



FROM THE FIELD:



Promising Health & Safety
Practices on Thoroughbred Farms

WWW.WORKERSAFETYANDHEALTH.COM

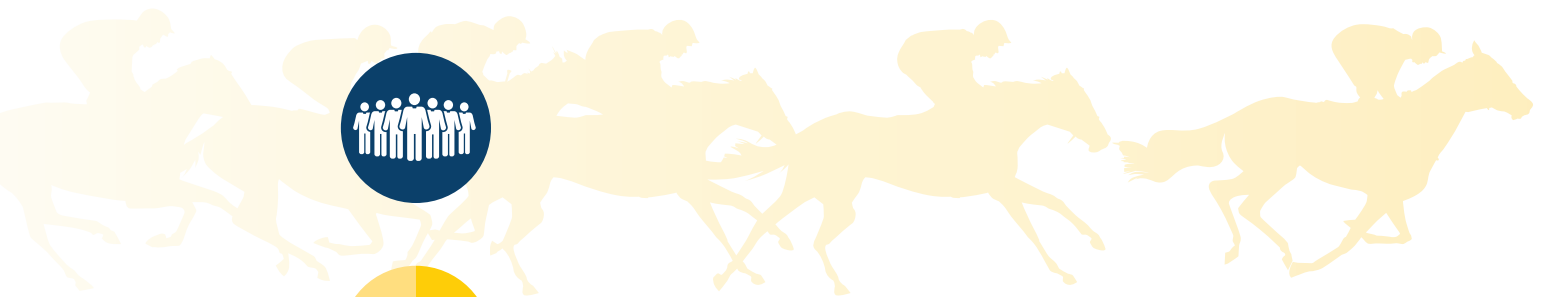


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About the Study

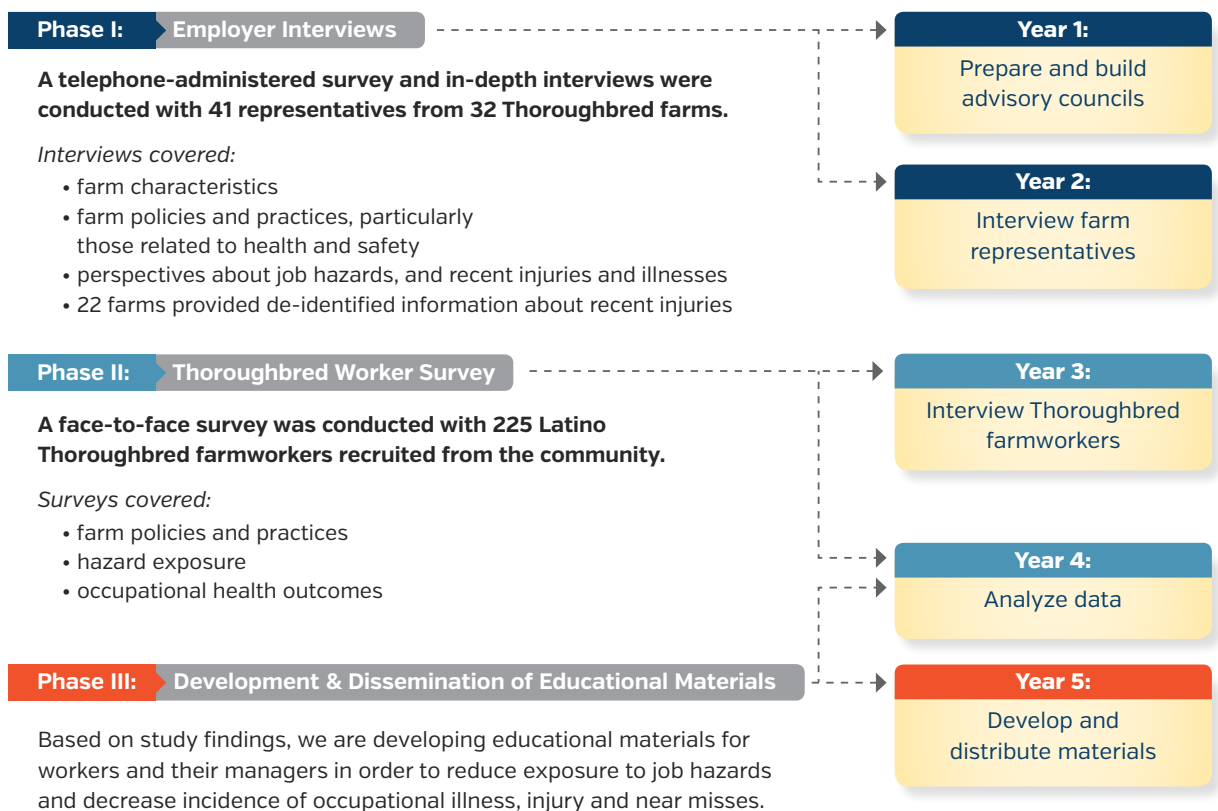
In recent years the Thoroughbred industry, in Kentucky and elsewhere, has become more diverse. In fact, our study results reveal that at least half of Thoroughbred farmworkers in Kentucky are estimated to be Latino. With all the strengths this diversity brings, it also brings complexity and challenges in ensuring workers' safety and health.

The goal of the Thoroughbred Worker Health and Safety Study is to help farms meet these challenges and to make work safer on Thoroughbred farms. In order to do this, we collected information from 32 Thoroughbred farm representatives and from 225 Latino Thoroughbred workers on the work conditions, management practices, and work-related injuries experienced by Thoroughbred workers and are providing educational tools and resources to workers and managers based on study findings. More information about the study is available at www.workersafetyandhealth.com.

