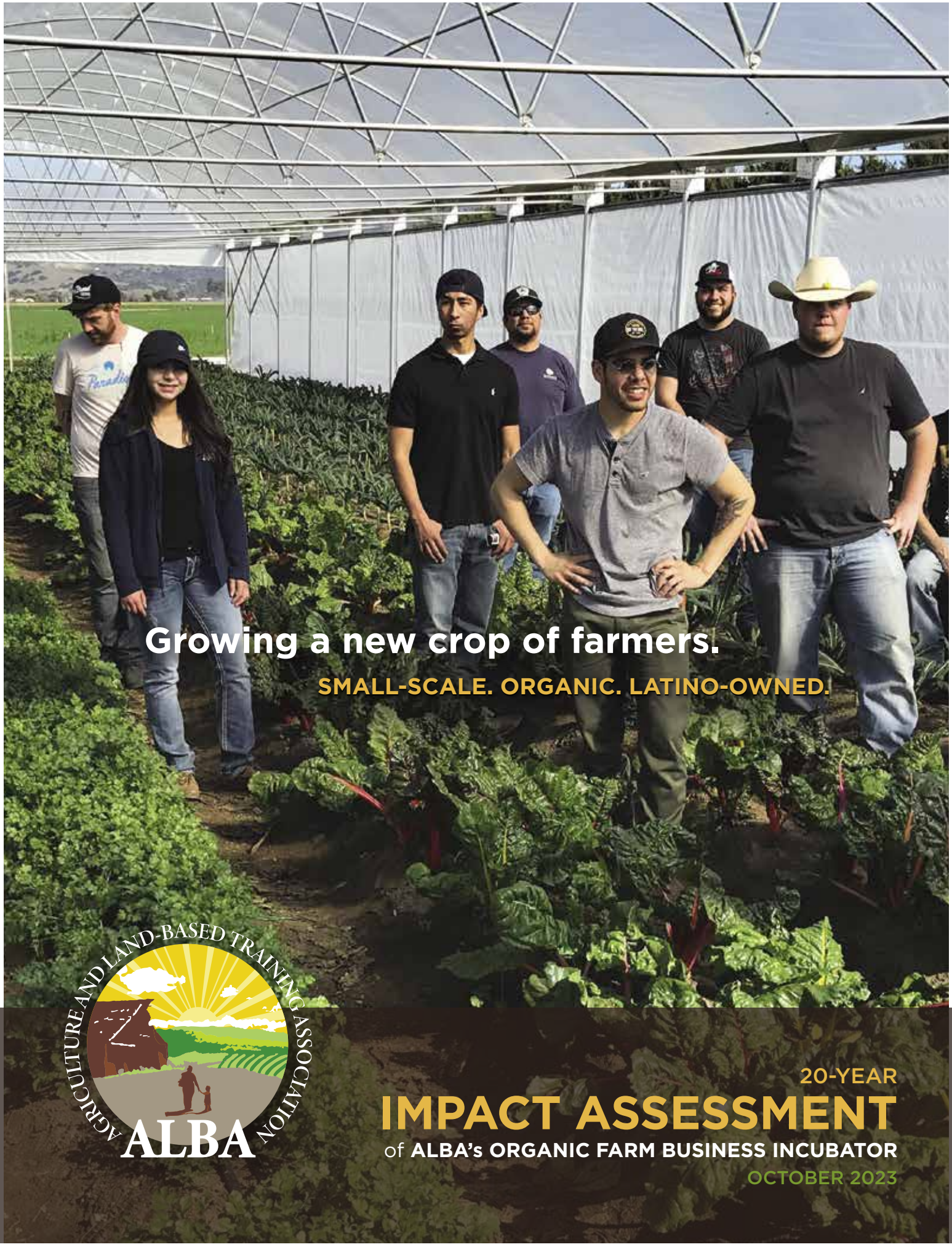


Growing a new crop of farmers.

SMALL-SCALE. ORGANIC. LATINO-OWNED.

AGRICULTURE AND LAND-BASED TRAINING ASSOCIATION

ALBA

20-YEAR

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

of **ALBA's ORGANIC FARM BUSINESS INCUBATOR**

OCTOBER 2023

PROLOGUE

Since 2001, ALBA has served limited-resource farmers through land-based training in organic farm management, helping them advance their careers or pursue their dream of farm ownership. Having surpassed ALBA's 20-year anniversary in 2021, we decided the time had come to conduct a thorough impact assessment of our programs to determine whether ALBA is living up to its reputation as an organic farm incubator which meaningfully benefits the limited-resource farmers it serves.

As one of the longest-standing farm incubator programs, ALBA felt that the study would also be useful for the larger community of food system stakeholders. This includes the many government, foundation and individual donors who have invested more than $15 million into ALBA's work since its founding. In a broader sense, we also hope the assessment sheds light on the effectiveness of the farm incubator model in establishing viable farm businesses while driving greater equity and sustainability in agriculture.

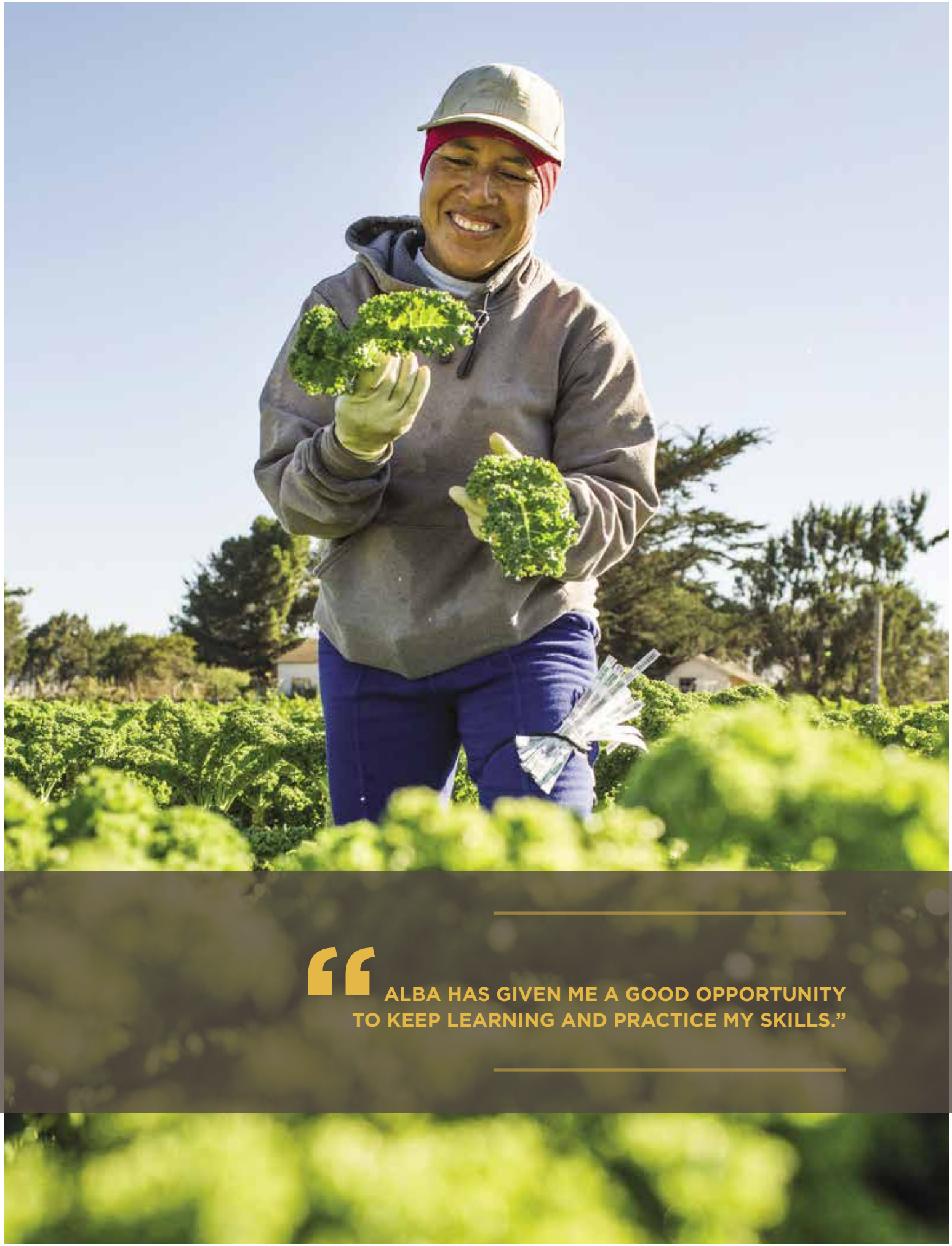
With the generous support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, ALBA conducted its most comprehensive impact assessment to date. In total, ALBA surveyed 181 farmers who graduated from our 1-year Programa Educativo para Pequenos Agricultores (PEPA) course between 2002 and 2020. Questions focused on changes in career and income since graduation and to what extent the program impacted their careers in agriculture. Farm business owners were asked additional questions about their acreage, farm revenue, and plans for the future among others. The following report summarizes their responses.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the many partners who contributed to the project. Jan Perez of UC Santa Cruz helped us develop the questionnaire. Javier Matta, then a senior at Stanford, did the majority of survey interviews with farmers by phone and in person. Federico Castillo, Omar Romero-Hernandez and Margarita Martins of UC Berkeley drove around the Central Coast to interview alumni to better understand the qualitative impacts of the program. Chris Brown, ALBA's Development Director, analyzed the survey data and wrote the report. He was advised by Ken Meter of Crossroads Resource Center and Juli Obudzinski of Earthbound Consulting, as well as his ALBA colleagues.

Most of all we thank the farmers for their participation and for the noble work they do.

