



2025 Annual Report



**Transitioning With Purpose,
Growing With Impact**

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CREDITS

Editorial Director & Writer: LeAnne R. Ruzzamenti

Contributors: Madelyn Edlin, Alexandra Martinez

Editor: Rebecca Easter

Designer: Kim Marquardt

ABOUT EFI

Equitable Food Initiative (EFI) is a capacity-building and certification nonprofit that works to improve the lives of farmworkers and drive business performance by integrating worker engagement throughout the supply chain. Committed to multistakeholder participation, EFI works with growers, farmworkers, retailers and experts to create assessment, training and organizational development programs that support continuous improvement and address agriculture’s most pressing challenges.

For more information, visit equitablefood.org.



From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

This is the last annual report letter I will write as EFI’s executive director. I was hired by Oxfam America in 2011 to turn promising conversations between “strange bedfellows” into a viable program to create win-win outcomes for farmworkers, employers, retailers and consumers. The past 15 years have been an exhilarating adventure, and EFI is now a recognized thought leader on agricultural labor in the fresh produce industry. I have loved this job and given it my all, but it also became clear to me over the past two years that EFI would benefit from new leadership for the next phase of its growth.

In May 2025 many of EFI’s founders gathered to celebrate the 10th anniversary of spinning off from Oxfam as an independent nonprofit (see p. 18). At that same meeting, board and staff members agreed on a recruitment strategy for my successor, and by October they had selected Gonzalo Martinez de Vedia as EFI’s new executive director. As you will see in this report, Gonzalo brings tremendous experience, energy and new perspectives. I look forward to seeing where he leads EFI over the next decade!

EFI made tremendous advances in its program work in 2025, despite political and economic challenges that rocked the produce industry. Increased federal immigration enforcement exacerbated severe labor shortages, creating operational uncertainties for agricultural employers and impacting production schedules and sales projections. The rapid introduction of new tariffs and subsequent trade disruption created administrative complexities and added costs for producers, distracting them from their workforce development goals. This shifting landscape also impacted philanthropic support, as foundations that had previously supported EFI’s work rapidly turned their focus from longer-term systemic solutions for agricultural workers to emergency funding for immigrant rights groups.

Yet despite these headwinds, EFI continued to build organizational strength and impact. One objective of our 2022-2026 strategic plan was to significantly increase the proportion of our annual budget that is derived from earned revenue rather than grants. The following chart shows that as the organization has grown consistently over the past decade, EFI has integrated new earned income opportunities into its approach.

EFI: A DECADE OF GROWTH	Time Period	Average Annual Expenditure	Average Annual Growth Over Prior Period	Program Revenue as % of Expense
	2016–19	\$2,192,866	21%	18%
	2020–23	\$3,135,237	8%	25%
	2024–25	\$3,696,721	5%	62%



“I’m proud of what we have accomplished together. And as I step away from EFI, my strongest emotion is an overwhelming sense of gratitude.

Peter O’Driscoll,
Executive Director 2011–25

Earned income now covers nearly two-thirds of EFI's budget. This significant shift in the composition of revenue over the past decade is the result of impressive program innovation, as well as a concerted effort to reduce dependence on volatile grant funding. EFI continues to rely on vital donor support and will expand fundraising outreach during Gonzalo's tenure. But we have also shown that program revenue is key to remaining on the path to long-term sustainability.

I'm proud of what we have accomplished together. And as I step away from EFI, my strongest emotion is an overwhelming sense of gratitude: to the retailers, suppliers, unions and activists who risked their reputations to collaborate; to the generous funders, and pro bono supporters whose bets on EFI have made our progress possible; and to the talented colleagues, board members and partners who together are engineering fundamental changes in the way the produce industry and broader society view agricultural labor. I'm excited to see how EFI builds on that foundation in the coming years!

Gratefully,



Peter O'Driscoll
Executive Director 2011–25

Meet EFI's New Executive Director: Gonzalo Martinez de Vedia



Q *Can you share a bit about your experiences and education that brings you to this role?*

A I got my education at a land grant college. At the time, I didn't know what that was! One thing it meant was that my mentors there pushed me to get outside the library and put theory to practice via extension programs. So while I was studying topics like public policy, labor relations and migration, I started the first of many years of visits to farmworker housing on dairy farms, apple orchards and vineyards across upstate New York. The classroom gave me tools, but I mostly found my motivation out in the field. I met workers from Veracruz who had settled for year-round dairy work in the Finger Lakes; I met crews of Jamaican guest workers who had been spending the harvest season on Champlain Valley farms for decades; and the list went on from there. I related immediately to those communities, as an immigrant, and I also started to understand the many ways our systems could better serve

them. Around those same years I made a commitment to be a part of that change. EFI was getting its own start across the country in California. It's not an accident we all crossed paths eventually.