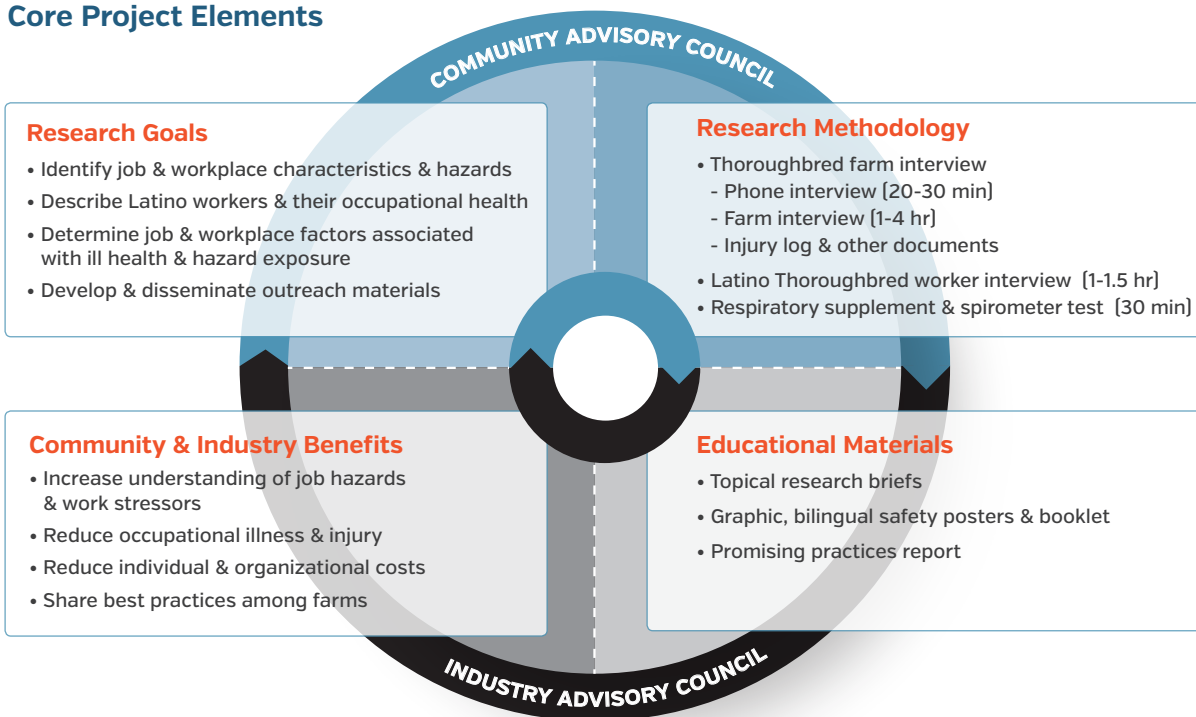
Farm representatives requested three main types of resources in the in-depth interviews:

1) a report sharing farms' promising health and safety practices, 2) research briefs that communicate key study findings in a simple format, and 3) graphic safety materials in English and Spanish. This report addresses the first request. All of these resources may be downloaded for free on the project website at www.workersafetyandhealth.com.

Project Phases



Core Project Elements



About this Report

One thing that was often repeated in the in-depth interviews with farm representatives was the desire to learn what other farms were doing to meet challenges related to health and safety and managing a diverse workforce. This *From the Field* report is comprised of summaries of the health, safety, and management practices employed by farms in our study that were described through these interviews. These promising, and sometimes novel, practices cover six key themes: **Employee Engagement, Employee Orientation and Job Training, Health and Wellness, Managing the Language Gap, Order and Routine, and Safety Meetings.**

We have also included information gleaned from the 225 surveys conducted with Latino Thoroughbred workers that are relevant to these six themes. These findings are presented in a section included within each theme entitled "What Latino Thoroughbred workers told us."

We offer this *From the Field* report to farms in hopes that employing the practices described within it can help farms reduce their costs and help all of the industry's workers enjoy a safer, healthier work environment.

Resources that Promote Employee Engagement

The term “**employee engagement**” is likely familiar to human resource representatives and unfamiliar to farm managers. Familiar or unfamiliar, it **exerts a strong influence on worker satisfaction**. The degree to which employees feel connected to their work and co-workers can make a big difference in their job performance and commitment. Farms in this study worked to improve employee engagement in the following ways.

▶ Employee Recognition



In order to recognize exemplary work and incentivize others to work hard, many farms rewarded employees who exerted extra effort, often with cash or prizes. One farm offered gift cards to the employee of the month and cash prizes for the best groomed horse on Derby Day. Others provided cash prizes or bonuses to sales staff based on their performance.

▶ Financial Support



Recognizing that farmworkers sometimes find themselves in financial difficulty many farms provided financial support to workers beyond their wages. Why?

Because farm managers and owners recognize that financial problems can lead to stress. Not only can stress cause strain in a worker's home life, but it can also bleed over into work and cause distraction. And distraction can be very unsafe for those working around large animals.

For some farms, financial support was largely informal and consisted of interest-free loans or cash advances. In one instance, a farm provided an employee an advance on his paycheck to cover medical expenses related to an emergency surgery.

Other farms offered financial assistance more formally. In fact, 81% of farms provided some form of financial bonus. Some offered help for those earning a GED or provided college tuition assistance for workers' children. Other farms encouraged employees to invest in a 401k plan – with some matching employee contributions – while others offered housing onsite or housing allowances.

▶ Co-ownership of a Horse



Farm owners and managers are interested in how well work is accomplished at their farms because they care about the horses, but also because they are financially invested in the business. A few farms believed

that the the same may be true for workers if they were also financially invested. To this end, a few farms either gave a horse to their grooms to collectively ‘own’, or included workers in the profit share when the horse was sold. It seemed to work. These farms noted that not only did the practice enhance workers’ understanding of the relationship between the quality of their work and the success of the farm, but it also increased their motivation to exert extra effort. One manager noted that workers were more attentive to horses’ appearances in front of clients when they had some skin in the game.