TABLE OF CONTENTS



“ALBA HAS GIVEN ME A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO KEEP LEARNING AND PRACTICE MY SKILLS.”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALBA's mission is to create economic opportunity for limited-resource farmers through land-based training in organic farm management. On 100 acres in the heart of Salinas Valley on California's Central Coast, the non-profit operates one of the nation's longest-standing farm business incubator programs. Since 2001, ALBA has launched and incubated over 220 organic farm businesses and provided intensive on-farm training to hundreds more.

This report summarizes the data gathered in ALBA's most comprehensive impact assessment to date. In 2022, ALBA surveyed graduates of our Programa Educativo Para Pequenos Agricultores (PEPA) course, a 1-year farmer education course designed to prepare participants to launch a farm business. The 181 survey respondents represent 48% of all PEPA graduates through 2020. Of those responding, 121 (67%) graduates continued into ALBA's Organic Farm Incubator (OFI) where they gained subsidized access to land, equipment, and technical assistance for up to 4 more years in their pursuit of independent organic farm ownership.

Given that ALBA's mission is centered on economic impact, this report focuses on measuring program outcomes such as farm business success, career advancement and changes in income. In addition to individual outcomes, the findings point to broader themes regarding the program model and the people we serve.

LAND-BASED INCUBATORS ARE AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO KICKSTART FARMS

The findings show that ALBA, in coordination with partners, is effectively mitigating the main barriers to farm initiation, which include accessing land, finance, markets, and technical assistance. In addition, start-up farm businesses face a steep learning curve requiring significant investment. ALBA mitigates these barriers through offering on-site education and resources giving start-up farms the time to take root and grow.

A total of 77 respondents are currently operating a farm business, which is 43% of all respondents, and 64% of the 121 who launched a farm in ALBA's incubator. Despite competition from corporate growers with thousands of acres of production, ALBA farms have found a niche, farming organic vegetables and berries on small acreage leveraging their experience working in the fields with help from family. Nearly 70% of independent farms surveyed are in the top quartile of American farms in terms of sales, and nearly 20% are in the top decile. (p.13)

This 450% rise in farm ownership post-graduation was matched by a 76% drop in respondents employed as low-wage farmworkers. Moreover, the number of respondents in agriculture careers rose by 21% after the program (p.16). Incomes rose too, with a significant portion of respondents shifting from earning under $30,000 to over $50,000.

UNTAPPED POTENTIAL OF AMERICA'S LATINO FARMERS

Another important outcome of the assessment is to highlight the underappreciated talent and entrepreneurial spirit that exists within the Latino farming community. Though respondents represent 12 countries, ALBA's story is best told by Mexican immigrant families who come to California to work in farm fields. Indeed, Mexican immigrants represented 57% (104) of survey respondents, with U.S.-Born Latinos (USBLs) — mainly the children of Mexican immigrants — adding another 17% (30)[1]. Though they have a combined survey representation of 74%, their actual participation rate is 10-15% higher[2].

Mexican immigrants and USBLs also stand out in terms of farm business ownership. An impressive 56% (58 of 104) of Mexican immigrant respondents were operating a farm business, followed by 37% (11 of 30) of USBLs. Together, they owned 90% of the farms surveyed (69 of 77) (p. 11). The same holds true for their commitment to farming as a livelihood. Over 60% of both groups earned a majority of their household income from the farm. Of the 8 remaining farms, only 1 could make this claim. (p. 12).

ALBA's participant demographics mirror those of California agriculture at large; roughly 90% of California's farmworkers are Latino, of which over 70% are from Mexico[3]. The assessment showcases their capacity and determination to farm independently and sustainably, making the case that Latinos' youth, numbers and farming experience are a vital asset in expanding the organic agriculture movement.

THE INVESTMENTS ARE PAYING OFF

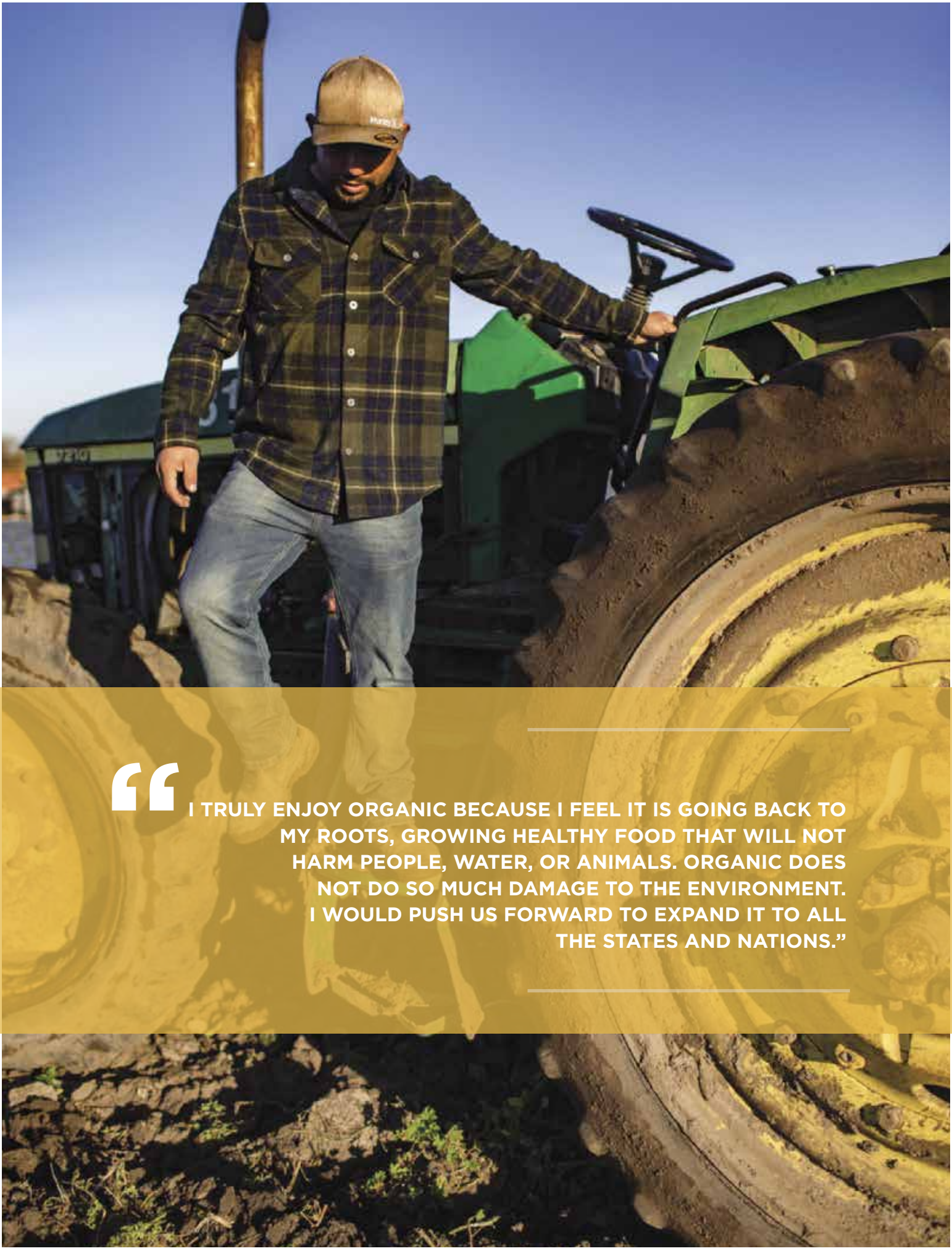
For stakeholders involved in this work, looking beyond individual achievement to the program's return on investment is also compelling. ALBA estimates that the ***annual* economic output of the farms launched in the program is more than 3 times the total grant funds awarded *over 20 years*** (p. 19). Add to this the hundreds of thousands of hours of experiential training and technical assistance — which has strengthened the organic food and farming workforce — and the economic impact is even greater.

In summary, the data and perspectives gathered through this assessment confirm that ALBA's incubator farm model is effective at establishing organic farms at an impressive rate and more broadly creating opportunity for farmers of color. In doing so, ALBA serves as a replicable model for achieving greater equity and sustainability in agriculture.

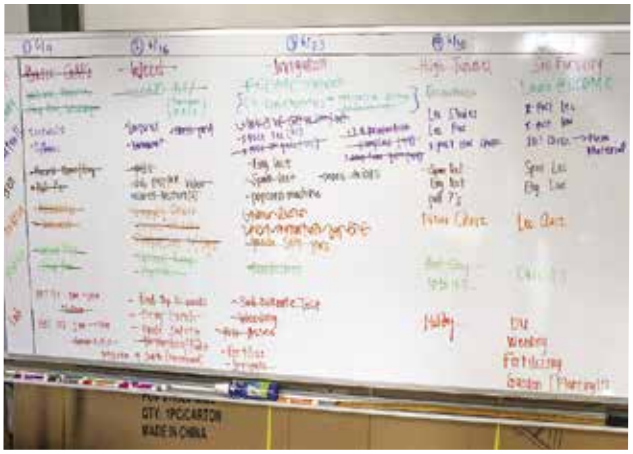
[1] Five of the 30 U.S. Born Latinos reported being of mixed race.

[2] The last five years of PEPA enrollments had an 87% participation by people of Mexican origin.

[3] California Findings from the National Agricultural Workers Survey 2015-2019, January 2022.



“I TRULY ENJOY ORGANIC BECAUSE I FEEL IT IS GOING BACK TO MY ROOTS, GROWING HEALTHY FOOD THAT WILL NOT HARM PEOPLE, WATER, OR ANIMALS. ORGANIC DOES NOT DO SO MUCH DAMAGE TO THE ENVIRONMENT. I WOULD PUSH US FORWARD TO EXPAND IT TO ALL THE STATES AND NATIONS.”



THE PROGRAM

Since 2001, ALBA has been creating opportunities for low-income field laborers through land-based training in organic farm management, helping them advance their careers or pursue the dream of farm ownership. The nonprofit provides intensive, on-farm training and access to resources for aspiring farm business owners for up to 5 years.