Q *Your experience with workers in the field clearly influenced you, but behind every leader is often a story of personal inspiration that sets their direction. Is there someone who has inspired your work and career path?*

A I spent a lot of time with my grandmother growing up. She is a sociologist who helped write Argentina's national action plan against child labor. Her generation paved the way to some of what we think of as best practices and standards today. Imagine the courage it took for her to leave a small rural town to dive into these topics in the 1970s in Buenos Aires. When a military dictatorship got into power and started targeting the social sciences, she had to flee to another province with a 6-year-old in tow and wait them out. Eventually, with the return of democracy, my abuela's generation had their chance to enter government, shape policy and leave their mark. I think I have that in common with many others who work on these topics: We are in it to pick up where those before us left off, as a way to feel connected to that history and honor the sacrifices. There are days I think of it like a relay race, taking the progress to the next level.

Q *A multistakeholder approach is such a critical part of how EFI operates; how does that resonate with you personally?*

A EFI didn't invent the "big table" approach – it's a tried-and-true method to get things done across topics and places – but it's one of the few groups I've seen successfully create and maintain a space like that at the complex intersection of issues that is the modern food system. I don't think multistakeholder spaces are comfortable for everyone. Some of the most talented and impactful leaders I've met around the world have chosen a very clear "side" or theory of change and only really engage others across the table in bargaining, in court or when it's time to get a quote for a report or article. Those are essential, difficult and often dangerous jobs. I believe coalition-building and getting groups who have varying interests to work together for systems change is also a worthy endeavor, and difficult in its own way. It's the kind of "difficult" I prefer to work with.

Q *It's one thing to value coalition-building in theory, but it's another to see it work in practice. What did you observe during your time on the EFI board that convinced you this specific group of stakeholders was ready to go the distance?*

A I was drawn to EFI because it was started as a leap of faith between organizations who don't normally collaborate, and despite all the predictable challenges involved in that, virtually all of the founding stakeholders are still at the table. When I joined EFI's board of directors, I saw folks stay to chat between meetings. They genuinely showed curiosity and interest to better understand one another, each other's work and views. That authentic interaction

makes a multistakeholder approach successful. And it is what gave me the confidence to take on the executive director role and to continue what Peter O'Driscoll has done so well over these 15 years: keep EFI focused on the scale of the impact we can have right at the intersection of all our approaches and perspectives.

Q *2025 marked 10 years for EFI as an independent nonprofit. As you look at the next decade, what are some things you are most excited about, want to build on or hope to introduce?*

A EFI is at a really exciting point in its development. The team spent more than a decade earning trust, building relationships and understanding the food industry from the inside. And, as a small, focused and young organization, we can respond to changing conditions, experiment and move quickly when we see opportunities to scale impact. That combination of in-house experience and the agility to innovate positions us for a chance to reach a critical mass of workplaces across the food industry.

EFI and our peer organizations have launched and learned from programs that operate within 1% to 2% of the agricultural workforce. I believe it's time to insist that a few initiatives reach the other 98%. My hope is that EFI creates programs, resources and campaigns that make a measurable difference in the life of a majority of farmworkers.

The other area that motivates me is worker participation. Decades of trial and error in the broader farmworker service and advocacy space have helped us learn what meaningful versus symbolic participation looks like. I've had the privilege of spending countless days in farmworker communities, in people's homes, at labor camps and in union halls. Those experiences don't make me a

spokesperson for workers, but they mean I know who to call when I see openings to bring workers into new conversations and decision-making processes. In parallel to traditional avenues for worker representation, EFI has created unique mechanisms for workers to access more agency and decision-making in their workplaces. I'm excited to push that work forward and find new ways to bring worker leadership to the core of our food system.

Q *Do you have a general philosophy that guides you as a leader?*

A I've always respected strength over power. Power might come from a title, a budget or a credential, but strength is earned through integrity, competence, humility, consistency and the trust we build with others.

Time and again, organizations like EFI have had a catalytic effect by bringing together people who don't usually work together and creating the conditions for other forms of leadership to emerge. And that leadership can come from any rung of the food chain, from a grower, a food safety manager or a farmworker whose experience helps everyone see a better path forward.

To me, leadership is about earning trust, creating space for others to contribute and helping people accomplish together what none of them could accomplish alone. If EFI continues to do that well, we'll help build a food system that is not only more productive but also stronger, safer and healthier for everyone.

Strategic Pillars

Strategic pillars define EFI's work and the activities that will deliver on our mission.



Drive Market-Responsive Continuous Improvement



Certify Industry Leaders



Build and Credential Skills for Farmworkers and Managers

Progress on the 2022-26 Strategic Plan

In 2025, EFI completed the fourth year of its current five-year strategic plan, and with the progress that has been made, the EFI team is well positioned to define new strategic priorities for the next plan. In implementing the current strategic plan, EFI has expanded its suite of products and services over the past several years to reach agricultural employers at every stage of their journey, whether they are just starting on a path to improve their labor practices or are ready to advance beyond certification to support deeper training and credentialing of their workforce.



