

# EFI Highlights Role of Farmworkers During Food Safety Month

*Reminds Consumers That Food Safety Starts at the Farm*

WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, UNITED STATES, September 2, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Equitable Food Initiative](#), the workforce development and certification organization that partners with growers, farmworkers, retailers and consumer advocacy groups, is celebrating National Food Safety Education Month by encouraging growers and agricultural associations to share their commitment to food safety and remind consumers that farmers and farmworkers are on the frontlines of providing safe, nutritious food.



Farmworkers in Mexico peel and cut mango

EFI hopes to expand the food safety message beyond in-home education to raise awareness about the 2.4 million farmworkers around the United States who work tirelessly to grow, harvest and pack safe fruits and vegetables and who follow strict protocols to reduce the prevalence and severity of food safety incidents.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that each year foodborne illness sickens roughly 1 in 6 Americans (or 48 million people), hospitalizes 128,000, and causes 3,000 deaths. The CDC aims to change that and has designated September as National Food Safety Education Month, with a focus on educating consumers about proper food handling and safety.

In a recent consumer survey, EFI polled respondents about a variety of social responsibility and sustainability issues and about their concerns when purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables. Food

recalls, foodborne outbreaks and illness were their second highest concern at 68%, right behind pesticide use and residues at 69%.

During the month of September, EFI will share stories on social media about food safety in the produce industry and encourage other industry members to do the same. Sample graphics and a video can be downloaded on the EFI website at [equitablefood.org/foodsafety](http://equitablefood.org/foodsafety).

Important messages to share with consumers include:

- Food safety starts on the farm, and farmworkers are on the front lines of preventing foodborne illness.
- To detect and address threats to food safety, workers need dignified working conditions, training and a culture that encourages them to speak up.
- Well-trained farmworkers are the critical first step in preventing foodborne illness.
- Farmers are held to high food safety standards and must complete yearly food safety audits and continuing education programs.

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*LeAnne Ruzzamenti, Equitable Food Initiative*

EFI's goal is to highlight food safety messages that further help consumers understand the value of a well-trained, skilled workforce that is equipped to not only recognize food safety issues but also assist in mitigating them before they become health issues for consumers. EFI is encouraging industry members to speak with one voice and continue amplifying the message that food safety starts at the farm by:

- Sharing EFI-provided messages and information across social media platforms

- Creating unique content or videos for social media highlighting their own food safety protocols and messages and using the hashtag #FoodSafetyMonth
- Contacting local media and asking them to share information about the role of agriculture and farmworkers in growing and shipping safe food



Workers gather in a greenhouse with plant starts at the beginning of the planting season

LeAnne Ruzzamenti, director of marketing communications for EFI, commented, "As consumers, we take for granted that we have access to some of the safest, most abundant and affordable food supplies in the world. But as industry members, we also need to share our story with consumers so they better understand the role we play in creating this level of safety and abundance." Ruzzamenti continued, "Farmworkers play a vital role in the food system and, in fact, are the foundation of our supply chain, ensuring the availability, quality and safety of our food."

For more information on National Food Safety Education Month, visit [equitablefood.org/foodsafety](http://equitablefood.org/foodsafety).

#### About EFI

Equitable Food Initiative is a nonprofit certification and skill-building organization that seeks to increase transparency in the food supply chain and improve the lives of farmworkers through a team-based approach to training and continuous improvement practices. EFI brings together growers, farmworkers, retailers and consumers to solve the most pressing issues facing the fresh produce industry. Its unparalleled approach sets standards for labor practices, food safety and pest management while engaging workers at all levels on the farm to produce Responsibly Grown, Farmworker Assured® fruits and vegetables. For more information about Equitable Food Initiative, visit [equitablefood.org](http://equitablefood.org).

View a list of EFI-certified farms at [equitablefood.org/farms](http://equitablefood.org/farms).

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