ALBA's incubator program starts with PEPA, a 1-year course designed to prepare participants to launch a farm in the second year of the program. The course is conducted in five 8-week modules on the following topics: (1) Soil Health and Crop Planning, (2) Small Farm Business Management, (3) Marketing, (4) Organic Production, and (5) Whole Farm Planning. Participants are a mix of aspiring farm owners, college students and mid-career professionals interested in organic farming. Though ALBA welcomes aspiring farmers from all backgrounds, Mexican immigrants and U.S.-Born Latinos represent 85-90% of participants in the program.

Class sessions are held twice weekly and last from two to four hours. During the week, classroom sessions are held in the evening and led by ALBA staff or guest speakers from the farming industry. On the weekend, sessions take place on ALBA's 1-acre demonstration plot where the class farms, harvests, packs and markets produce over two crop cycles. In the off season, the class continues to meet, and takes study trips to network and gain exposure to other farms, farm service providers and buyers.

Each PEPA class graduates between 18 and 24, roughly half of whom choose to continue into the Organic Farm Incubator (OFI), where they launch a farm business on ALBA's land. OFI participants are provided subsidized access to land, farm equipment and free technical assistance over 4 years. Field staff assist farmers in organic production, equipment usage and complying with food safety standards. In the office, staff advises them on business strategy, cash flow management, food safety, regulatory compliance and record-keeping.

Upon entering the incubator, farmers launch their farms on a ½-acre. Over the next three years, they expand up to five acres, gradually mastering the responsibilities of farm business ownership as they ready to transition off-site to independent farming.

In a typical year, 30 participants take at least 1 PEPA module and 20 complete the entire course. In the OFI, there are an additional 36-40 farm businesses being incubated representing the four previous graduating classes of PEPA. Each year, an average of 11 new farms are launched and 4-8 farms leave the program to continue farming off-site.

ECOSYSTEM OF SMALL FARM BUSINESS SERVICES

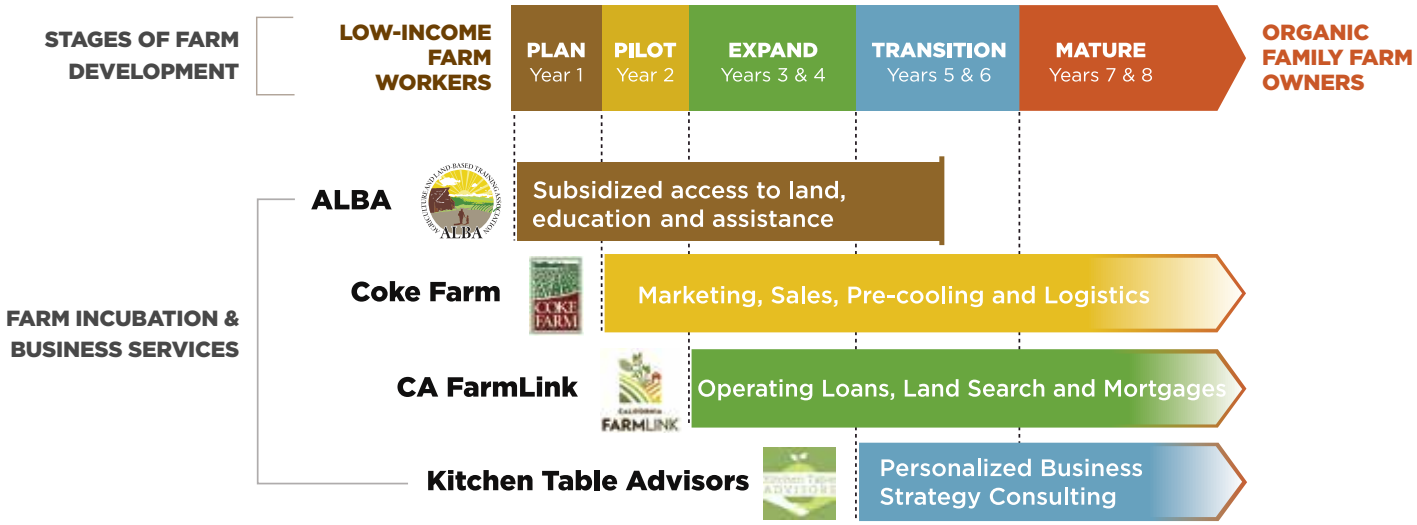
Facilitating OFI graduates' transition to farm ownership requires a wide array of expertise and services, more than ALBA alone can provide. ALBA has developed several key partnerships over the years to provide business services to start-up organic farms:

- **California FarmLink** initially specialized in helping farmers find land, but saw the lack of financing options for beginning farmers. In 2011 they began lending to farmers and gained status as a Community Development Financial Institution in 2013.
- **Kitchen Table Advisors** was founded in 2013 by the former Director of Lending at FarmLink to address the need for more business assistance for farmers during the vulnerable transition from ALBA's program to independent operations.
- **Coke Farm** is a unique organic produce wholesaler which does business with beginning small-scale farmers. Coke provides consistent market access to our farmers who make up half of their suppliers.

Other partners supplement the training program, rounding out a vibrant ecosystem of business and educational services for ALBA's start-up, organic family farms, the majority of which are owned and operated by Mexican immigrants:

- **Employment Services** provide training in leadership and entrepreneurship.
- **Loaves, Fishes and Computers** does workshops on computer literacy.
- **Monterey Resource Conservation District** trains farmers on irrigation and soil nutrient management.
- **Santa Cruz Community Ventures** trains on financial literacy and credit building.

> "I LOVED THAT THE PROGRAM WAS TAUGHT MULTI-CULTURALLY, THAT IT WAS TAUGHT BILINGUALLY. I LOVED THAT CULTURAL EXCHANGE AND BEING WITH DIFFERENT TYPES OF PEOPLE IN CLASS."



Stages of new farm development and nature of partner intervention.

FINDINGS

This section details the findings from the 181 survey responses and associated interviews from ALBA's PEPA graduates. First, the background and experience of respondents is summarized, then the report takes a closer look at a subset of those who are actively farming to better understand ALBA's effectiveness as a farm business incubator. Special attention is paid to the outcomes for Mexican and US-Born Latinos, who represent the majority of survey respondents and yield some of the most striking outcomes. An overview of impact metrics follows, such as farm sales, income, and career advancement, closing with an estimate of the program's impact on the local economy. In addition, respondents are quoted throughout the document in order to directly share their perspectives on farming and the program experience.

BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE OF RESPONDENTS

First, we look at the background of PEPA participants in order to provide insight into their relationship with farming and their reasons for coming to ALBA to seek opportunities in the agricultural sector.

CHART 1 Race/Ethnicity of Respondents

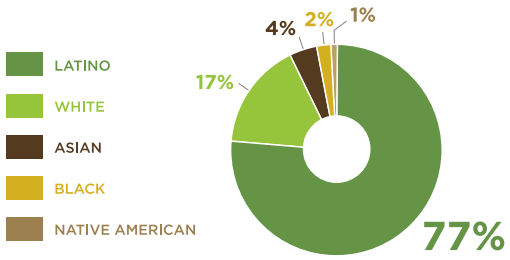
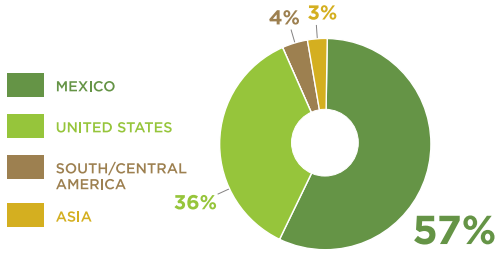


CHART 2 Country of Birth of Respondents



In terms of race and ethnicity, the vast majority of survey respondents identified as Latino (77%), Whites represented 17% of respondents, with Asian, Black, and Native Americans making up the remaining 7% of participants (Chart 1).

The majority of respondents (64%) originate outside the U.S., with nearly 90% of whom are from Mexico (Chart 2). The survey sample includes an additional 12 immigrants from 10 different countries. Seven respondents came from the Central and South American countries of Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Peru. Five more were from the Asian countries of India, Iran, Pakistan, South Korea and The Philippines.

Special attention is paid to Mexican immigrants in this report, because they stand out in terms of participation, farming experience and their success in farm business ownership. California's Central Coast is home to tens of thousands of Mexican immigrants, many of whom work in the fertile fields of the Salinas Valley. Given the low pay, difficult working conditions and lack of career alternatives brings them to ALBA to seek new opportunities.

Table 3 breaks down the demographics of respondents and the experience they bring into the program. Mexican immigrants distinguished themselves, with 10 to 15 years' more experience than other groups (Table 3). U.S.-Born Latinos (USBLs) were the next most experienced group, half (50%) of whom had farming experience averaging 8 years.

TABLE 3 Prior Farming Experience by Cohort Group

RACE/ETHNICITY OF RESPONDENTS	NO.	% OF THOSE SURVEYED	% WITH PRIOR FARM EXPERIENCE	AVERAGE YEARS' EXPERIENCE
All immigrants	**116**	**64%**	**88%**	**17.2**
Mexican	104	57%	92%	17.9
Others	12	7%	50%	6.3
All U.S. Born	**65**	**36%**	**40%**	**6.8**
Latino	30	17%	50%	8.2
White	29	16%	32%	5.2
Others	6	3%	14%	3

Other U.S.-born participants — even those attracted to a farm training program — have far less experience in agriculture. This is likely linked to higher levels of education and the availability of alternative career pathways. But it may also relate to something the survey did not track: age. U.S.-born respondents tend to enroll in the program at a younger age, either as students of Hartnell College or to explore organic farming early in their careers, which naturally limits their potential farming experience.

The post-survey interviews made clear that the motivation to farm as a career extended well beyond economic considerations. Many of the immigrants were raised on the land and consider farming as an identity more than a job. They spoke of wanting to have autonomy to make decisions, set their own schedules and strengthen their family by working together. Many spoke of the pride derived from bringing healthy food to the community and cultivating the land using natural methods.