Organizational Sustainability

Sustain the People, the Culture, the Financing and the Systems Needed to Implement EFI's Work



Continued Rapid Growth for the Ethical Charter Implementation Program



The Ethical Charter Implementation Program (ECIP) continued to expand throughout 2025, showing increased commitment across the fresh produce and floral industry to continuous improvement and alignment with the Ethical Charter on Responsible Labor Practices.

Powered by EFI, the program equips suppliers and growers to turn the principles of the industry's Ethical Charter into action through the Learn, Assess and Benchmark (LAB) software platform. The LAB creates a safe harbor where growers and suppliers can evaluate their labor management systems and identify opportunities for improvement. Employers establish a clear baseline and track their progress over time in Grower LAB. In Supplier LAB, aggregated grower data provides visibility into how sourcing networks align with the Ethical Charter and where additional support may be needed.

User data flows up into a buyer dashboard, through aggregated profiles that help participating retail partners identify which of their suppliers are most actively engaging the LAB platform. EFI's goal has always been to create market incentives that reward companies that can demonstrate respect for their workforce. ECIP helps good employers showcase their labor practices to retail and food service customers.

In 2025, program updates under Engagement 2.0 introduced updated assessments, new supplier questions and a stronger focus on sustained participation. Industry participation was energized by two in-person events. The Engagement 2.0 Launch Preview at the Organic Produce

Summit in July convened more than 75 suppliers, growers, retailers and industry partners. The event introduced a new supplier gold star to reward companies for accurate and comprehensive supply chain size reporting. At a reception during the October International Fresh Produce Association Global Produce & Floral Show, 34 gold star suppliers were recognized, a 50% increase in "Leadership Circle" members over 2024 totals.

Industry engagement continued to expand throughout the year. By December 2025, more than 325 suppliers and 1,770 growers held active subscriptions in ECIP. Despite the introduction of more rigorous engagement criteria under Engagement 2.0, renewal rates remained strong, reflecting the value users saw in the program and its role in supporting responsible labor practices. The number of suppliers earning two or more engagement stars more than tripled compared with the previous year. Among growers, more than 1,000 participants achieved highly engaged status through active participation in ECIP or by holding an approved third-party social responsibility certificate.

ECIP continues to engage growers who are new to social responsibility programs, providing a starting point for developing stronger labor practices at the field level. By providing resources, benchmarking tools and a pathway for continuous improvement, ECIP is helping bring better labor practices to farming operations that may not otherwise have had access to the framework and support they need.

Ethical Charter Implementation Program Continued

The program covers a wide range of commodities across the Americas and South Africa, anchored by dense activity in the United States and Canada, with Mexico leading as the most engaged geographic location. This growing footprint demonstrates both the flexibility of the Ethical Charter framework and the industry's willingness to collaborate around shared labor principles. As the program evolves, ECIP will continue to provide suppliers, growers and retailers with tools to strengthen labor practices throughout the produce supply chain. Read the full [ECIP 2025 Annual Report](#) for more details.



EFI Certification Evolves From Culture Change to Operational Value

After gathering more than a decade of data from EFI's certification program, the evidence is clear that transforming agricultural workplace culture drives better business performance while improving working conditions. The year ended with 359 EFI-certified locations and a program that has now directly benefited over 60,000 workers across those farms. Also in 2025, the smallest operation to date was certified, so EFI farms now employ from 36 to 9,000 workers. Internal processes continue to be optimized for greater efficiency, ensuring that EFI captures the clear, measurable data needed to tell a powerful story of agricultural transformation through workforce engagement.

STREAMLINING THE AUDIT TO FOCUS ON STRENGTHS

EFI's certification program offers rigorous social compliance alongside worker engagement to improve workplace culture. Insights from worker and employer

feedback shape the ongoing refinement of the program, ensuring a cost-effective and agile process.

In 2025, EFI leaned into its core strengths and amended the training and auditing processes, allowing farming operations more flexibility in choosing to which sets of standards they are audited. Every facility must still meet all labor standards, as well as those that ensure a culture of food safety. Teaching the "why" behind the protocols remains critical and helps ensure employees actually follow them.

However, to eliminate operational redundancy and reduce the financial burden on growers, EFI stopped conducting technical Global Food Safety Initiative-recognized food safety audits because most growers already maintain credible food safety certifications. This shift gives growers flexibility and reduces audit costs, while keeping frontline workers deeply integrated into safeguarding the supply chain.

MEASURING LONG-TERM IMPACT

Independent third-party evaluations have consistently demonstrated the EFI certification program's effectiveness in driving positive cultural change, strengthening labor management systems and improving communication and skill development among workers. As several companies have now used the program for up to a decade, EFI can assess the longer-term impacts on both the operations and the lives of farmworkers. GoodFarms, Stemilt Growers and Windset Farms® have all gathered data over the past several years that demonstrates how EFI's worker engagement and collaborative model is leading directly to operational excellence, workforce stability and measurable business value.