▶ Morale-Boosting Perks



Farms attempted to boost staff morale through a variety of social activities and employee perks. Informed by employees’ interests, some targeted workers:

giving away basketball or Derby tickets; offering employee breakfasts or lunches; allowing food trucks onto the farm; providing space where workers could hit golf balls or play soccer; or offering a warm, dry recreation room with a TV and computer breaks.

Others perks and activities extended to workers’ families: allowing families to fish, exercise, or do laundry on the farm; hosting an end of breeding season cookout; hosting a Christmas party complete with a Santa and gifts; or sponsoring a 5K race for workers and families.

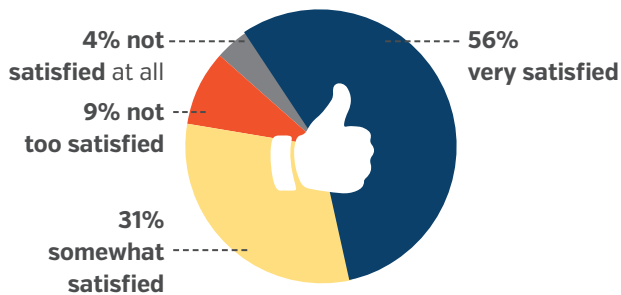
Regardless of whether the practices targeted workers or families, all farms attempted to foster a friendly environment between workers and management.

Benefits of Improving Employee Engagement

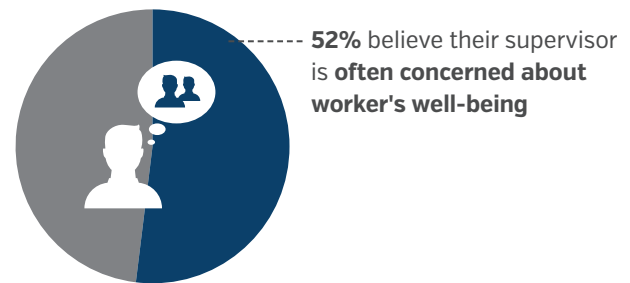
- A **satisfied and engaged worker** may be less likely to miss work, be more open to constructive criticism, and be more likely to develop better relationships among themselves and with management.
- **Engaged workers** are also more likely to remain at the farm, thus reducing the expense of hiring and training new staff.
- **Non-work stressors** such as financial strain can become workplace distractions, pulling a worker's focus off the assigned task. Consequently, helping workers manage their non-work obligations can free them to be more attentive at work.

What Latino Thoroughbred Workers Told Us About Employee Engagement:

How satisfied are Latino workers with their horse farm jobs?



How concerned are supervisors with worker well-being?



In Brief: Other Practices for Engaging Employees

- ▶ **Provide third-party counseling** to workers coping with personal problems.
 - Some farms provided Employee Assistance Programs (EAP).
 - One farm paid for a marriage counselor for an employee.
- ▶ **Take advantage of down time** to regularly teach workers about the business, so they can see how their work fits in the bigger picture.
- ▶ **Institute a way for employees** to communicate problems and grievances to management.
- ▶ **Recognize employees for the hard work** they provide your farm.
- ▶ **Invest in your workers** by helping them earn their GED by subsidizing classes, or paying their attendance fee.
- ▶ **Promote individuals** from within the organization so that workers are motivated to work hard.

Work stress was associated with a 6.7x increase in odds of injury.

Keep work stress down by enhancing employee engagement.

Employee Orientation and Job Training

Although we found that training was most often informal and on the job, **some farms standardized their employee orientation and job training procedures in order to ensure that workers understood 1) what was expected of them, 2) how to work safely, 3) how things worked on the farm, and 4) what benefits they were offered.** Below are examples of specific practices that farms implemented in this effort.

New Employee Orientation and Evaluation

Orientations need not be highly formal to be helpful. On one farm, the office manager personally reviewed farm policies and benefits with each worker. Understanding that many workers never had health insurance before, she explained the process of going to the doctor for preventive care using herself as an example. She also consulted with them if they faced an unexpected medical bill or didn't know how to utilize their benefits.

Some farms offered formal orientation in which new hires met with the human resources (HR) director (with a translator if needed). Later, workers met with the HR director and manager separately and were evaluated to determine if they understood farm policies and if they conducted their work safely and effectively.

Farms that utilized a checklist to guide their orientation found that it helped ensure important topics were covered. Workers and managers may be asked to sign the list to show that topics were covered and understood.

Checklist of topics:

- Job responsibilities
- Overall farm policies (e.g., drugs, alcohol, smoking, violence, harassment)
- Expectations of employee conduct (e.g., dress code, visitors, communication and respect)
- Attendance expectations (call-in procedures), supervisor/office contact information
- Safety rules and procedures relevant to job
- Employee benefits
- Emergency protocols and emergency action plan

Orientations need not be highly formal to be helpful.

Employee Policy and Safety Manuals

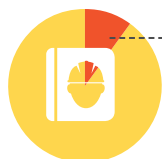
Farms of all sizes provided employee policy and safety manuals. Some distributed these manuals when a worker was first hired and again when they were updated. Ideally, a farm's orientation will cover the content of its employee/safety manuals.

Common topics covered in manuals included: employee benefits, farm policies and safety regulations, emergency action plans, worker expectations and responsibilities, injury protocols, and management contact information.

One farm shared the content of its safety manual for use as a template, which is provided on the project website at www.workersafetyandhealth.com.



41% of farms offered employee policy manuals



9% of farms offered access to safety manuals

Farms of all sizes provided employee policy and safety manuals.

Mentorship

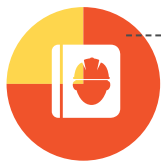
A common practice on many farms was partnering new employees with experienced workers who let the new hires shadow them for a set period of time. Some farms treated this period as an apprenticeship lasting up to a year to allow for exposure to a wide range of tasks and conditions. During this time, new grooms often began by mucking stalls and slowly graduated to working with horses as they mastered the simple tasks.

Assigning new workers a mentor helps them adapt to the job and the farm’s social environment.