FARM INCUBATION OUTCOMES

ALBA allocates most of its resources to incubating farm businesses, making the findings on these businesses of particular interest. ALBA is pleased to report that 77 (43%) of all respondents are farm business owners, which is even more impressive considering that only 121 of them (67%) entered the Organic Farm Incubator to pursue farm ownership.

However, it should also be noted that only 51 of the 77 farms (66%) are operating entirely outside of ALBA. Another 8 (10% of farms) are farming on land both at ALBA and off-site as they prepare to transition from the program. If we count only these 59 farming off-site, then 33% of respondents are farm business owners, which is half of those who entered the incubator.

The 18 farm businesses operating solely at ALBA must also be considered. Their ability to farm independently has yet to be proven, but two factors speak to their likelihood of attaining true independent status. First, they have persevered through PEPA and their first year in the incubator during which time, when most participants leave. Second, the majority of these farmers (10) hold no other jobs, showing that they are 'all in' on farm ownership. Based on experience, ALBA conservatively estimates that 10-12 of the 18 farms will continue farming, which would raise the farm ownership rate to almost 40%.

> **"MY ANCESTORS ALL WORKED IN FARMING, SO I WAS SURROUNDED BY AGRICULTURE AT AN EARLY AGE. I HAVE A LIKING FOR THE SOIL AND FOR WORKING THE LAND."**

Additional considerations would arguably bump up the farm ownership rate further.

1. Five respondents (3%) work on their family farm, which ALBA still considers a success because multiple family members often enter the program with plans to farm together.
2. Another 16 (9%) farmed independently after leaving the program for an average of 4 years before retiring or returning to employment.
3. Yet another 18 (10%) respondents have plans to launch a farm in the near future.
4. Were 7 retirees excluded in calculating the rate, it would have been 2% higher.
5. Had Latino respondents (77%) reflected the actual Latino program participation rate (88%), there may have been another 7-10 farm owners surveyed.

ALBA FARM CHARACTERISTICS

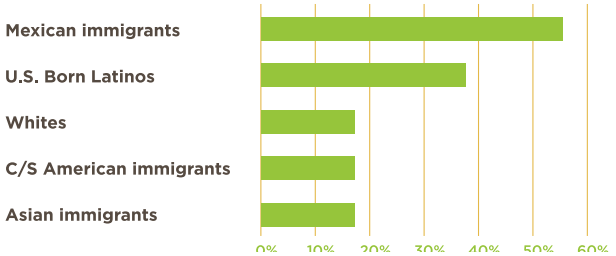
In the Salinas Valley, and across the country, agriculture is dominated by industrial-scale, non-organic farms, which over decades have driven most family-owned livelihood farms out of business. The fact that ALBA's small- and mid-scale farms can buck the trend and thrive in a competitive environment makes them important to study. The following is a summary of the characteristics of farms surveyed:

- Duration of operation ranges from 1 to 21 years, averaging 6 years.
- Acreage farmed ranges from ½ acre to 229 acres, averaging 14 acres per farm.
- Upon leaving ALBA, farms nearly triple in size on average (from 5 to 14 acres).
- Nearly 90% of farms are wholly organic, 5% are partly organic.
- Most farms (73%) cultivate fewer than 10 crops, mostly sold through Coke Farm in Bay Area markets. However, 18% of farmers grow over 20 crops, indicating sales through farmers markets or direct sales channels that demand more crop diversity.
- Most sell their crops through wholesale channels and several sell at farmers markets. More direct sales are desired but buyers are hard to find and serve.
- 94% of owners say they plan to farm long-term and 76% plan to expand.
- Farmers can yield $20,000-$30,000 in sales per acre growing high-value organic mixed vegetables, herbs and strawberries.

FARM OWNERSHIP BY RACE/ETHNICITY

Looking at farm ownership by racial and ethnic group, reveals that the high rate of ownership is driven mostly by Mexican immigrants. As previously mentioned, they represent 57% of total respondents and own 75% of all farms, displaying their strong identification with and commitment to farming. Mexican immigrants are about 50% more likely to be farm owners than USBLs (37%) and more than 3 times as likely to be farm owners (56%) than Whites, Asian immigrants and other Latino immigrants, all of which have a 17% ownership rate (Chart 4).

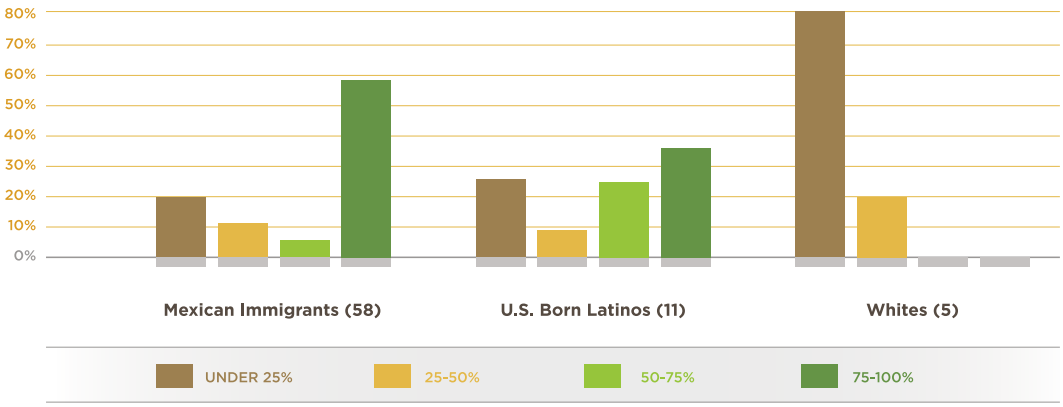
CHART 4 Farm Ownership by Race/Ethnicity



COMMITMENT TO FARMING

Mexican immigrants and U.S. Born Latinos not only have a higher farm ownership rate, the data shows that they are far more likely to commit to it as a livelihood. This can be seen in the portion of household income they draw from farming and the gross revenue yielded by their farms. Chart 5 shows that 67% of farms owned by Mexican immigrants earn more than half their household income from the farm. In fact, of these 39 farms, 33 earned 100% of their income from farming. For USBLs, 55% (6 of 11) earned most of their household income from the farm, half of whom (3 of 6) relied solely on the farm for their living.

CHART 5 % of Household Income from Farm

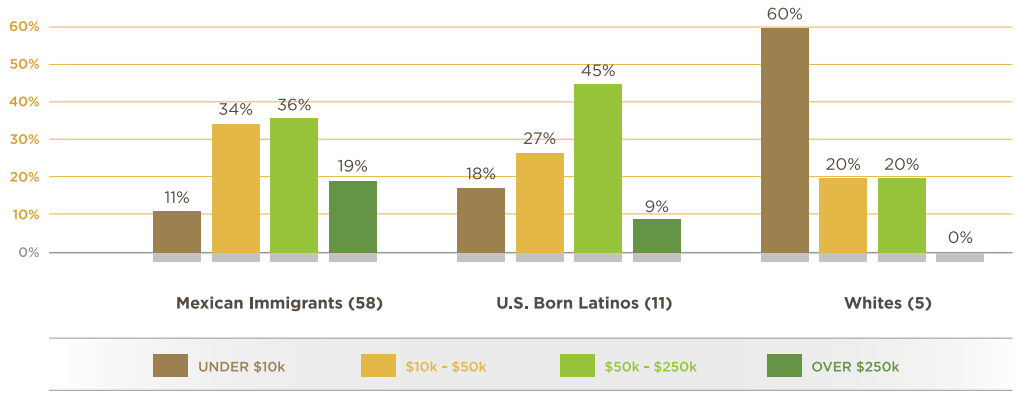


"THE CONTENT AND MATERIAL WERE VERY RELEVANT AND PRACTICAL. THERE WAS A STRONG EMPHASIS ON ORGANIC FARMING REGULATIONS AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT WHICH WERE BOTH IMPORTANT TO ME AND REMAIN VERY FOUNDATIONAL FOR THE WORK THAT I DO."

> “ALBA WAS VERY BENEFICIAL FOR ME. I SAW FARMING AS JUST PLANTING AND HARVESTING. ALBA SHOWED ME HOW TO BE A BUSINESSMAN AND MADE ME A BETTER FARMER.”

Subsequently, 55% of farms owned either by USBLs or Mexican immigrants[4] have sales above $50,000 (Chart 6). Farms owned by Mexican immigrants, however, are twice as likely as USBL farms to have sales over $250,000. In contrast, 3 of 5 White-owned farms have sales under $5,000, and only 1 had sales above $50,000.

CHART 6 Farms by Sales Range and Race/Ethnicity



The differences can be attributed to their relative size, which again, relates to their commitment to farming for a living. White-owned farms average just 3 acres compared to 12 acres for USBL-owned farms, and 16 acres for Mexican immigrant-owned farms. Even this higher acreage is artificially low given that 24 of 58 Mexican immigrants are still farming, partially or entirely, at ALBA. These farms average 3.2 acres and are expected to quadruple in size in terms of acreage cultivated and sales when they transition to fully independent farming.

The devotion to farming demonstrated by Mexican immigrants likely reflects both their preference for independent organic farming and the lack of available employment and entrepreneurship alternatives. With strong farming skills, but lacking formal education and English language skills, many immigrants see farm business ownership as an attractive lifestyle and a desirable alternative to low-wage farm labor. However, the reliance on farm income may also hint at the dependence on family labor to make the business work, preventing spouses from taking other jobs.

[4] Three Mexican immigrant owned farms on 14, 18, and 27 acres did not report sales. Their size would conservatively put them in a $100,000-$500,000 sales range.