INCREASED COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION

Dismantling silos, increasing collaboration and creating direct communication between workers and managers has been a proven tenet of EFI's training and certification program since the beginning. These three companies have provided a wealth of anecdotal information and testimonials on how the training and creation of the worker-manager collaborative teams have fostered open dialogue, rapid feedback and data-driven problem-solving. Each company has dedicated thousands of hours annually to ensure that workers and managers are properly trained and educated to bring issues to the attention of management. EFI has directly trained hundreds of workers at each of these operations, resulting in stronger relationships, greater trust and increased communication.

More sophisticated data collection in recent years has enabled the three companies to add quantitative measures to the qualitative feedback they have previously shared.



WORKFORCE STABILITY & RETENTION

In an industry challenged by labor volatility, GoodFarms, Stemilt and Windset Farms have outperformed industry standards for attraction and retention of workers, creating a stable workforce that can leverage institutional knowledge over time.

More importantly, by creating strong organizational cultures, each of these companies has become an employer of choice and maintains a waitlist of workers who would like to work for them.

98%

Windset Farms' average annual worker return rate

9.3 Years

average tenure of year-round employees at Stemilt Growers

More than 50%

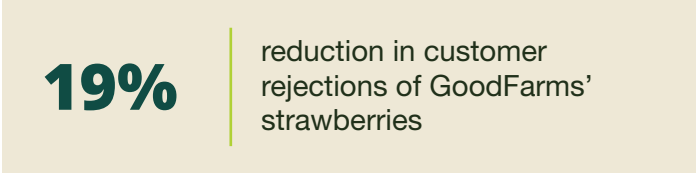
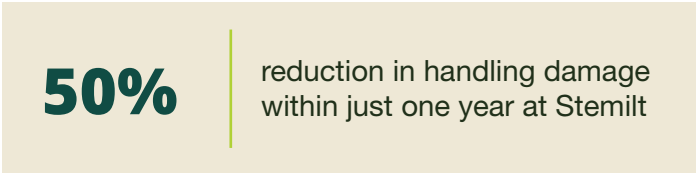
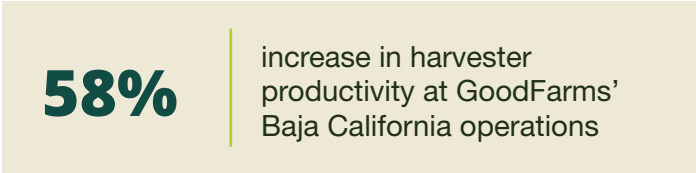
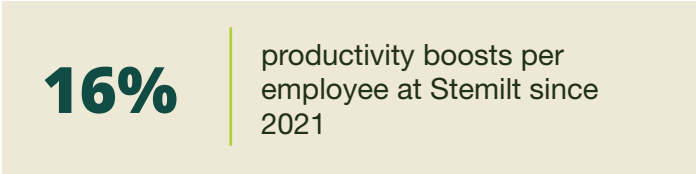
decreased reliance on H-2A guest workers as GoodFarms is preferred by local workers



EFI Certification Continued

OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY & QUALITY

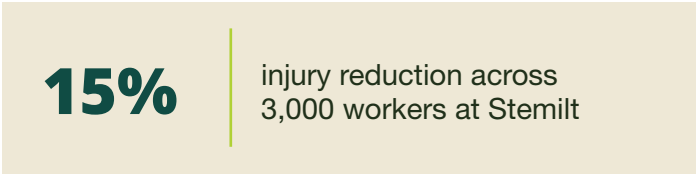
Engaged workforces operate with higher precision and motivation and offer suggestions to improve business performance.



WORKPLACE SAFETY

Worker health is a cornerstone of overall operational health. By partnering with EFI, these companies have moved beyond basic compliance to proactively design safer physical environments. Worker-led initiatives at these EFI-certified operations have included:

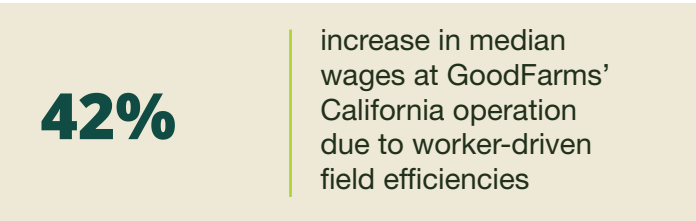
- **Field Hydration:** Increased access to clean water and specialized field hydration protocols.
- **Facility & Transit Safety:** Improved warehouse safety, designated traffic lanes and increased lighting in parking lots.
- **Ergonomics & Comfort:** Enhanced packhouse temperature controls, safer ladder/scaffolding use and proactive exercises to prevent repetitive motion injuries.
- **Emergency Readiness:** Certified first-aid providers directly integrated into field and facility teams.



WORKER COMPENSATION & THE EFI BONUS

Directly rewarding frontline workers creates a mutually beneficial cycle of financial sustainability. These three certified suppliers have seen wage growth and historic premium payouts.

The data eliminates any doubt that EFI certification is about more than compliance or social responsibility. It is a business strategy that will pay dividends in a continued tight labor market. When growers invest in their workforce and provide the training and space to engage workers, the entire supply chain benefits.