Benefits of Employee Orientation and Training

- **Employee orientation helps workers know what is expected of them and what benefits they are offered.** Some workers may not have experience with benefits and may not understand how the system works.
- **Clear injury procedures help workers receive timely and appropriate care, preventing further complications and ensuring proper workers’ compensation filing.** They can also prevent unnecessary and expensive trips to the emergency room.
- **Assigning new workers a mentor helps them adapt to the job and the farm’s social environment.** If a language barrier exists, partnering a new hire with someone who speaks their language can help overcome comprehension issues. Providing mentors with a training checklist and evaluation plan ensures that key points are being covered and retained.

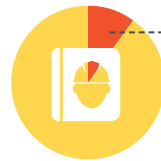
What Latino Thoroughbred Workers Told Us About Orientation and Training:



75% of workers believed that a **safety manual** would be useful.



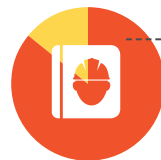
20% had employee **policy manuals**



10% had **safety manuals**.



39% received **job training**

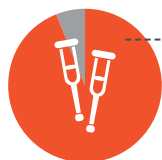


86% of those with a safety manual **read it**.

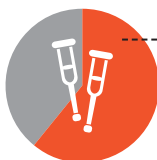
Working while sick was associated with increased injuries among Latino workers. A top reason why workers came to work while sick was believing they would not be paid, indicating the importance of discussing benefits in orientation.

Workers' Compensation

Workers' compensation provides protection for both workers and the farm in the event of an unexpected injury. It is important for workers to understand how it works, so be sure to cover this in orientation.



94% of farms carried **workers' compensation**



Only 61% of workers thought they were covered by **workers' compensation**

Many workers were unaware they were covered by worker's compensation if injured at work.

In Brief: Other Employee Orientation and Job Training Practices

- ▶ **Ensure important topics are covered** in orientation by using a checklist.
 - If you do not already have one, **use the safety manual template provided** on our website (workersafetyandhealth.com) to produce a farm safety manual.
- ▶ **Assess how much new hires know** about horse handling to determine how best to target orientation and training.
- ▶ **Collaborate with your workers' compensation provider** to create a robust training program, possibly including videos or other materials – it can also help with your premiums.
- ▶ **Post injury protocol information** in tack rooms or break rooms so that this information is handy when it is needed most.
- ▶ **Review the importance of routine preventive care** and early treatment of injuries and illnesses with your workers.
- ▶ **Instate a probationary/grace period** of 3-6 months for new hires during which time workers can be trained and evaluated on their horse handling and safety knowledge.
- ▶ **Offer ongoing training opportunities** to workers to review proper safety and horse handling procedures.
- ▶ **Crosstrain workers** so all workers have at least some horse handling skills. Use rainy or slow days to have more experienced grooms teach basic horse handling skills to maintenance staff.
- ▶ **Ensure that all workers understand what to do in the event of an injury.** Talk about this openly and often so that workers know that they will not be shamed and will be taken care of if injured.

We found that workers with longer tenure at their current farm had 2.7x higher odds of an injury in the past year.

Offer training to ALL workers, not just new ones.

Health and Wellness

Farm work is physically challenging and can even be dangerous. To help minimize the physical stress employees may experience, farms have sought to promote healthy lifestyles and safe work practices among their employees. Examples of such practices are described below.

Health/Fitness Promotion

Promoting healthy eating and physical activity were strategies used by farms to enhance the health and well-being of their workers. Simple solutions offered by farms include stocking healthy food for staff or providing food storage and cooking facilities onsite to encourage workers to eat healthy.

Soccer is an immensely popular sport in Latin America and some farms encouraged workers to play at lunchtime or after work by providing space on the farm to play. In addition, some farms paid workers' tournament entry fees or even hosted tournaments.

Farms also promoted physical activity by providing exercise equipment onsite for employees and their families. One farm created a workout room for workers to use on breaks, after work, or on weekends. Other farms offered punching bags or barbells in break rooms. One manager modeled healthy behavior by exercising himself and encouraged workers to do the same.



Some farms paid workers' tournament entry fees or even hosted tournaments.

Paid Time Off

Paid sick leave contributes to worker well-being by providing workers the ability to rest if sick and heal if injured. In fact, according to other research coming out of this study, coming to work while sick was associated with workers' experiencing an injury in the past year. Fortunately, paid leave was widely provided by farms, with over 90% of farms providing some form of it.

Vacation was also provided by many farms to allow workers the opportunity to relax and spend time with friends and families. Some farms compensated workers for unused vacation time. Workers often appreciated this benefit, though one farm manager noted that they were so motivated by the financial incentive they would not take vacation and therefore did not experience the mental and physical recharge that vacations provide. Given the long work weeks that are common in the industry, it is important for workers to feel refreshed and stay focused by having time off. Ultimately, this farm changed its policy and encouraged workers to take the vacation time they were given.

Safety Incentives: Do they work?



In an effort to limit injuries, a few farms have introduced monetary incentives for zero injuries, such as compensating managers for no injuries in their divisions or across the farm in general. While the intent behind

incentive programs is good – to create safer workplaces – evidence indicates they may result in undesired consequences, such as underreporting of injuries¹. Instead of rewarding workers or managers for a lack of injuries, safety experts recommend addressing those aspects of the work environment that may lead to injury and rewarding workers for behaviors that create a culture of safety. These may include making safety suggestions, identifying hazards, participating in a wellness program, or serving on a safety committee or task force.²

¹ Smith, Thomas A. 1997 What's Wrong with Safety Incentives? *Professional Safety*. 42(5): 44.

² S., L. [2015]. Designing Safety Incentive Programs That Work. *Professional Safety*, 60(12), 20.

Benefits Associated with Employee Health and Wellness Programs

- **Management’s support** of workers’ physical, mental, and emotional health help support worker well-being.
- **Workers who are physically fit and healthy** may be less prone to certain injuries.³
- **Health and wellness practices** demonstrate the farms’ commitment to its workers, which can foster workers’ own feelings of commitment and motivation to work hard.

