

90 Percent of Day Laborers in Mexico Make Less than \$15 a Day



Mexico City, May 18 (teleSUR-RHC)-- About 90 percent of Mexican farmers, fishers and foresters make less than 200 Mexican pesos (\$15) a day for shifts of up to 12 hours, according to a survey by the country's Institute of National Statistics (INEGI).

The San Quintin agricultural day laborers finally achieved a \$15 as a base salary based on an eight-hour shift, as well as 13 other favorable agreements, such as the right to form a union and medical care.

The recent San Quintin farmers' conflict in the northwestern state of Baja California – just south of the border with the United States – brought to light the abusive conditions imposed by agribusinesses against farm laborers. And despite the favorable agreements achieved by the farmworkers' movement in San Quintin, the main demand of their struggle, salary increases, remains unresolved.

The INEGI revealed that over 6.5 million Mexicans working in agriculture, as livestock laborers, fishes and forest activities, make a mere \$15 a day, but worse even, is the fact that over 94 percent of these workers lack medical care, according to the same survey, according to Mexican newspaper *La Jornada*.

The daily said that there are about 4 million agricultural workers that make anywhere between one and three minimum salaries a day, which is about 70 pesos or \$4.5. But, there are close to two million people that work in farm fields without pay, as they do it in exchange of squalid shelter and food.

These people are usually women and children, according to the INEGI: “Only about five out of 100 farmworkers actually make 200 pesos or slightly more a day,” La Jornada said.

This labor sector – farming, fishing, livestock labor and forest activities – represents 13 percent of Mexico's total work force, which is estimated a just under 50 million. There is still the serious issue of workers, mainly indigenous, that are subjected to modern-day slavery conditions, such as the recent case of the 200 Tarahumaras indigenous people that were rescued in Baja California. A company linked to former Mexican President Vicente Fox was apparently responsible for the crime against this indigenous group.

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