“We’ve not only seen a 15% reduction in workplace injuries, but have also experienced a significant lift in efficiency, with improved measures in pounds of fruit packed per hour, labor cost per acre and rejection rate. These indicators are all the intended consequences from our commitment to engaging people in the work and focusing on how to get better.”

West Mathison, President, Stemilt Growers



“Before it was hard for us to speak in public. Now ... we’re more independent. EFI has made us grow as a team. We’ve acquired skills, we’ve learned how to channel the problems that come up.”

Female Farmworker

EFI CERTIFICATION STRENGTHENS WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN THE FIELD

Women comprise about one-third of the U.S. farm workforce according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Labor. However, transitioning from field work into leadership positions has historically been a challenge for women. EFI certification addresses this gap by providing clear pathways to leadership and ensuring that channels exist for female voices.

Each year, EFI staff offer intensive trainings to several hundred agricultural workers in collaboration, problem-solving, conflict resolution and communication skills. While women have historically outpaced industry demographics by averaging 39% of those trainees, 2025 marked a historic milestone: Exactly 50% of all workers trained were women. This statistic is one representation of the profound cultural shifts that EFI certification fosters on farming operations.

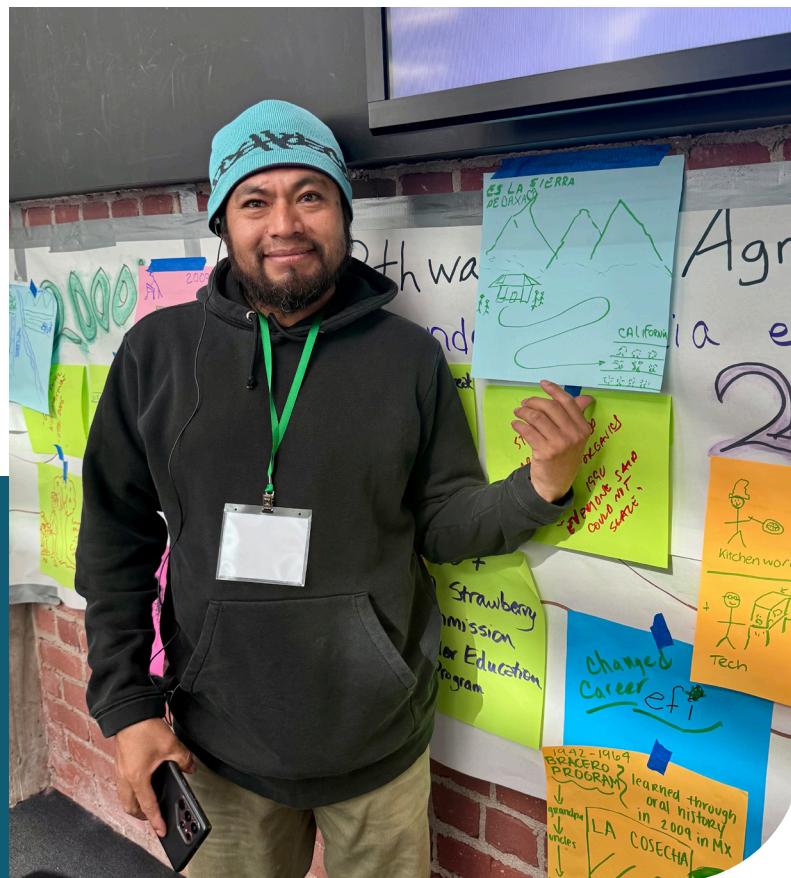
FOSTERING A RESPECTFUL, HARASSMENT-FREE WORKPLACE

- Because the EFI Program fosters a culture of collaboration and respect, it has been found to be a successful model for eliminating sexual harassment and improving the work environment for women and minority workers.
- EFI’s training equips women with the tools and confidence to speak up without fear of retaliation, share ideas for improving operations, and lead cross-functional teams.
- A culture rooted in mutual respect means women report feeling safer and better supported by management, making it easier to request time off for personal and family matters.





Formalizing Agricultural Skills to Elevate the Workforce



EFI's

Organizational and Workforce Development program area is driving a systemic shift to acknowledge, document and validate the knowledge, skills and abilities of agricultural workers. By bridging macro-level state policy with micro-level on-farm validation, this work aims to create a formalized framework that recognizes farmworkers as true professionals. Ultimately, these changes provide better jobs and higher wages for workers and develop the highly skilled and versatile workforce the produce industry needs.

Even as companies invest in automation to address the labor shortage, they recognize that skilled workers who can interface with and help integrate new technologies are now more essential than ever. As one grower expressed, "I don't want to hire \$15/hour farmworkers. I want to hire \$30/hour agricultural professionals."

BUILDING A STATEWIDE INFRASTRUCTURE IN CALIFORNIA

Creating a standardized statewide credentialing system requires systemic buy-in from across the agricultural ecosystem. In March 2025, EFI and Jobs for the Future designed a convening to establish a shared vision among

state agencies, labor unions, employer associations, community colleges and training providers. Farmworkers held a significant place at the table, ensuring that ground-level operational and community realities shaped the strategic action plan.

California Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary Karen Ross met with farmworkers and other stakeholders during the convening and discussed the intersections of the work to document and recognize agricultural skills with technology, the economy, the regenerative movement and cultural competency. Following the event, EFI distributed [a report](#), and Jobs for the Future staff have since held four additional stakeholder convenings to maintain momentum.

A PILOT FOR GROUND-LEVEL VALIDATION

Systemic change must be validated by real-world application. EFI partnered with GoodFarms' Buenaventura Ranch operation in Santa Maria, California, to build and test an operational "skill library." EFI staff directly shadowed harvesters and crew forepersons in the field to document and record specific skills and workflows, translating everyday activities into visible, measurable



Workers attended the convening along with state agencies, employer associations, community colleges and training providers

competencies. In addition, EFI collaborated with a skills assessment expert from Purdue University to design culturally appropriate evaluation methodologies that measure skill acquisition and competency.

EFI also partnered with the Center for Employment Training to design training curriculum for the identified skills and with the UFW Foundation to conduct surveys that will help identify workers and their needs. These partnerships are supporting a demonstration project at Buenaventura Ranch.

MATCHING TRAINING WITH FIELD EXPERTISE CREATES INNOVATIVE INDUSTRY RESOURCE

EFI training was an instrumental component of a unique program launched in the state of Washington to bring farmworkers into consulting roles and effectively bridge the gap between management and field experience. There is a growing realization among employers that when farmworkers help design new technologies and work processes they are much more likely to produce positive results.

Semillero de Ideas contracted EFI to design and implement a 10-session intensive training program for a cohort of farmworkers. The training instructed farmworkers in consulting skills and how to work with growers on innovative orchard-based interventions, as well as how to structure a consulting contract, account for time and expenses, plan project implementation and create reports. Workers are now available as consultants to fruit tree growers across the state of Washington.

EFI is striving to help the industry redefine farmwork as a recognized and sustainable career. Professionalizing the agricultural workforce is a critical strategy for stabilizing the supply chain, especially during the current challenges of ongoing labor shortages, technological advancements, climate change and economic factors.



California Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary Karen Ross met with farmworkers and other stakeholders during the March convening



Leadership Team Committee

The Leadership Team Committee (LTC) was formed unofficially in 2014 and matured into its current form at the end of 2020, when EFI's board of directors unanimously approved the staff's recommendation to form a standing advisory group of farmworkers and managers who serve on EFI-certified worker-manager collaborative teams to provide strategic input to the organization.

The committee meets bimonthly and discusses topics like challenges and opportunities in the certification program; how to engage workers in credentialing agricultural skills, training and development; how EFI can improve retailer recognition efforts; and more. In addition, the LTC has become a path for professional growth. While some members have advanced in their careers or transitioned into new roles, new participants have joined with a shared drive to learn more about the Responsibly Grown, Farmworker Assured certification. Beyond technical knowledge, members have enhanced their communication skills, becoming confident advocates who represent the voices of thousands of workers.

Alice Linsmeier, EFI's Organizational & Workforce Development Manager, organizes and facilitates LTC meetings and notes the personal growth she has witnessed among LTC members. "I have watched the confidence some committee members have gained during their tenure. From speaking with fellow committee members, EFI staff and board members, they grow comfortable sharing their ideas, questions and concerns. Most importantly, they feel heard and valued as key EFI stakeholders."

The impact of the LTC extends beyond the meetings and even strategic input to EFI. Committee members bring these critical discussions and learnings back to their own operations. Long-term committee co-coordinator Estefani Ocea describes the group as "a very important space for sharing experiences and inspiring other teams at other operations." Eudelia Morales, who has been on the committee since 2021, shares that "the most valuable part of the LTC is the certainty that worker opinions and ideas are truly being integrated into EFI's decision-making process."

Together, these voices ensure that all stakeholders have a seat at the table, especially when it comes to the organization's strategic mission.

Companies with representatives serving on the LTC:

- El Milagro de Baja, GoodFarms
- El Sol, El Cultivo y La Tierra, GoodFarms
- Frutos de Huerta Real, Mastronardi Produce/ SUNSET®
- Rancho Don Juanito, GoodFarms
- Rouge River Farms
- Stemilt Growers
- Windset Farms



Reach & Impact

(as of December 31, 2025)

CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Impact data from EFI's rigorous certification program



359

Certified Farming Operations



4,848

Total Workers Trained Since Beginning of Program



254

Workers Trained in 2025



60,428

Total Workforce* on EFI-Certified Farms



*represents the cumulative annual workforce employed on farms during their period of EFI certification

Reach & Impact

(as of December 31, 2025)

ETHICAL CHARTER IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Impact data from industrywide initiative to assess and continuously improve labor management systems

6

Participating Buyers



325

Suppliers Subscribed



137

Suppliers Earned 2 or More Green Stars
(234% increase year over year)



1,770

Growers Subscribed



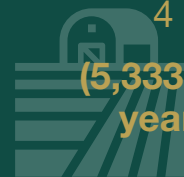
60%

of Growers Have No Formal Audit Program



326

Growers Earned a Gold Star Plus 4 Green Stars
(5,333% increase year over year)



News & Notes



EFI STAFF MEMBER APPOINTED TO AGTECH ALLIANCE ADVISORY BOARD

Kevin Boyle, EFI's Director of Organizational & Workforce Development, was appointed to the California AgTech Alliance's Industry Advisory Board. The Alliance is driving climate-smart innovation and creating pathways for skilled agricultural technology careers — a mission that perfectly aligns with EFI's workforce development initiatives.