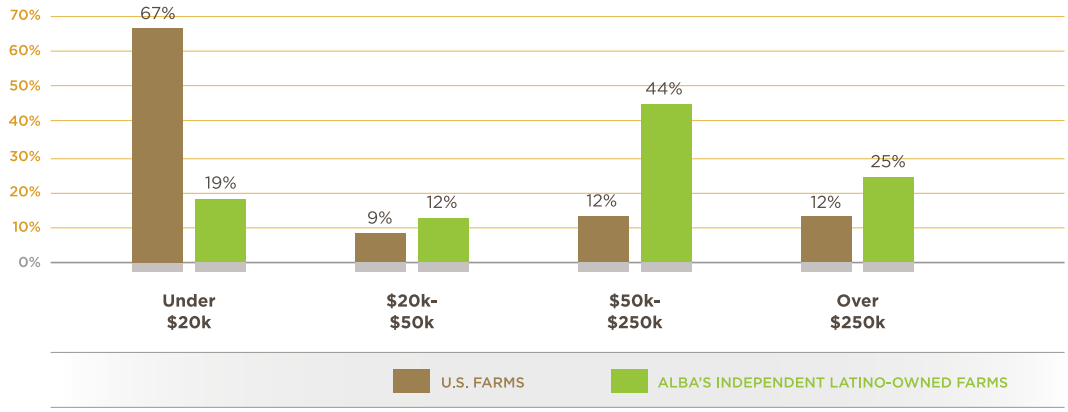
COMPARING ALBA'S INDEPENDENT FARMS TO AMERICAN FARMS[5]

Understanding how ALBA's farms size up against American farms gives additional insight on the impact of the program. Earlier references to industrial-scale corporate farms may have given the impression that they are the norm. In fact, less than 4% of the 2.04 million American farms have sales above $1 million; however, due to their size, they cumulatively account for 70% of total farm revenue. In comparison, the smallest 74% of farms (1.5 million) have sales under $40,000 and together account for 2% of farm revenue.

In the middle, roughly 400,000 remain with sales from $50,000 to $1 million. Once a majority of 6.8 million farms, they are now less than 20% of today's 2 million farms, 70% of which earn less than ¼ of their household's income[6]. In this light, the farms coming out of ALBA's program look a lot more productive.

Chart 7 shows the sales distribution of ALBA's 53 independent Latino-owned (AILO) farms who operate off-site. AILO farms show dramatically higher sales than the farms counted in USDA's 2017 Census of Agriculture. A total of 69% of these farms have sales above $50,000 in sales, which is nearly triple the rate of American farms at large (24%). Census data shows a century long decline of small and medium-scale farms. The farms coming out of ALBA, however, seem to bucking the trend.

CHART 7 ALBA's Independent Latino-Owned Farms (AILO) vs. American Farms by Sales



Other comparisons speak to the goal of equity and sustainability. AILO farms are 89% organic and 6% partly organic, compared to 1.7% of American farms. Perhaps the most important comparison is in the area of racial demographics. Latino-owned farms make up 9o% of those surveyed, which is in sharp contrast to U.S. farms in general, which are just 4% Latino-owned.

This data speaks to the unrealized potential in the Latino farming community, despite their motivation to farm independently and cultivate the land organically. More than that, the data makes the case that Latinos' youth, numbers and farming experience are vital assets in the struggle to transform the food system. After all, Americans have been walking away from the farm for decades. At ALBA, Latinos are actively pursuing it.

[5] 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture, Table 2.

[6] 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture.

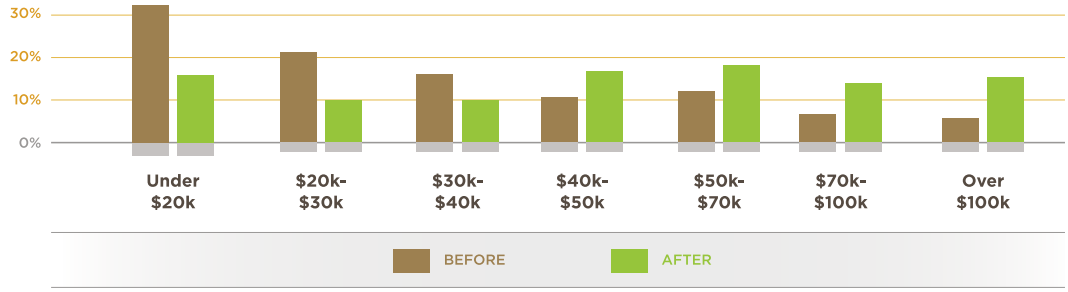
CREATING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

ALBA's mission is to create economic opportunity for limited-resource farmers through land-based training in organic farm management. Determining whether ALBA is achieving this mission is — along with farm business success — the goal of the study.

CHANGES IN INCOME

Comparing incomes before and after ALBA's incubator program is one way to quantify improvements in business and career prospects. As summarized in Chart 8, all income categories below $40,000 dropped from 65% to 36%, while those above $40,000 rose proportionately. Participants earning incomes less than $30,000 dropped even more from 49% to 25%. Subsequently, respondents earning more than $50,000 nearly doubled from 24% to 47%. The biggest increase was in those earning over $70,000 which jumped from 12% to 29% of respondents.

CHART 8 Income Before and After ALBA



Farm owners showed the biggest rise in income, as those earning over $50,000 jumped from 20% to 50%. In fact, farm owners were 43% of all respondents who earned over $50,000, followed by those working in agriculture (27%).

However, not everyone experienced a rise in income. The 40 respondents who are still earning under $30,000 deserve a closer look. Nearly two-thirds (65%) are immigrants, all but one of whom are from Mexico. More than half of the immigrants are farm owners (14 of 26), of whom 11 are in the early stages. If successful, they will likely expand and generate income from the farm in the near future. Of the 14 low-income respondents born in the U.S., 4 are farm-owners, of which 3 are early-stage farms. Three more are working in agriculture, and another three have jobs outside of agriculture. Others are retired (2) or unemployed (2). The fact that over 20% of respondents still had very low-income is a reminder of the challenges many immigrants and USBLs face. Still, the fact that some are early-stage farmers or early in their careers gives hope that brighter days are ahead.

“I ENJOY MOST WHEN THE CROP IS READY TO BE PICKED.
MY WHOLE FAMILY COMES TO WORK LIKE A TEAM.
I KNOW THE FARM IS A SAFE PLACE FOR OUR HEALTH.”

CAREER ADVANCEMENT

In addition to income, the survey also inquired about occupations before and after participation in the program, finding significant changes in careers post-graduation. First, respondent unemployment dropped from 8% to less than 3%. Second, the number of ALBA graduates working in agriculture — whether through farm ownership or employment — increased by 21% (from 105 respondents to 127). See Appendix B for a sampling of agricultural jobs held by alumni.

More importantly, significant changes between job categories reflect greater opportunity. The most notable changes were a 76% drop in farmworker jobs (from 34 to 8) and a 450% rise in farm business owners (from 14 to 77). **The rise was driven by Mexican immigrants whose farm ownership rate spiked from 9% to 56% and accounted for 75% of all owners surveyed.**

The increase in farm owners led to a decline in all other categories except for 'non-agricultural jobs', which was stable. It is worth mentioning, however, that 14 of 41 (34%) respondents who had non-ag jobs before coming to ALBA were able to transition to farm business ownership and another 5 (12%) found jobs in agriculture.

Of the 37 with jobs in agriculture, 22 (59%) are 'entirely' or 'mostly' involved in organic farming and food, and an additional 30% 'partly'. The emphasis on organic is more impressive considering that organic products are just 19% of Monterey County's[7] farm sales, supporting ALBA's claims to strengthening the organic workforce.

Next, respondents were asked a series of questions to ascertain whether they felt ALBA had helped them advance their careers whether in employment or entrepreneurship.

Regarding whether the skills developed at ALBA were useful in their careers, 94% answered affirmatively ranging from very useful to somewhat useful (Chart 9). Nearly 90% stated that the program guided their career choices (Chart 10). However, career skills and guidance must translate into tangible career opportunities.

CHART 9 Did ALBA develop skills useful to your career?

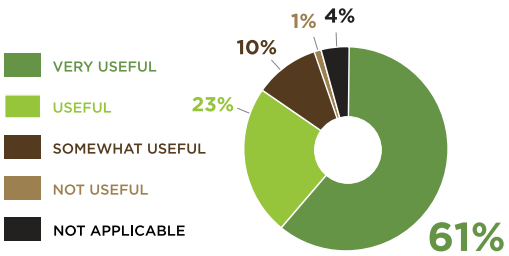
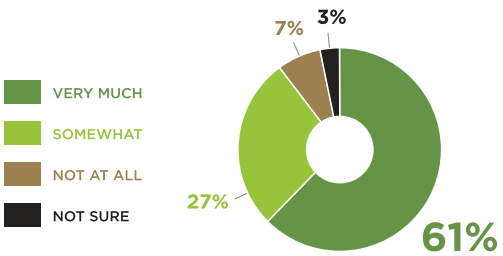


CHART 10 Did ALBA help guide career choices?



[7] 2021 Monterey County Crop Report, Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner.

Eighty-eight percent affirmed that the program improved business or career opportunities and 87% stated that their careers were either 'Much better' or 'better'. Responses were surprisingly similar across all demographic groups (Charts 11 & 12).

CHART 11 Did ALBA improve business or career opportunities?

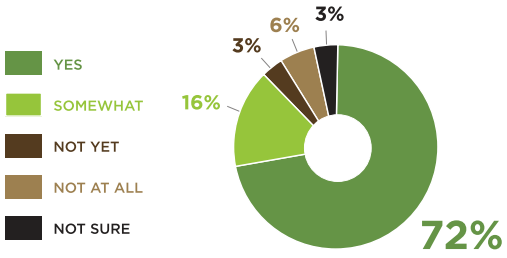


CHART 12 How is your career now compared to before ALBA?

