

Oregon OSHA
Ag Labor Housing Advisory Committee
Monday, April 29, 2019

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Alba Johnston	Janet Fults	Mike Doke
Alta Schafer	Jeff Carlson	Mike Omeg
Ana Molina	Jonathon Gonzalez	Nargess Shadbeh
Candy Carnes	Julie Love	Renee Stapleton
Eric Lloyd	Kate Ryan	Sherry Marks
Erin Roby	Lavrie Hoefer	Stacey Cooper
Holt Andron	Lizeth Marin	Taylor A.

Jeff Carlson called the meeting to order.
Self-introductions were made.

Jeff Carlson welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the guest speakers:

Eva Galvez, and Rosa Rivera of Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center.
Eva grew up in Hood River as a daughter of seasonal workers. She has been a family physician for 12 years.

They shared a PowerPoint presentation on the programs they have.

Some of the housing problems they see when they are out at the farms are:

- Substandard quality/structurally deficient
- Lack of affordability
- Crowding – multi families
- Lack of facilities for cooking and washing
- Environmental hazards
- Lack of space for play/rest

We have seen improvement in the camps over the years because the owners have been willing to improve the conditions.

The demographics of farm workers have changed over the years. The workers are moving their families here with them, and are less likely to move around. They are more likely to stay in the US during Winter/Spring rather than going back and forth.

Practical solutions to mitigate or prevent hazards and risks.

- Screens on windows
- Tight windows
- Sheds to store work boots, work clothes, and tools
- Increase the number of washers and dryers
- Increase facilities for showering and hand washing
- An area for cooking, food prep, and food storage
- Clean area for eating outside
- Better ventilation or air conditioning
- Clean and safe area for rest and for kids to play

Nargess asked if there were particular issues that the farm workers share with them.

-Prenatal care for the women, toxic exposures, cleaning supplies, pesticide exposure, and what the impact will be on pregnant women: i.e. birth defects, cancer, early labor, etc.

-Sexual abuse

For growers who have in compliance camps and who are trying to provide, what should we prioritize?

-Communal areas, play grounds, a place to share meals, and a place for rest away from pesticide drift.

The CDC shows that Zika and Yellow fever are spreading to our areas. Are there any concerns?

-It is on their radar and they don't know that everyone screens for the virus unless they are show signs. They are doing outreach on them from June through August. Pregnant women will be screened and they don't expect things to get worse.

How many camps are you able to visit per year?

-They visit 6 camps, 3 large and 3 smaller.

Declining air quality from forest fires. How do we mitigate?

-Ensure that the housing has good ventilation or AC.

Jeff thanked them for coming and presenting this information.

Current Rules vs. Discussion Items-

Ohio recently mandated outdoor recreation areas. What would be some hurdles in Oregon?

-One of the camps has a green space that has soccer fields and basketball courts. They have to maintain the fields and it is an added expense. They also have play structures and these had to be put in by a contractor. It takes time and money for upkeep and some legal council's may not let them due to liability issues.

There are some challenges especially for smaller farms that have few workers, and space issues. The group is worried about a blanket rule; a one size fits all.

The group discussed water testing. OR-OSHA is testing for nitrate and arsenic as a pilot. Sherry Marks added that water is tested quarterly and to be tested before given the okay.

Clinics visiting camps-

The Hood River area has a group, Clinica/One Community Health that growers help provide for clinics and education. Their experience has been good.

Transportation-

Many families have one car and they have hesitation, and are fearful for going into town. Maybe providing more transportation.

-this is also an added cost and more time.

Communication-

Bulletin boards are used for posting the required documents and other general information. They have designated people to go out and post the info. Sometimes this can be a little time consuming.

Some have a phone call in number in addition to the bulletin's.

Mattress Rules-

The states you have to have single beds with no sharing. It would be nice if couples were addressed and allowed to share.

Fumigating mattresses- using medical grade mattresses that are vinyl and easier to clean. Could the fumigation requirement be removed and just require to cover them.

Discussion on cots and pads that are used over them.

It was asked if families were able to have a separate area for sleeping away from non-family members.

Washing-

The washing ratio for clothes at 1:30 seems like a lot, is this something that can be changed?

There are DEQ issues that the growers have too, and it is hard to determine because it fluctuates.

The well water only has so much water and so much pressure. Then there is brown water to dispose of. If you exceed the amount that your water/ septic system can handle, then you have to upgrade to a highly engineered system and that is hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Could there be separate machines for contaminated clothing?

Is the water that you are using hard or soft? It is hard to determine what is needed, and how would we determine what the best ratio is. Is it in a federal preamble?

Clarity on what is acceptable for clothes lines and drying facilities.

There are growers who are going above and beyond on their farms, or is this a problem with growers who are not even meeting the basics.

Could we rotate the meetings to other parts of the state rather than always coming to Portland? Yes we can move the meetings.

It was suggested the next meeting be held in The Dalles, and not have any speakers or presentations so we can spend more time working on resolving issues.

Meeting adjourned at 11:20am.

Next Meeting:

May 23, 2019

Building #1 Columbia Gorge Community College