What Latino Thoroughbred Workers Told Us About Farm Health and Wellness Practices:

Latino Worker General Health (%)



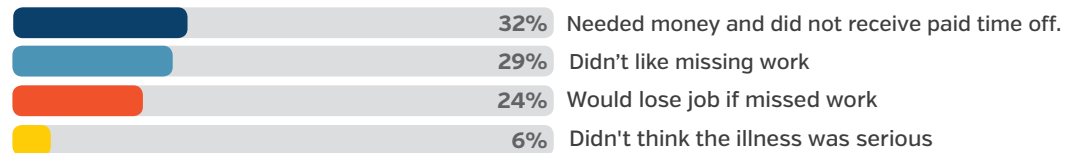
Working While Sick

Coming to work while sick was associated with experiencing an injury in the past year. 32% of those who came to work sick did so because they didn’t have paid leave.



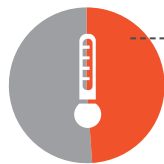
Average # of days workers came to work sick in the past year

Top reasons for coming to work sick included



**% may not equal 100 because only the top reasons are listed*

Paid Sick Leave



49% had **paid sick leave**



Average # of paid sick days a year

Paid Vacation



85% had **paid vacation**



Average # of paid vacation days a year

³ Maher, Christopher G. 2000 A Systematic Review of Workplace Interventions to Prevent Low Back Pain. *Australian Journal of Physiotherapy* 46(4): 259-269.

In Brief: Other Practices for Health and Wellness

- ▶ **Make workers aware of the health resources available to them.**
 - Visit www.workersafetyandhealth.com for a community resource guide available in English and Spanish.
- ▶ **Provide time and equipment** for workers to exercise.
- ▶ **Provide onsite flu shots** to ensure that all staff are protected during flu season.
- ▶ **Offer healthy snacks** for employees as a treat or on a regular basis.
- ▶ **Provide CPR certification** and first aid classes.
- ▶ **Provide first aid kits** in barns' warming rooms or tack rooms and the glove boxes of trucks.
- ▶ **Provide water coolers** in barns and in trucks so that workers stay hydrated.
- ▶ **Help workers quit smoking** through smoking cessation programs.
- ▶ **For fire safety and employee health**, consider making your farm a smoke-free environment, or at least limit where smoking is allowed.
- ▶ **Promote health literacy** through regular health-focused meetings or health fairs.
- ▶ **Bring a doctor, nurse, or community health worker to the farm** to conduct screenings/checkups.

Managing the Language Gap: Improving Communication & Safety

Like other sectors of U.S. agriculture, the workforce on Thoroughbred farms has become increasingly multi-cultural and multi-lingual, requiring farms to devise strategies to manage the language gap between workers, supervisors, and managers. Examples of strategies employed by farms are detailed below.

Subsidizing or Compensating Workers to Attend English Classes

Farms offered a variety of incentives to encourage Spanish-speaking employees to learn English. Many community organizations, such as Bluegrass Literacy, Operation Read, and churches, offer free or low-cost English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, and several farms supported their staff in taking these classes. Some reimbursed workers for fees incurred or paid workers' hourly wages for time spent in class. One farm did both with great success.

Onsite Learning

While ESL classes may be freely available in the community, many workers cited obstacles to attending them such as a lack of transportation, time, or energy after a long work day. In order to overcome these barriers, some farms offered lessons after work or over lunch by contracting with community or charitable organizations, like Blue Grass Farms Charities. In addition to the convenience, farms could often request lesson plans emphasizing work-related vocabulary.

Hosting ESL classes on the farm does pose challenges that must be considered. Some farms found the lunch break to be a distracting time for class because emergencies may arise requiring workers to halt their lessons. For this reason, some managers moved English lessons to the end of the day.

When determining when to offer onsite classes, ask workers what they prefer. Different farms may require different schedules.

English lesson plans can emphasize work-related vocabulary.

Bilingual, Graphic, and Color Coded Signs/Labels

Many farms have bilingual charts and vocabulary posters with key farm-related words posted in barns. Some farms have printed and posted free bilingual safety posters from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Other farms have included color-coded labels or signage *(See Order and Routine section)* to aid comprehension of proper work procedures; these are helpful whether or not a language barrier exists.

This project has also created a series of 12 graphic, bilingual safety posters/booklets for the Thoroughbred industry that are available for free download at www.workersafetyandhealth.com.



Spanish Classes for Managers



Many managers took efforts to learn Spanish because it was a more efficient way of overcoming the language barrier – one person learning Spanish could facilitate communication with the entire staff. One farm offered onsite Spanish classes to managers over the lunch hour, also providing lunch. The farm noted that it was difficult to get full participation from busy managers who often just wanted to rest over their lunch break. Given managers' full work schedules, farms may also want to offer incentives for learning Spanish and/or devise short-term approaches that address language needs.

Benefits of Managing the Language Gap

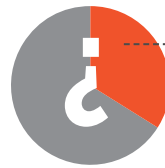
- In situations of immediate danger, **the ability to communicate clearly can be life-saving.**
- When communication among all staff is strong, **workplace problems or injuries are more likely to be reported and workers are more likely to understand workplace protocols** (e.g., what to do and where to go if injured).
- Improving communication on the farm may help **employees better understand and access the benefits offered to them.**
- **When managers learn Spanish, not only does communication and safety improve, but workers feel respected.** They may also be motivated to try harder in their own English lessons!
- In general, **the better the communication,** the more smoothly and efficiently the farm can operate.
- Expanding the language capabilities of the workforce may help the farm **prepare future managers and aid its long-term success.** If workers' English skills are limited, it may be difficult for them to be promoted to management positions, despite being excellent workers.

Workers whose supervisor spoke Spanish were less likely to report an injury in the past year.