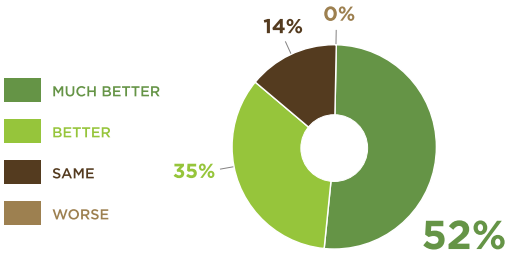
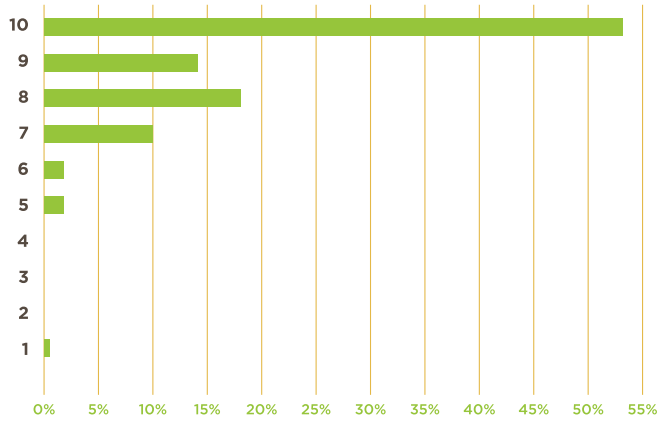


Chart 13 shows respondents' satisfaction with the program, rating their experience at ALBA on a scale from 1 to 10 with 10 being best. Over half of respondents (53%) gave ALBA the highest rating, with another 43% rating ALBA 7, 8 or 9. Though ratings do not link directly to impact, it speaks to the enduring value they place on the experience.

CHART 13 Rating ALBA Program from 1 to 10



> "MAYBE I WOULD BE WHERE I AM NOW IF I HAD NOT COME TO ALBA, BUT IT WOULD HAVE TAKEN A LOT LONGER. ALBA HELPED ME NAVIGATE THE FARMING COMMUNITY, TO FIND LAND AND RESOURCES, AND GAVE ME THE BASICS OF FARMING."

CRITICISMS AND SUGGESTIONS

While most respondents had positive feedback on ALBA's programs, there was also some valuable constructive criticism. When asked: "What would you change to make ALBA more useful to farmers?," 121 responded, including 39 respondents who used the opportunity to further praise the program.

The most recurrent area for criticism was marketing, which drew 26 comments. Respondents from earlier years complained about the low prices offered by the food hub, ALBA Organics. One participant said that having a food hub alongside an incubator is an outright conflict of interest. Recent graduates who arrived after ALBA Organics closed, called for a re-opening of the cooler to market their goods. The comments reflect the common frustration of farmers that the market does not pay them adequately for their hard work, for which there is no easy solution.

Another 17 comments focused on the need for a greater level of assistance in the field, especially among those who were relatively new to farming. Respondents asked for more time, training and mentorship in the areas of production, pest management, handling regulatory issues, and finding land outside the incubator.

Twelve farmers requested more land and financing while in the incubator. Another 6 highlighted aging equipment and lack of tools as obstacles. A few offered ALBA advice about expanding the program and services.

Organization issues within ALBA also drew feedback. More than half of the 15 comments referred to poor communication from ALBA staff. Others requested that staff improve listening and avoid favoritism.

Some criticisms were lodged by those who were early participants of the program, which do not account for more recent improvements to the program and infrastructure. For instance, a new Marketing Advisor position assists farms in securing new clients. ALBA also established a private-sector partnership with Coke Farm an organic wholesaler that provides beginning farms with reliable market access. In recent months, to shore up equipment and infrastructure, ALBA invested in two new John Deere Tractors, and a new irrigation well, which are available for farmers' use.

ALBA has also updated its business management and food safety curriculum and is working on marketing education to better prepare farmers for ownership. Through partnerships, we've added financial and computer literacy to our curriculum. We hope this will lead to a higher rate of success and satisfaction going forward.

See a sampling of comments from participants in Appendix B.

> "OWNING YOUR OWN LAND AND BEING AN ORGANIC FARMER IS A SOURCE OF PRIDE."

ALBA'S IMPACT ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Drawing from the data on farm businesses established, an attempt at a rough calculation can be made on the broader return on investment of ALBA's program. Over its first 20 years, ALBA received a total of $15.7 million in grants and contributions to fund program operations. This will be compared with the estimated economic output of the farms established by the program.

Based on experience, we know that one acre of organic farmland can typically produce 500 to 600 boxes of vegetables per crop cycle over an average of 2.5 crop cycles per year, generating an average of 1,400 cartons per acre. If a carton is sold for $15 on average, that generates $21,000 of gross revenue per acre. Calculated on the total of 1,099 acres cultivated by all 77 farms surveyed yields a total of $23.1 million in revenue per year.

The impact does not end there. This revenue is paid out in business expenses and wages, which are then recirculated by recipients, rippling through the local economy. Economists call this the 'multiplier effect'. Calculating an appropriate multiplier applicable to ALBA's farms is beyond the means of this assessment. However, one can be borrowed from Economic Contributions of Monterey County Agriculture (2020), which used a multiplier of 1.62 to estimate the regional economic impact of each dollar of the industry's crop revenue. Using this multiplier for our purposes would amplify ALBA farms' total crop sales into a $37.4 million annual contribution to the local economy.

This represents the impact of the 48% of alumni that were surveyed. Add to this the projected contributions of the 52% of alumni who were not surveyed. If we conservatively assume that these alumni farm on just 1/3 the acreage of those surveyed, the figure rises to $49.9 million. **That means that ALBA farms' contributions to the local economy on an annual basis are more than triple the value total grant awards and contributions over 20 years.**

Moreover, this calculation excludes three other benefits that are harder to quantify.

1. Thousands of hours of on-farm skills training to strengthen the organic workforce.
2. Environmental benefits stemming from establishing organic farms and careers.
3. Lower health costs by providing a pesticide free work environment for farmers.

One more thing to consider in the calculation are the grants funds themselves brought in from external sources and spent locally: over $14 million in ALBA's case.

For the new businesses, new jobs and the economic impact they create, the farm incubator model is a something to be strongly considered by non-profits, and state and local governments. For the donor community the farm incubator model is one that directly addresses issues such as sustainable food systems, beginning farmers, racial equity, rural development, and workforce training.

“AGRICULTURE IS LIFE. ONCE IN YOUR LIFE YOU NEED A DOCTOR, A LAWYER, A POLICEMAN AND A PREACHER, BUT EVERY DAY YOU NEED A FARMER.”

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The data and perspectives gathered through this assessment confirm that ALBA is establishing organic farms at an impressive rate and more broadly creating opportunity for farmers of color in organic agriculture. The program effectively mitigates the main barriers to starting a farm — access to land, finance, markets, and technical assistance — giving start-up farm enterprises the time, resources, and counsel to be successful.

CONCLUSION

The assessment shows that small- and medium-scale organic farms can survive and thrive even among the agribusiness giants of the Salinas Valley. The dedicated education and resources provided by ALBA helps them navigate the start-up phase, and business support services from partners enables their independence and long-term viability.

An even more important outcome of the assessment is to showcase the untapped farming talent within the Latino community. The data shows that their experience can be leveraged toward farm ownership and career growth with a modest investment in education and resources.

Both of these conclusions have implications beyond the Salinas Valley. Farming as a career has been on the decline for a century. Small and medium scale livelihood farms were once a majority of the nearly 7 million farms, but are now just a fraction (~20%) of the 2 million farms that remain[8]. Over this time, the transfer of farm knowledge and assets from one generation to the next has largely been lost. In light of this, ALBA's success in establishing viable small and medium scale farms is a glimmer of hope, brightened by the fact that most are owned by farmers of color.

ALBA's farm owners exemplify the immense pool of farming talent in communities of color which, if given the opportunity, could catalyze positive change in American farming. Up to 3 million farmworkers[9] are tending America's fields, of whom 70% are immigrants, 83% are Latinos[10] and, who average just 33 years old[11]. In contrast, the nation's 2 million current farm owners are 93% White and average 59 years old. This demographic imbalance along with the assessment data make us wonder: could Latino farmers fill the boots of retiring farmers and spark a revival of sustainable family farms?

We believe so, but it will not be easy. For decades, the decline of family farms has been met with the purchase and consolidation of land into ever-larger industrial-scale farms. Science has driven yields up, technology has lessened the need for labor, and economies of scale have reduced production costs, all of which are good for a business's bottom line.

However, industrialized food production is under increasing scrutiny for its negative impacts on the health of the environment, workers, and even consumers, due to the prevalence of processed foods[12]. Moreover, the growth of very large farming operations has created an uneven playing field which has driven smaller farms out of business and made it difficult for new farms to get their start.

To counter the negative impacts of modern food production, and meet the rising demand for organic produce, an influx of environmentally sustainable small and medium-scale commercial farms is needed.

[8] Small and medium-scale farmers are defined here as those with annual sales between $50,000 and $1 million, based on data from the 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture; [9] National Center for Farmworker Health, 2012; [10] Findings from the National Agricultural Workers Survey, 2015-2016, JBS International; [11] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farmworkers_in_the_United_States; [12] National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 2009-2010.

These farms will steward the land and supply healthy foods to local and regional markets, creating new opportunities for farmers and restoring vibrancy to the rural economy.

To make it possible, we must invest in the youth, numbers, and farming experience within communities of color, Latinos being prominent among them. Many grew up farming and consider it more than a job, but an identity. As a result, they possess exactly what much is needed at this moment in time — and what most of the American workforce has lost — the grit, experience, and motivation to farm independently in harmony with nature.

SCALING UP INVESTMENTS IN FARM INCUBATORS

This is not a call to turn back the clock to an agrarian economy. Rather, we envision a more dynamic agriculture sector which creates a better balance between small and large farms, between organic and more conventional methods, and brings diversity to farm ownership. But how, specifically, do we get there?