2ND ANNUAL FARMWORKER OF THE YEAR

The Farmworker of the Year Award was created to elevate farmworker voices and celebrate the essential frontline workers whose contributions are vital to the success, safety and sustainability of the food system. The 2025 winner, Rafael Terán Melchor of Stemilt Growers, exemplifies these values. With 23 years of experience in agriculture, Melchor is widely respected for his thoughtful mentorship, solutions-driven approach and dedication to his team.

The following workers were named 2025 finalists: Guadalupe Huerta de Jesus from Frutos de Huerta Real for SUNSET®, Maria Barbara Resendiz Martinez from GoodFarms, Rene Orozco from Lakeside Organic Gardens, and Franklin Rolando Carrillo Rodas from Windset Farms.



[Watch the winner announcement video.](#)

EFI CELEBRATES POLLINATOR MONTH

In 2025, EFI placed a strong emphasis on championing pollinator health and habitat by expanding educational outreach via a digital pollinator [toolkit](#). Information is included about the many different types of pollinators beyond the beloved honeybees and butterflies and how they contribute to the food system, farmers' livelihoods and the U.S. economy.





**LEADERSHIP 101
COURSE DEBUT**

EFI launched Facilitation 101, a bilingual leadership course designed for supervisors, managers, trainers and leaders in the produce industry. During this multiday virtual course, participants developed skills in communication, group problem-solving, active listening and team engagement.

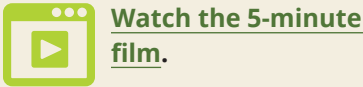
**GOODFARMS’ ZIMMERMAN-LOMMELE
RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS INDUSTRY AWARD**

While accepting the 2025 Frieda Rapoport Caplan Women’s Catalyst Award, Amalia Zimmerman-Lommel credited her success to mentors who supported her early in her career and created opportunities for her to grow and develop. She noted the role EFI played in developing a workplace culture at GoodFarms that creates numerous opportunities for farmworkers, especially women. “Sometimes, all we need is a little opportunity—and someone who believes in us,” Zimmerman-Lommel said.



**EFI AND CERTIFIED
SUPPLIER STEMILT
GROWERS
FEATURED IN B LAB
GLOBAL FILM**

A Holistic Approach to Resilience recognizes the challenges faced by and deep knowledge required of farmworkers. The short film was produced for Once Upon a Farm by BBC StoryWorks Commercial Productions and spotlights the people behind EFI-certified fruit and the growing movement to create safer, more transparent and more equitable agricultural practices.



**#FARMWORKERFRIDAY
CAMPAIGN FOCUSES
ON SKILLS AND
CONTRIBUTIONS OF
FARMWORKERS**

In July, EFI introduced regular features of workers on its social media channels using a special campaign hashtag. The posts aim to highlight the hands and work contributing to the food system and spotlight farmworkers who demonstrate leadership, collaboration and dedication. The campaign quickly caught on, with other organizations using the hashtag to share worker stories.



**ECIP EVENTS ELEVATE PROGRAM AND EARLY
ADOPTERS**

Held during key industry trade shows, two events offered an exclusive look at upcoming ECIP updates and celebrated early adopters who quickly achieved Leadership Circle status. The events enabled participating retailers to champion the program’s importance within their supply chains, underscore a commitment to continuous improvement, and recognize the suppliers committed to advancing responsible labor practices.



EFI CELEBRATES 10 YEARS

In May, EFI board members, staff and founding members gathered to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the organization’s status as an independent nonprofit.

A special program highlighted stories and perspectives of EFI’s early founding and beautifully underscored its success as a multistakeholder organization working to drive value for every part of the supply chain.



“Farmwork is hard work. It’s skilled work.”

