



EL AGRICULTOR LATINO (THE LATINO FARMER)



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Special points of interest:

- *Farm Bill Development*
- *Latino Cooperative on the Rise*
- *More FSA Loans Approved & Crop Insurance Purchased*
- *More Workshops*
- *RCDR celebrates 15 years*
- *Center Expansion*

USDA 2007 Farm Bill



The 2007 Farm Bill was released by Sec. Mike Johanns in early January. The release illustrated that the 52 farm forums conducted by USDA had been effective in allowing many limited resource farmers (SDA) to speak openly about their concerns and in turn influence the molding of the 2007 farm bill. The largest and most important forum was the Las Cruces, NM listening forum that was held during the very successful National Association of Latino Farmers and Ranchers Conference in 2005 that had over 400 Latino farmers and stakeholders in attendance. Area farmers Evaristo Silva, Aristeo Maldonado & Jose Guzman testified passionately about the changes they wanted Sec. Johanns to take on at that forum. Eric Alegria, Director of the Center was instrumental in developing testimony that was submitted for the record during a House Committee on Agriculture meeting on July 10th in Yakima and Latino farmers were in attendance.

Some issues of importance are: Double the target of direct FSA loans that will be used for beginning farmers & SDA; Overhaul repooling of funds to ensure that these funds are for beginning and SDA farmers; Increase the existing limit of \$200,000 for farm purchase to a maximum of \$500,000; Expand funding for technical assistance for specialty crops and increase the maximum allowable project to \$500,000; linking crop insurance participation to farm program participation. The Center continues to advocate for the concerns of beginning and limited resource farmers." said Luz Gutierrez.

United Growers Cooperative (UG), Leading to success!

In 1999, a group of Latino farmers in Tonasket a rural community close to the Canadian border, formed a business group called United Growers (UG). Each of their stories was almost identical. They had all immigrated to Washington from the Mexican State of Michoacan to work as farm workers and then had taken the next step by buying their own farm. Their dream, like other small farmers was to not only grow their own fruit, but also to be able to sell their fruit to the highest bidder. After several failed attempts to establish a direct marketing relationship with Mexican importers it dissolved.

In 2005 they were incorporated as a cooperative with legal support provided by the Center. The members have participated in workshops and board trainings for the cooperative business model.

The Center staff has been in the forefront of this venture with researching, investigating and exploring the needs of the cooperative. Based on their assessments, the Center contracted a Marketing consultant John Overton (story follows) to develop a Strategic Marketing Plan. The plan is being finalized with the implementation phase of the plan to follow. To date, several markets have expressed interest in working with the coop. Production levels are on the rise and the Center continues to work UG as an intermediary with the goal to facilitate the establishment of regional and/or national domestic markets for their products to give them the market edge and the long term sustainability all of the members have been working towards since they harvested their first crop years ago.





The Center and its staff continue to advance the capacity and stability of Latino farmers by providing outreach and technical support for an increased number of Latino Farmers. The most significant impact is clearly exemplified by the increased number of loan applications being submitted and approved through the FSA direct loan program.

With the Center's assistance, more than \$5.6 million in loans have been loaned to Latino farmers in Washington.

There are still many applications pending for Latino farmers in **Yakima, Okanogan, Chelan, Adams, Franklin, Grant and Benton** county.

John Overton—Marketing Consultant

John Overton was given a contract to develop a strategic marketing plan for "United Growers Inc." of Tonasket.

Mr. Overton has been directly involved in the development, management, operations, marketing and financing of various types of small to medium sized cooperatives in both the U.S. and abroad. He served as an international advisor to more than 26 countries throughout Asia, Latin America and North Africa. Overall Mr. Overton has assisted more than 500 cooperatives by helping them develop and implement their short to long term Strategic Marketing Plans. More than 80% of the cooperatives he has assisted have achieved long term success. The Center and UG are very pleased with his work, energy & support to date.



So far in the first quarter of 2007 the Center staff was responsible for successfully packaging and obtaining the following FSA direct loans:

- ✘ **Marcelo Martinez** of Wapato obtained an Operating Loan for some leased acreage.
- ✘ **Jorge Lopez** of Tieton who had already obtained a Farm Ownership Loan, was approved for an Operating Loan.
- ✘ **Primitivo Serna** of Outlook obtained a Farm Ownership Loan, and also approved for two Operating Loans for his cherry orchards.
- ✘ **Manuel Mendoza** of Wenatchee obtained a

Farm Ownership Loan for his apple orchard. He attended the first Borrower training conducted by the Center and received a Certificate of Completion. He also got approved for two Operating Loans.

- ✘ **Delfino Salgado** of Wenatchee obtained a Farm Ownership Loan and two Operating Loans.