What Latino Thoroughbred Workers Told Us About Managing the Language Gap:



29% spoke English **WELL**



34% understood English well.



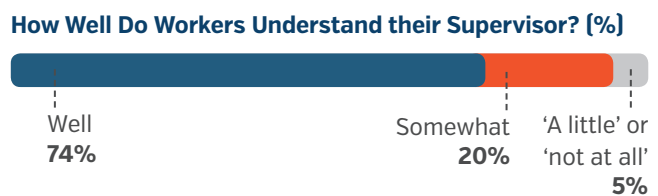
95% were most comfortable speaking **Spanish**, however



50% used **English MOST OFTEN** when communicating with supervisor.



76% had a **middle school education**, or less



67% report to a person that spoke at least **SOME Spanish**.



Among those, **64%** said their supervisor spoke it **WELL**.

In Brief: Other Practices for Managing the Language Gap

- ▶ **Don't assume that workers understand you when they nod their heads.**
Ask workers to repeat back instructions so you know key information is being communicated.
- ▶ **Talk with workers regularly about their language skills and needs.** Ask what barriers they face to learning English and try to help overcome them.
 - One manager recommended that the industry could collectively fund an education center where non-English speaking workers could improve English skills.
- ▶ **Incentivize workers learning English by rewarding gains** in English proficiency.
- ▶ **Identify individuals within your workforce** who would be willing/able to translate during meetings and orientations.
- ▶ **Print Spanish safety materials** and hang in tack room:
 - This project has created a series of 12 graphic, bilingual safety illustrations available for free download at www.workersafetyandhealth.com.
 - Occupational Safety and Health Administration has developed materials available here: www.osha.gov/dte/grant_materials/material_listing_language.html.
- ▶ **Inquire about onsite ESL classes:**
 - Blue Grass Farms Charities offers this service for a fee or voluntary donation at the time of printing.
 - Bluegrass Literacy
- ▶ **Hang ESL class schedules in the tack room.**
 - The Lexington Public Library maintains a free ESL classes list here: www.lexpublib.org/lexington-esl-classes-and-community-resources#documents
- ▶ **Provide cues for workers to learn** both English and Spanish vocabulary:
 - One farm provided English-Spanish flashcards in the break room to help workers learn work-related vocabulary.
 - One farm labelled equipment, tools, and chemicals in both English and Spanish.

→ *In concert with numerous Thoroughbred industry leaders, safety professionals, farm managers and workers, **this project has created a booklet of 12 bilingual, graphic safety posters** for the Thoroughbred industry available for free download on our website: www.workersafetyandhealth.com*

Order and Routine

Most of the injuries reported in our study occurred while workers performed daily, routine tasks like leading a horse or turning it out to pasture. Though these tasks become second nature to those who have worked in the industry a long time, they do pose risk and clear horse handling procedures may help both new and seasoned workers maintain good habits when working with horses. Below are some examples cited by farms to establish procedures around common tasks and hazards on Thoroughbred farms.

Color Coding Medicines and Farm Equipment

One farm color coded shanks and twitches according to the barn from which they originated in order to reduce the risk of cross-barn infection.



Some farms also color-coded chemical or medicine containers to organize all containers pertaining to a certain class of chemical or to indicate if caution is required. For example, disinfectants, along with any bottle used to dispense them, may have a blue label or all medicines that require latex gloves may be labeled in red.

One farm used color coding to label potential hazards during mating. For example, maiden mares or mares who showed resistance during teasing were flagged with a yellow or red tag on their harnesses to alert the groom that they may require special attention.

Checklists



Training on Thoroughbred farms was largely informal and on-the-job. While this is practical, key information could be missed. Training checklists* is a tool some farms used to ensure that new hires received training on important topics. Checklists included information on job tasks and procedures as well as information on employee benefits and emergency/injury protocols.

Checklists were also used as a form of daily communication. Some farms communicated daily goals and job instructions by posting them on bulletin boards in break rooms.

Maintain Consistency on the Weekend



One farm never changed routine practice or procedures over the weekend. Many farms rely on skeleton crews on the weekend and new activities – such as beginning a new project or moving horses to new paddocks – may require extra help. In addition, doctor and veterinarian offices would not be open should an injury occur to a human or horse.

Training on Thoroughbred farms was largely informal and on-the-job. While this is practical, key information could be missed.

Evaluation Period

Some farms have instituted an evaluation period during which new hires are observed to see if they can safely and skillfully perform the job. During this period, the English comprehension of a new employee may also be tested.

*Please see page 6 for information on checklists for orientation and training. A complete list of topics for orientation and safety trainings are also available at the end of this report.

Benefits Associated with Order and Routine

- **Establishing solid procedures** builds a foundation of safety as it lessens the likelihood of cut corners.
- **Ensuring that things are done the same way every time** may also help to ensure that they are done properly and safely.
- **Integrating visuals or color-coding in signs throughout the barn** helps everyone quickly distinguish between different risks, but particularly those who have difficulty reading English.
- **When expectations of workers are clearly communicated**, it is easier to handle situations when they are not met.
- **When routines are standardized and followed**, current workers can better train and orient new workers to the job.
- It is easy for important conversations to get sidelined by a busy schedule. **Evaluation periods provide opportunities for managers** to initiate important topics with new employees about what is and is not working out well. They also provide an opportunity for workers to communicate what they may not understand about farm processes.

What Latino Thoroughbred Workers Told Us About Order and Routine

Order and routine may protect workers from injury. However, according to the Latino Worker Survey, employees felt pressure to work quickly at the expense of working safely. In addition, over a third of workers were not confident that they did their job safely. Given that Thoroughbreds can challenge even an experienced horseman, workers who do not feel confident about doing their jobs safely may be at particular risk for injury. For strategies to ensure that all workers know both how to be safe and that management prioritizes safety, please see the sections on farm orientation and training [page 6] and safety meetings [page 17].



