant said, "You are ashamed of asking people." Other participant said: "Shame, I think it's a barrier that also affects, not being able to move forward, also shyness, so I think those are the things that affect." Fear is also connected to *Language* (as a limitation to communicate and access information). One participant said: "Another thing is language, it's another barrier, even though one can say, I do understand, but not 100%, there are a lot of important things, when you want to start a business, you want to understand 100%, so that is a barrier."

*Vision and opportunities* (as part of their lives to be successful, to take advantage of the opportunities presented to them and have established goals). One participant said: "Many Hispanics families come to the United States to have a better life and they want a better life for their kids." In some cases that vision includes *How to start their own business* (lack of understanding as a limitation to start their own business). Participants recognized that they must do a double effort to overcome barriers, and that when they come to this country, they must start from zero. One participant said: "The problem was how to find out what to do [start a new business], we don't speak very good English, it was a problem and all the paperwork was very hard for someone to understand."

*Community leader* (a category that was present in the last focus group, the importance of a leader in their community for obtaining information and decision making). It was highlighted

the importance of a community leader as a reference point to access information about the opportunities, as well as a moral support and advisor in the decision-making process. It is key to identify a community leader for calling community members to participate in development programs. One participant said: “I want to say thanks to Mrs. Alvarez, she has been a guide for me, she helped me a lot with Regina, when she got out of school and I did not want to let her go to college, she told me to give her a chance.”

As the nature of a qualitative study; the results cannot be generalized further than the participants of the study. Transferability of the findings is possible for potential participants of the target counties of study, by providing a thick description of the participants and the setting.

### **Conclusions/Implications**

According to Lopez and Suvedi (2009), Hispanics become farm owner operators because they consider agriculture a profitable activity. Working in a farm is also part of their heritage, involves family values, allows them to be their own boss, and have a better lifestyle. Our participants also perceived agriculture as a way of subsistence, for their own use, and as a family activity and tradition. There is a need to increase the services to Latino farmers and ranchers, contributing to the future of agriculture and their potential role as industry leaders as previously indicated by Marinez and Gomez (2011). Concern existed for the future preparation of the youth in agriculture. They recognized the importance and relevance of the agriculture sector and the importance of the professional preparation of the youth in agriculture.

The youth were aware of the importance of their education and preparation as professionals to increase their knowledge and not to only be “farmers” but agriculture professionals. They admitted that education opened their eyes to an array of opportunities and services available. Starkweather et al. (2011) reported that Latino farmers come from agricultural backgrounds, and they see farming as a lifestyle and most of their knowledge is learned from experience. It is also mentioned that the current Hispanic farmers need technical knowledge to support their empirical knowledge and be updated about the technological advances to maximize their production and benefits in agriculture. There is a need to increase the services for Hispanic farmers and ranchers, but mostly improve the communication strategy from the agencies.

Our focus groups participants recognized that their immigrant status limits them to obtain only low-paying jobs, with intensive labor which limits their economic fluency. The immigrant status creates a demotivation in the agriculture production as main business, because of low payments of products. The agricultural sector is dependent on undocumented immigrants that conduct repetitive tasks, with no career development, and low wages (Callan, 2011). Hispanics tend to have average wages 40% below of those of natives (Petersen & Assanie, 2005). It is also a reality that most Hispanics come to the U.S in search of the “American Dream” (Garcia-Pabón & Lucht, 2009). Participants agreed that they all came to the United States in search for a better life and opportunities, what they call the “American dream.” Due to the rapid growth of the Hispanic population in the U.S. workforce, it is important to understand the level of acculturation and how to effectively integrate them in teams, leadership positions and other organizational roles (Romero, 2004).

Family union and support are the fundamental pillars for the development of the Hispanic family as a whole and as individuals. Their integration in society should support their culture, because both adults and youth express concerns of losing their culture identity and heritage in their current and future generations towards their exposure to the American culture. Learning the English language was important for participants' personal growth as individuals, for work, to start their own businesses, and support their children's education and activities. Technical support in agriculture, business planning, administration, and finances was identified as a need.

The fear, insecurity, and perceived discrimination for their immigrant status creates a big barrier. They admitted the existence of fear in the Hispanic community for being minority and they are afraid to express themselves. According to Martinez and Gardner (2011), Latinos face discrimination in institutions based on social networks, where they are very selective, to have access to the information they require, which results on Latinos relying on themselves and their networks. Participants lack knowledge about their right and responsibilities in the United States and information on how to access the best options for health insurance, education, loans, and government agencies was also needed.

### **Recommendations**

The Hispanic youth and adults in this study were aware of the opportunities they have in this country, as well as the sacrifices they went through to be here. For the youth, all this relates to their future potential and having better opportunities than their parents. Easier ways to access these opportunities should be made available. Addressing these basic needs and concerns such as family, education, culture, finances, immigration, health, and communication will allow the successful adoption of development programs, including a better use and application of agriculture programs offered by extension and the USDA.

It is recommended that universities and government agencies take in consideration the results revealed in this needs assessment for future training and outreach opportunity to support this segment of the population. Some of the recommendations include offering education in family issues by experts on topics such as interpersonal relations, family coexistence, parent-children relationships through different life stages, and the adaptation to the new culture while maintaining their own. Continue facilitating conditions for learning the English language for adults. On the other hand, training in administration of finances and introduction to good credit practices would be very beneficial.

It is important to capitalize on the agricultural interests of Hispanic families by encouraging youth to enroll in secondary agricultural education and participate in FFA. Promote careers in farming, ranching, and professional employment in the agricultural industry. To support these initiatives, it is recommended to create a Hispanic information system. This information system should include programs, projects, initiatives, and proposals available to the Hispanic community through private sources and public agencies. Local information centers in strategic places with a high Hispanic population can be created. These centers should be managed by staff fluent in Spanish and English who are knowledgeable about opportunities available to Hispanics. Ideally, once established, these centers should be self-sustaining. Potential exists for these centers to be managed through local community-based organizations, public schools, community colleges, or universities.

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