Their success is our success.



Real Estate Training



Farm Real Estate Workshop

On January 31, Mike Gibbons, a broker with Coldwell Bankers, provided very valuable training on farm real estate purchasing. He provided information on real estate law, purchase and sale agreements, as well as the closing process. The Sunnyside workshop was the second farm real estate purchasing training offered by the Center. Eric Alegria, Center Director said it would not be the last. He emphasized that, "Obtaining knowledge of the process and law surrounding farm real estate is imperative to the success of beginning farmers." The workshop had twelve current and future farmers in attendance.

Tax Training Workshops

The Center in collaboration with officials from the Department of Labor & Industry, Employment Security, Internal Revenue System and the Department of Revenue coordinated two tax training workshops, one in Sunnyside and the another that was held in Yakima. The workshops were well attended.



Tax Training



Please call the Center at (509) 453-3157 if you are interested in attending future workshops.



RCDR's Quinceañera!



The Rural Community Development Resources (RCDR) had a gala Quinceañera celebration on Friday, January 12, 2007 at the Clarion Hotel which also marked the completion of 5 years of the official establishment of the Center for Latino Farmers. The event recognized the accomplishments of all the RCDR programs and recognized all the people that have contributed to its' success. Luz Bazan Gutierrez, founder and CEO said, "Our job is easy when we have such great clients that work hard and are eager to learn and succeed." Several Latino farmers (See below for the list) were given awards at the event to signify their growth and the growth of their businesses.



Miguel Contreras, Evaristo Silva, Hilario Alvarez & United Grower Members Receive Awards at the Ceremony

• Miguel Contreras ☀️ Outstanding Farmer	• Evaristo Silva ☀️ Most Inspira-	• Hilario Alvarez ☀️ Most Market-Oriented	• United Growers Coop. ☀️ Outstanding Leadership Award	• Manuel Mendoza ☀️ Emerging Farmer	• Primitivo Serna ☀️ Most Improved
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Farmers Obtain Crop Insurance

The Center continues to provide outreach to educate farmers about crop insurance. This past quarter with the Center's technical support three beginning farmers purchased crop insurance for the first time and one farmer upgraded his crop insurance. All are now better managing their risk.

- **Evaristo Silva** of Tieton upgraded to Adjusted Gross Revenue-Lite crop insurance for his pears and apples.
- **Antonio Cornejo** of Sunnyside purchased crop insurance for

the first time to protect his cherries in the 2008 crop season.

- **Luberto Rodriquez** of Wapato purchased Multi Peril Crop Insurance to protect his cherries.
- **Juan Santiago** of Toppenish purchased Multi Peril Crop Insurance to for his cherries.

All farmers are pleased with their investment.



The Center and CBC Team Up



The Center and Columbia Basin College (CBC) are partnering in order to better serve Latino Farmers located in areas close to the Tri-Cities including cities such as Prosser, Pasco and Othello. The Center has been working with CBC, in order to come up with a collaborative agreement that will give both parties the ability to better serve Limited Resource Latino Farmers through the provision of outreach and technical assistance.

The agreement between the Center and CBC was finalized in mid-March and indicates that the project will initially run for a 90 day trial period.

The Center will be providing loans packaging assistance and workshops at the new location.

Please call the Center at (509) 453-3157 for details.



**Center for Latino Farmers
Yakima, WA**



A Division of Rural Community
Development Resources

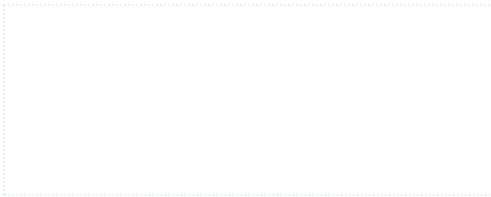
24 South 3rd Ave
Yakima, WA 98902

Phone: 509-453-3157
Fax: 509-453-5165

E-mail: latinofarmers@charter.net

WE'RE ON THE WEB:

www.centerforlatinofarmers.com



Marketing *Water Rights* *QuickBooks* *Crop Insurance*
Borrower Financial Management *Basic Computer Skills*
Tax *Real Estate Purchasing* *Pesticide Management & Certification*

Upcoming Spanish Workshops

Workshop/Training	Date (s)	Time	Location
QuickBooks	TBA	TBA	TBA, Tonasket/Okanogan Area
Marketing	TBA	TBA	Whistler's Restaurant in Tonasket
FSA Process	May 23	6-8:30pm	Columbia Basin College, ESL Building in Pasco
*Monthly Radio Show	April 19, May 17 June 21	4pm-5pm	Radio KDNA-FM 91.9

Space is limited, to register call (509) 453-3157 or (509) 453-5133