The first place to look is America's network of agricultural colleges and universities, which provide excellent education and training for agricultural careers. However, cost and entry requirements exclude a great many experienced farmers, like those featured in this report. Moreover, this educational system, on its own, has not been able to stem the decline of family farms. Something more is needed.

ALBA envisions a robust nationwide network of land-based farm incubator and apprenticeship programs to create pathways to sustainable farm ownership and careers. The land-based learning network will supplement agricultural colleges and universities, offering low-cost and inclusive alternatives for aspiring farmers, regardless of their educational background or socio-economic status. Moreover, these programs can also educate K-12 and college students, and community members of the importance, complexity and wonder of agriculture, planting the seed for the next generation of farmers and community leaders.

This vision is well underway as shown in the FIELD Network of land-based farm incubator and apprenticeship map (see Figure 14) [13]. FIELD was established in 2020 to leverage the experience of established land-based learning programs to provide resources and education for new and aspiring organizations. The network is led by another farm incubator program, the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project in Beverly, Massachusetts. However, FIELD itself, and many of the programs it represents, are fledgling organizations with varying levels of support. In order to expand the network and catalyze the success of this model, dedicated investment from government and philanthropic sources is required.

[13] https://nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu/food-systems/national-incubator-farm-training-initiative/national-incubator-map

FIGURE 14: FIELD Network of land-based farm incubator and apprenticeship map

We hope that the findings shown in this report make a strong case for the incubator model's effectiveness in establishing viable farm businesses while driving greater equity and sustainability in agriculture. Established incubator programs such as ALBA, New Entry (MA), VIVA Farms (WA), Big River Farms (MN) and others, can help by mentoring other programs and establishing practice standards to accelerate their success. Each program will be different, tailored to specific farming practices and distinct regional barriers to farm ownership.

ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC BARRIERS

Broader changes and federal reforms must also be made to give smaller-scale, diversified organic farms a foothold amidst ongoing farmland consolidation and industrialization. Policy and funding must be targeted toward overcoming systemic barriers through affordable access to farmland, financing, extension services, and high-value markets.

In return, these investments would stimulate new farm businesses and jobs, strengthening our country's food security, and build community health, wealth, and well-being centered around a more resilient localized food system.

Though there is much to be done, ALBA and its partners show that a different way is indeed possible. In our view, investing in land-based farm incubators and apprenticeship programs will catalyze diversity, sustainability and opportunity in agriculture. Doing so, will help revive America's family farms and the rural economy, and contribute to restoring the environment. Land-based farm incubators like ALBA offer a model to help make it happen.

“ALBA DID A GOOD JOB OF INTRODUCING US TO PEOPLE IN THE FARMING PROFESSION — OTHER MORE EXPERIENCED FARMERS, PEOPLE WORKING TO HELP US FIND LANDS, AND PEOPLE TO HELP WITH THE BUSINESS SIDE OF IT.”

APPENDIX A: METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

The survey instrument was developed with input from evaluation experts at the University of California-Berkeley and the University of California-Santa Cruz. Versions were prepared in both Spanish and English.

As a milestone for eligibility to take the survey, ALBA's team set graduation from the first-year PEPA course, whether or not participants elected to launch a farm at ALBA. Graduates of the 2021 and 2022 classes were excluded from the survey because not enough time had elapsed to make any notable changes in career or income.

Starting in October 2021, the survey was available on-line, a link to which was e-mailed to each alumnus. This yielded very few responses. ALBA then enlisted the Stanford student to conduct interviews by phone and in person. Over six months, 181 surveys were completed, representing 48% of all alumni graduating from 2002 to 2020. This makes it by far the most comprehensive assessment of ALBA's impact ever conducted.

A UC-Berkeley team then conducted 37 in-depth interviews to assess the qualitative impacts of the program. Most of the interviews were done with Mexican immigrants who represent a majority served by the program and those surveyed. Qualitative findings in the reports will supplement the survey's mostly quantitative data providing additional perspective. The report was compiled by ALBA's Development Director.

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESPONSE DATA

The sample includes a larger than typical portion of people identifying as White. ALBA intake data from 2017–2022 shows White participation of 6%, far lower than their survey participation rate of 16%. Subsequently, the overall 77% Latino rate of survey participation is up to 15% lower than their typical 85-90% program participation. This may reflect the fact that White participants have better access to technology, are less likely to change contact information, and more open to sharing information than their Latino counterparts, some of whom are undocumented. To adjust for this, the report will break down data by ethnic groups and country of origin, except for Black, Asian and Native American respondents whose participation was too small to merit a disaggregated analysis. Data on Latinos will be split into the two largest groups, Mexican immigrants and U.S.-Born Latinos (USBL), to reflect differences in their lived experience including education, language skills, documentation and overall opportunity.

There was also likely bias in the self-selection of those taking the survey toward those who had more career or business success who may be more inclined to share information and have positive impressions of the program. On the other hand, the data is weighted toward recent graduates, nearly one-third of whom graduated between 2017 and 2020. This means that many respondents are still establishing their farms or building careers, with the full impact of the program yet to materialize.

APPENDIX B: IN THEIR OWN WORDS

10 CRITICAL OR SUGGESTIVE COMMENTS FROM FARMERS

"Bring back ALBA Organics, and have cooling available to farmers."

"ALBA organics – the conflict of interest is huge there. I would recommend (if it still exists) for ALBA to not deal with that aspect because it's unrealistic — farmers need to know how to survive finding their own markets, otherwise they'll collapse."

"Having more farm equipment available, more control of who waters, or another well to satisfy the demand for summer watering".

"That they continue guiding us, after our years end there. Once we've left ALBA, everything related to paperwork and permits becomes quite difficult to manage."

"Teach farmers to grow diversified crops so they can stand out in competitive markets."

"ALBA should provide more access to organic farmland to give more students opportunities so that they don't graduate without options."

"Would have loved to stay a couple more years to be able to save up money better for farming outside. I wasn't able to stay as long as other farmers."

"We don't receive notifications about workshops, assistance programs, training, etc. Please don't abandon those of us who have graduated from ALBA."

"They could offer us more equipment; tractors and tools; there were too few."

"Fundraise to serve more people. Need more space in classroom. Students should be coming in and circulating constantly. This brings in young families."

10 POSITIVE COMMENTS

"Far better program than I had imagined. Nathan is absolutely amazing in his instruction, one of the best I've ever had for anything. Learned a lot."

"Nothing should change because the support they give is incredibly useful."

"ALBA has given me a good opportunity to keep learning and practice my skills."

"The teachers were amazing, the classes, the camaraderie."

"So many friends from class, training changed my life completely, networking was crucial and incredibly meaningful. Hands-on field classes were great. I learned a lot that way. Field trips were lovely for opening my horizons; I now know how to look for markets."

"It's a great program and gives an overall perspective on the organic industry."

"ALBA has the skills to make you a good farmer, and everyone decides whether to stay. Like, they give you a pencil. Either you draw or your canvas has no color."

"Continue helping the community, motivating people to believe in themselves."

"The program is very good, we build our careers as they teach."

"I wish I would have stayed in ALBA, I wish I had never given up, I would like to be a farmer right now, and have my own business."

APPENDIX C: SAMPLING OF AGRICULTURAL JOBS HELD BY ALUMNI

1. Ag education: high school
2. Ag Inspector
3. Agriculture managerial
4. Appointment coordinator
5. Biomonitor for invasive grass (Arundo donax) removal within the Salinas riparian cooridor
6. Compost and biochar laboratory analyst
7. Crop Advisor
8. Farm Hand
9. Farm Manager
10. Farm manager
11. Farm Manager for Junior College
12. Field Supervisor
13. Food Safety and Regulatory Compliance
14. Funding for international agroecology research
15. Green Waste Driver
16. Hartnell College — CTE campus
17. Horticulture
18. Integrated Pest Management
19. Irrigation management consultant
20. Land preparation, herbal plant care
21. Landscape design
22. Lead regional operator
23. Non-profit that provides business advising to small farms.
24. Organic Certification, Independent Contractor
25. Organic Farm consultant
26. Organic local restaurant
27. Planting and packing
28. QA Supervisor
29. QA Supervisor / Quality Control / Food safety
30. Research
31. Research for Ag company
32. Sales and accounting
33. Selling plants and seeds
34. Technical service provider

APPENDIX D: ALBA MEDIA COVERAGE

PRINT

1. Reiley, Laura. "Going it Alone in Two of America's Agriculture Towns." *The Washington Post*, December 8, 2020. https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/road-to-recovery/farmers-ranchers-coronavirus-food-california-west-virginia/?itid=hp-top-table-main
2. Magdaleno, Johnny. "Turning Farm Workers into Farmers." *The New York Times*, November 27, 2019. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/27/opinion/turning-farm-workers-into-farmers.html?auth=login-google&login=google.
3. U.S. Department of Agriculture. "A Colorful Future." *USA Today Special Edition*, 2019, page 34. https://issuu.com/studiogannett/docs/dept_of_agriculture
4. Tovar, Antonio and Anthony Pahnke. "Immigrants Lift Up a Food System in Need of Reform." *Civil Eats*, December 11, 2019. https://civileats.com/2019/12/11/immigrants-lift-up-a-food-system-in-need-of-reform/
5. "Small Farms Hatch from Salinas Valley Ag Incubator." *Salinas Californian*, August 9, 2015. http://www.thecalifornian.com/story/news/2015/08/09/small-farms-hatch-salinas-valley-ag-incubator/31392063/
6. Danish, Muna. "If More Latinx Farmers Own Their Land. Could They Make the Food System More Sustainable?" *Civil Eats*, April 15, 2019. https://civileats.com/2019/04/15/ag-census-more-latinx-farmers-own-their-land-could-they-make-the-food-system-more-sustainable/