----- **43%** said managers only cared about doing the job quickly & cheaply.



----- Only **67%** were very confident that they did their job safely.

Given that horses can challenge even a very experienced horseman, workers who do not feel confident about doing their jobs safely may be at particular risk for injury.

In Brief: Other Practices for Order and Routine

- ▶ **Draft checklists related to specific tasks** – like turning a horse out to pasture – and hang them prominently. Depending on the literacy of the workforce, these checklists may be in English, Spanish, both, and/or graphic in nature.
 - Please visit www.workersafetyandhealth.com for free graphic safety posters that show proper horse handling techniques and other safety messages with labels in English and Spanish.
- ▶ **Make workers' compensation work for you.** Many workers' compensation providers, such as the Kentucky Employer's Mutual Insurance, provide free resources available for download on their websites.
 - Visit https://www.kemi.com/safety/resources/farms_landscaping_industry.aspx for more information.
- ▶ **Take advantage of free safety resources.** The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health [NIOSH] offers free occupational safety and health training materials organized by language.
 - Visit https://www.osha.gov/dte/grant_materials/material_listing_language.html.

Safety Meetings

The importance of repeating safety messages and building a culture of safety was widely recognized by farms. Consequently, many farms held regular meetings with workers – planned and unplanned – to discuss safe work practices. Specific practices are described below.

Daily Check-ins

On some farms, managers gathered employees each morning to review the day's tasks and to highlight relevant safety messages, like how to lift heavy loads or safely turn a horse to pasture. If any unusual or particularly dangerous jobs were being conducted (pruning trees, for example), the farm manager would detail the procedure for workers and ask if workers had any questions or concerns.

Safety Team



One farm had a designated safety team that met on a quarterly basis comprised of 12 individuals from various levels and divisions of the farm (e.g., managers, grooms, office staff, etc.) and different demographic groups (e.g., Latinos, males, females). This group reviewed injury narratives from the previous quarter, including details about the injury and precipitating events. It then considered recommendations for preventing similar injuries in the future.

Minutes from these meetings are shared with employees by posting them by time clocks and on Human Resources (HR) boards, thus giving workers an opportunity to learn from them and see that the farm took their safety seriously.

As one example of how the safety team influences practice, it recently recommended that the farm compensate workers for the purchase of steel-toe boots to reduce the prevalence of foot injuries. Another recommendation was to encourage more reflection from workers and managers in injury reports so that the root cause of the injury could be determined.

The "safety team" reviewed injury narratives from the previous quarter including details about the injury and precipitating events.

Safety Clinics



One farm held safety clinics in which the HR director shared information with each division (i.e., broodmare, yearlings, maintenance) about recent injuries and strategies for future prevention. Safety clinics served as an opportunity to communicate safety rules, promising industry practices, and observations from the HR director regarding risks being taken on the farm. Safety clinic content and discussions were translated into Spanish by a contracted interpreter.

Safety topics changed with recent injuries and with the season, but almost always included some element of machinery.

Safety clinic topics changed with recent injuries and with the season (e.g., avoiding heat exhaustion in the summer, staying dry and warm in the winter), but almost always included some element of machinery, such as spreader safety, traveling on the road, muck wagons, tractor safety, or power take off (PTO) safety.

One challenge was that workers were not always engaged in the safety clinics, which were held out on the farm in groups of 10-15. Thinking that workers may be distracted in the barn environment and feel shy in larger groups, the HR director decided to bring workers into the office for clinics in groups of about 8 people. The results were successful: workers were more engaged and provided feedback, which helped the HR director better understand how best to support worker safety.

Benefits Associated with Safety Meetings

- **Regular safety meetings allow for constant communication** about hazards and how to avoid them.
- **Safety meetings communicate to workers that the farm cares about and prioritizes safety.** This is important as it teaches that when faced with the decision of whether to work quickly or safely, management supports taking the extra time to work safely.
- By including workers in safety check-ins, meetings, or clinics, **the farm gains workers' on-the-ground perspective** on how to avoid future injuries.
- Regular meetings of any kind **provide a way for people working in different areas of the farm to come together**, which may help build morale and a sense of unity.

Safety meetings communicate to workers that when faced with a decision to work quickly or safely, they should work safely.

What Latino Thoroughbred Workers Told Us About Farm Safety Practices

According to workers surveyed, safety meetings are rare on farms, as is safety instruction when first hired. Informal hazard communication is more common. Nearly a quarter of workers do not believe safety practices are important to management.

Safety Climate*

Workers' safety practices are very important to management.



- Disagree
- Agree
- Don't Know

Workers are regularly made aware of dangerous work practices or conditions.



Workers are regularly praised for safe conduct.



Workers receive instructions on safety when hired.



Workers attend regular safety meetings.



Proper safety equipment is always available.



Workers have almost total control over personal safety.



Taking risks is not a part of my job.



The possibility of being injured at work in the next 12 months is very likely.



91% of workers thought it was very likely that they would be injured in the next year.

*Note that totals may not equal 100 due to rounding

In Brief: Other Practices for Safety Meetings

- ▶ **Encourage managers and the injured worker to reflect on injuries** by describing them in detail. Have them ask “why” until a lesson in prevention can be learned.
- ▶ **Check in with all workers after an injury occurs to let everyone know what happened and why.**
 - Let workers ask questions or just talk about the event.
 - Communicate recommended changes to work practices, if there are any, at this time.
 - During this post-injury debrief, be careful not to cast blame. You do not want workers to feel reluctant to report injuries or they may wait until a minor issue becomes serious.
- ▶ **Make sure employees understand the content of safety meetings** and are actively involved. If a language barrier exists, be sure that someone can translate.
- ▶ **Post safety meeting topics in advance of the meeting** so workers can reflect on the topic and actively participate.
- ▶ **Provide hands-on examples and demonstrations** of safety practices during meetings.
- ▶ **Hold safety meetings during the lunch hour.** Providing lunch may help ensure all workers attend.
- ▶ **Collaborate with workers’ compensation providers** to construct safety messages that target your farms’ most pressing problems.