Jane Kuhn,
Director of
Sustainability
Once Upon a Farm

Statement of Financial Position

Year Ended December 31, 2025

	2025	2024
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 950,574	\$ 1,454,912
Grants and accounts receivable, net	45,659	322,298
Prepaid expenses	11,277	14,099
Unbilled revenue	133,023	-
Fixed assets (net)	1,582,685	1,111,081
Deposits	1,700	1,700
Other assets	20,352	-
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 2,745,270	\$ 2,904,090
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	318,471	273,973
Deferred revenue	806,955	678,655
Total Liabilities	\$ 1,125,426	\$ 952,628
NET ASSETS		
Without donor restrictions	951,944	844,829
With donor restrictions	667,900	1,106,633
Total Net Assets	\$ 1,619,844	\$ 1,951,462
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 2,745,270	\$ 2,904,090

Statement of Activities

Year Ended December 31, 2025

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	2025 Total	2024 Total
Revenue				
Contributions and grants	\$ 396,307	\$ 550,000	\$ 946,307	\$ 2,123,657
In-kind contributions	226,000	-	226,000	-
Program income	2,401,265	-	2,401,265	2,157,959
Interest Income	29,667	-	29,667	36,332
Other Income	5,230	-	5,230	2,864
Net assets released from restrictions	988,733	(988,733)	-	-
Total Revenue and Support	4,047,203	(438,733)	3,608,469	4,320,811
Expenses				
Program service	2,868,444	-	2,868,444	2,402,566
Management and general	1,032,351	-	1,032,351	1,024,517
Fundraising	39,293	-	39,293	26,271
Total Expenses	3,940,088	-	3,940,088	3,453,354
Change in Net Assets	107,115	(438,733)	(331,618)	867,457
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	844,829	1,106,633	1,951,462	1,084,005
Net Assets, End of Year	\$ 951,944	\$ 667,900	\$ 1,619,844	\$ 1,951,463

2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Reyna Lopez**, Chair
Executive Director, Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN)
- Ernie Farley**, Vice Chair
Partner, GoodFarms
- Carol Schrader**, Treasurer
Independent Consultant
- Preston Witt**, Secretary
Assistant Vice President, Global Sustainability & Compliance, Costco Wholesale
- Lori Castillo**, Vice President of Marketing, NS Brands
- Kim Combs**,* Supplier Risk and Compliance Manager, The Kroger Co.
- Michael Conroy**, Independent Consultant
- Pete Donlon**, Vice President, Misionero
- Alexandra Hill**,* Assistant Professor of Cooperative Extension, University of California, Berkeley
- Joe Martinez**,* Co-Founder and CEO, Ciertto
- Erika Navarrete**, Vice President, United Farm Workers (UFW)
- Matt Rogers**,* General Manager and Co-Founder at AgSocio
- Lori Taylor**,* Founder and CEO, The Produce Moms
- Jamie Thorn**,* Social Responsibility Manager, Whole Foods Market
- Baldemar Velasquez**, President and Founder, Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC)

*Joined in 2025



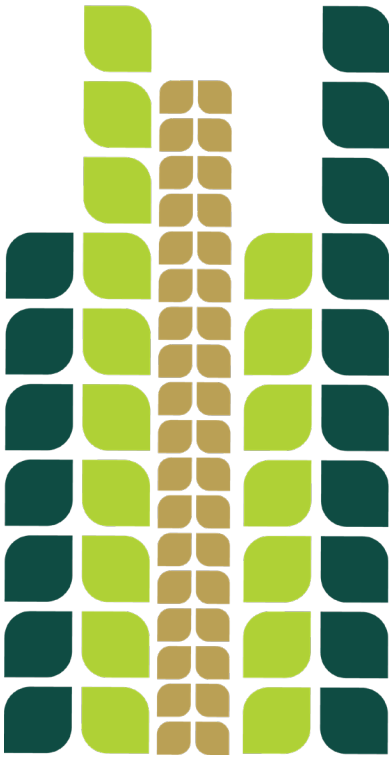
*Gonzalo Martinez
with board members
Matt Rogers, Kim
Combs, Alexandra Hill
and Jamie Thorn*

2025 STAFF

- Kevin Boyle**, Organizational & Workforce Development Director
- Shaleena Capers**, Finance Manager
- Karla Cook**, Certification Manager
- LaKisha Copeland**, Operations Associate
- Madelyn Edlin**, Product Marketing Manager
- Kenton Harmer**, Market-Based Impact Director
- Star Huff**, Operations Manager
- Alice Linsmeier**, Organizational & Workforce Development Manager
- Gabriela Lopez-Barry**, Special Projects Manager
- Adriana Martinez**, Interim Director, Strategic Partnerships & External Relations
- Alexandra Martinez**, Sr. Digital Marketing & Sales Associate
- Candace Mickens**, Finance & Operations Director
- Diona Monroe**, Data Manager
- Sky Navarro**, Sr. Data Associate
- Peter O'Driscoll**, Executive Director
- Julia Rivara**, Sr. Certification Program Associate
- Ana (Lulu) Rivera Collazo**, Training Manager
- LeAnne Ruzzamenti**, Marketing & Communications Director

Special Thanks to Our Donors

- California Workforce Development Board
- California Employment Development Department – Farmworkers Advancement Program
- Clif Family Foundation
- The James Irvine Foundation
- The Kroger Co. Zero Hunger Zero Waste Foundation
- New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
- Silicon Valley Community Foundation
- Walmart Foundation
- Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati
- Winifred Stevens Foundation





200 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001

202.730.6672

equitablefood.org