BROADCAST

7. "Hasta La Raiz." Produced by *Patagonia Co.*, https://youtu.be/uW8yNor8E74
8. "Follow the Food", episode 3 (minute 8:44 through 11:10). *BBC World Series*, January 21, 2021. https://www.bbc.com/future/bespoke/follow-the-food/
9. "Food (Justice) for All", Episode of Food Forward. *PBS*, August 21, 2014. http://www.pbs.org/food/features/food-forward-season-1-food-justice-for-all
10. "Acres of Ambition" (Video). *California Grown.org*, October 17, 2014; link: http://californiagrown.org/growing-california/

APPENDIX E: SOURCES OF GRANT FUNDING

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT *(primarily through the United States Department of Agriculture)*

- Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program
- Food Safety Outreach Program
- Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged & Veteran Farmers and Ranchers
- Local Food Promotion Program
- Conservation Innovation Grant Program
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program
- Rural Business Development Grant Program
- Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Grant Program(s)
- Western Extension Risk Management Education Grant Program

STATE GOVERNMENT

- California Department of Food and Agriculture
  - Specialty Crop Block Grant
  - Healthy Soils Initiative
  - California Underserved Producers
- Governor's Office of Economic Development

FOUNDATIONS

- Ceres Trust
- Community Foundation of Monterey County (local)
- David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- Farm Aid
- Gaia Fund
- Gamble Foundation
- Globetrotter Foundation, No Regrets Initiative
- Harden Foundation (local)
- James K. Irvine Foundation
- Ladybug Foundation
- Latino Community Foundation
- National Association of Latino Community Asset Builders (NALCAB)
- Resources Legacy Fund
- Satterberg Foundation
- UNFI Foundation
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation

CORPORATE DONORS

- Adobe, Clif Bar, Mechanics Bank, Patagonia and Wells Fargo

APPENDIX F: SURVEY TOOL

ALBA 20TH ANNIVERSARY ALUMNI SURVEY

Part I: BACKGROUND (EVERYONE ANSWERS ALL QUESTIONS IN THIS SECTION)

1. **What racial/ethnic background are you? (check all that apply)**
   a. Asian/Pacific Islander
   b. Black
   c. Latino
   d. Native American
   e. White
   f. Mixed (please specify)
2. **What is your country of birth?**
   a. Mexico
   b. United States
   c. Other (specify)
3. **Have you ever been employed as a farmworker?**
   a. Yes How many years?
   b. No
4. **How well can you speak English?**
   a. Fluently
   b. Fairly well
   c. Very little or none
5. **How would you describe your farming experience did you have before ALBA?**
   a. None or almost none
   b. Basic knowledge of farming
   c. Solid experience
   d. Expert farmer
6. **How much knowledge of organic farming before ALBA?**
   a. Very little or none
   b. A little
   c. A good amount
   d. Very experienced
7. **What were you doing when you entered ALBA's program? (check all that apply)**
   a. Student
   b. Farmworker
   c. Farm Owner / Operator
   d. Worked on my family's farm
   e. Field supervisor
   f. Farm machinery operator
   g. Other job in agriculture. Specify.
   h. Other job not in agriculture.
   i. Unemployed
8. **What motivated you to enter the ALBA program? (circle top 2 answers)**
   a. I wanted to be a farmer.
   b. I wanted to get a better job.
   c. I wanted to learn how to farm organically.
   d. I was concerned about pesticide exposure.
   e. I wanted to earn college credit.
   f. I wanted to learn about what opportunities were available.
   g. I heard about the program and wanted to learn more.
   h. Other

Part II: CHANGES IN EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

9. **What are you doing now ?**
   a. Operating my own farm (continue to next question)
   b. Working on my family's farm (continue to next question)
   c. Working in agriculture (skip to workforce-related questions)
   d. Working, but not in agriculture (skip to workforce-related questions)
   e. Studying (skip to income-related questions)
   f. Unemployed (skip to income-related questions)
   g. Retired (skip to income-related questions)

Section IIa: FOR FARM OWNERS AND THOSE WORKING ON YOUR FAMILY'S FARM

10. **What is the name of your (or your family's) farm business? (deleted optional)**
11. **Near what town/city is your farm located?**
12. **How many acres do you farm?**
13. **How many years have you owned and operated the farm?**

14. **Is your farm organic?**
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Partly —> How many acres are organic?; transitional?
15. **How many different crops do you grow in a year?**
    a. Under 5
    b. 6 to 10
    c. 11 to 15
    d. 16 to 20
    e. More than 20
16. **How many people do you employ?**
    a. Full Time (average at least 30 hours/week)
    b. Part Time (average less than 30 hours/week or seasonal)
17. **Do you have another job besides farming?**
    a. No other job
    b. Yes, a part time job
    c. Yes, a full time job
18. **What portion of your personal income comes from your farm?**
    a. Less than 25%
    b. 25% to 50%
    c. 50% to 75%
    d. More than 75%
    e. 100%
19. **How much of your household's income comes from your farm?**
    a. Less than 25%
    b. 25% to 50%
    c. 50% to 75%
    d. 75% - 99%
    e. 100%
20. **What are your average annual sales?**
    a. Under $5,000
    b. $5,000 - $10,000
    c. $10,000 - $20,000
    d. $20,000 - $50,000
    e. $50,000 - $100,000
    f. $100,000 - $250,000
    g. $250,000 - $500,000
    h. $500,000 - $1 million
    i. Over $1 million
21. **Where do you sell most of your crops (Pick your top 2)?**
    a. Farmers Market
    b. Community Supported Agriculture (boxes to consumers)
    c. Wholesaler
    d. Direct to retailer
    e. Direct to food bank
    f. Direct to processor
22. **Do you plan to farm long term?**
    a. Yes
    b. Likely
    c. Haven't decided
    d. Unlikely
    e. No
23. **What are your plans for the farm?**
    a. Expand the business
    b. Stay the same
    c. Scale down the business
    d. Close the business
24. **What do you like most about farming independently? (circle your 4 most important reasons)**
    a. The chance to earn more
    b. Authority to make decisions
    c. Control of my schedule
    d. Working on the land
    e. Working with family
    f. Feeding my family and community
    g. Carrying on my heritage
    h. Building financial assets
    i. Other

Section IIb: IN THE WORKFORCE

25. **What is your job?**
    a. Farmworker
    b. Field supervisor
    c. Farm machinery operator
    d. Other job in agriculture (specify)
    e. Other job not in ag (specify)
    f. Retired
    g. Unemployed
26. **Is your job related to organic farming and food?**
    a. Entirely
    b. Mostly
    c. Partly
    d. None
27. **How helpful was your experience at ALBA in helping you obtain a (past or current) job?**
    a. Helped a lot
    b. Helped some
    c. Did not help
    d. Not sure
    e. Not applicable
28. **In what areas did you benefit most from ALBA's program? (circle your top 3)**
    a. Access to land and equipment
    b. Organic production skills
    c. Ability to use farm equipment
    d. Business and management
    e. Marketing strategy and assistance

f. Food Safety
g. Developing a business network.
h. Built up my confidence to do more.
i. Awareness of career opportunities.
j. Other

29. Did you operate your own farm at any time since leaving ALBA?
a. Yes. For how many years?
b. No

30. What kept you from continuing to farm independently? (circle all that apply)
a. Income was too unstable.
b. Couldn't find good land.
c. Marketing was difficult.
d. Finding good labor was difficult.
e. Couldn't pay back loans.
f. I just couldn't make it work.
g. Other

Section IIc: CHANGES IN INCOME

31. What was your annual income before coming to ALBA?
a. Under $10,000
b. $10,000 - $20,000
c. $20,000 - $30,000
d. $30,000 - $40,000
e. $40,000 - $50,000
f. $50,000 - $60,000
g. $60,000 - $70,000
h. $70,000 - $100,000
i. More than $100,000

32. Please provide a specific amount (optional). (Separate question?)

33. Current income (if retired or unemployed, top wage earned after leaving ALBA)
a. Under $10,000
b. $10,000 - $20,000
c. $20,000 - $30,000
d. $30,000 - $40,000
e. $40,000 - $50,000

34. Please provide a specific amount (optional): _____ (separate question?)

Part III: REFLECTIONS ON YOUR ALBA EXPERIENCE

35. If your income rose after your involvement with ALBA, how much do you think your participation at ALBA helped?
a. Very helpful
b. Helpful
c. Somewhat helpful
d. Not very helpful
e. Not at all helpful
f. Not sure
g. Not applicable

36. How much did your experience at ALBA influence your career choices?
a. Very much
b. Somewhat
c. Not very much
d. Not at all
e. Not sure

37. Do you think that participation at ALBA opened new business and career opportunities for you?
a. Yes
b. Somewhat
c. Not yet
d. No change
e. Worse
f. Not sure

38. Were skills learned at ALBA useful for your career?
a. Very useful
b. Useful
c. Somewhat useful
d. Not very useful
e. Not useful at all
f. Not applicable (not farming, working or studying in agriculture)
g. Other (Please specify)

39. How would you compare your career now as compared to before coming to ALBA?
a. Much better
b. Better
c. Same
d. A little worse
e. Much worse

40. How satisfied are you with the ALBA experience? Circle (1-10, 10 being highest satisfaction)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

41. What are your plans in the next 5 years?
a. Continue operating my own farm
b. Start my own farm
c. Seek a better job in agriculture
d. Leave agriculture for a different type of work
e. Seek a better job outside of agriculture
f. Seek more training or higher education
g. Retire
h. Not sure

42. We'd love to hear your thoughts, suggestions, and lasting impressions of your ALBA experience.

ALBA is a 501(c)(3) Non-profit incorporated in 2001.

Have questions or comments on the report? Please send to chris@albafarmers.org

Design by DiggesDesign.com
Photo Credits throughout: Douglas Gayeton, Shawn Linehan, Mark Tuschman, and Unsplash (Empreinte, Timothy Brock, Shelley Pauls, Harshal Hirve, Jack Abef, Markus Spiske, Mohamed Hassouna, and Nomad Productions)

Special thanks to

W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION

A W.K. Kellogg Foundation grant supported the production of this booklet.