Possible Safety Meeting Topics

Horse handling

- General handling
- Leading a horse
- Turning out to pasture
- Grooming
- Trailers and vans
- Loose horses
- Saddling
- Mounting/Dismounting
- Riding
- Working with horses in an enclosed environment
- Administering medicines
- Ergonomics – how to muck, lift

General farm personnel

- Ladder usage
- Hoists/Lifting devices
- Shovels and rakes
- Materials handling (chemicals/medicines)

- Lawn maintenance tools & equipment
- Mowing
- Tractor and Bush Hog Use
- Line Trimming/Weed eater/Brush Cutter
- Chain saws
- Edging
- Backpack Blowers
- Blade removal and sharpening
- Hedge and tree trimming
- Pruning and cutting
- Electric tools
- Hand tools
- Grinders
- Power saws
- Flammable liquids
- Gas cylinders
- Shop area
- Electrical safety

All workers

- Fire prevention
- First aid
- General safety
- Lifting procedures
- Preventing heat illness
- Preventing hypothermia
- Workers’ compensation rights and processes
- Injury and emergency protocol

Worker Focused Resources

Bluegrass Community Health Center

1306 Versailles Road, Lexington, KY 40504
151 N Eagle Creek Dr. Ste. 220, Lexington, KY 40509
[859] 259-2635 or 1-877-527-2583 | <http://bchc.eku.edu/>

Bluegrass Community Health Center (BCHC) is a patient centered medical home that has provided care to Kentucky families for over 10 years. BCHC clinic locations provide complete medical care to adults and children, including counseling services, women's health and well child visits. Spanish interpreters are available to help facilitate care.

Blue Grass Farms Charities

340 Legion Drive, #20, Lexington, KY 40504
[859] 219-0910 | www.bgfcky.com

Blue Grass farms Charities is a non-profit corporation devoted to providing health and human services to people working in all aspects of the Thoroughbred Industry in Central Kentucky. Some of the services include:

- financial assistance with primary health care visits and prescriptions
- transportation to physician appointments
- financial aid for rent and utilities
- food and personal hygiene items
- serves as liaison for Thoroughbred Farm/Racetrack employers and workers.

At printing, BGFC provided an 8-week English as a Second Language class delivered at the farm. No fee is required, though a voluntary donation is requested for this service.

Safety Resources

Safety Manual Template

One of our farm partners has offered their safety manual for other farms to use as a template. This manual is available for download in English and Spanish on our website at www.workerhealthandsafety.com/information-for-managers/

Saddle Up SAFELY

Saddle Up safely is a rider safety awareness program sponsored by UK HealthCare, UK College of Agriculture and many community organizations. Through Saddle Up Safely, UK HealthCare seeks to educate current and future riders about the simple steps that can be taken to prevent accidents. It offers resources on rider tips, horse equipment and behavior, safety equipment, and more. Visit saddleupsafely.org.

Lexington Public Library

Maintains a list of low or no-cost English as a Second Language Classes, including some that are offered at the library: www.lexpublib.org/lexington-esl-classes-and-community-resources#documents.

Central Branch | 140 E. Main Street | Lexington, KY 40507
Northside Branch | 1733 Russell Cave Rd | Lexington, KY 40505
Beaumont Branch | 3080 Fieldstone Way | Lexington, KY 40513
Tates Creek Branch | 3628 Walden Dr. | Lexington, KY 40517
Eastside Branch | 3000 Blake James Dr. | Lexington, KY 40509
Village Branch | 2185 Versailles Rd. | Lexington, KY 40404

Bilingual Community Resource Guide for Farmworkers

This guide lists resources available to the Latino community in Lexington in Spanish and English. Available for download on our website: www.workersafetyandhealth.com/information-for-workers/

Workers' Compensation Provider

Consider contacting your workers' compensation provider to ask about safety materials or to partner on creating ones that are relevant to work at your farm. As one example, Kentucky Employers' Mutual Insurance provides free resources in English and Spanish to kickstart your own safety program. Visit <http://worksafeky.com>

Susan Harwood English and Spanish Language Training Materials

The Susan Harwood program provides training and education for workers and employers on the recognition, avoidance, and prevention of safety and health hazards in their workplaces. You can browse resources created by this program by topic or by language. Visit www.osha.gov/dte/grant_materials/material_listing_topic.html

Employee Orientation Checklist

1. Complete employment paperwork.

- Job application
- W-4 (K-4)
- I-9 + copies of ID
- Background screening authorization
- Drug test consent form
- Direct deposit form/Voided check
- Employee handbook / Return acknowledgement form (if applicable)
- Safety manual / Return acknowledgement form (if applicable)
- Emergency contact form
- Orientation training form

2. Review and highlight major policies in the handbook (or other employee information sheet)

- Pay, overtime, benefits, paid time off, holidays
- Time clock-issue card and instruct on use (if applicable)
- Policies-drugs, alcohol, smoking, violence, harassment
- Safety-fire, storms, heat/cold
- Employee conduct-dress code, uniforms, visitors
- Attendance and punctuality-Call-in procedure
- Lunch hour and breaks (Do not work through lunch)
- Workplace accidents and injuries-How to report work related injuries
- Emergency protocol-what to do in the event of natural disaster or emergency

3. Review employee handbook and safety manual.

4. Issue time card if hourly employee is using the time clock (if applicable)

5. Overview of farm and location of important buildings/structures

6. Provide copy of driver's license to office/HR staff if driving a farm vehicle on or off the farm

7. Provide benefit insurance packet for eligible employees

8. Provide uniform and safety equipment (if applicable)

9. Provide contact information for HR and supervisors' cell numbers.

A product of the Thoroughbred Worker Health and Safety Study, which aims to make work safer for workers and less costly for farms.

