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Latino Immigration and Community Development in Rural Nebraska

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Cornhusker Economics

Latino Immigration and Community Development in Rural Nebraska

Market Report	Year Ago	4 Wks Ago	8-25-17
Livestock and Products, Weekly Average			
Nebraska Slaughter Steers, 35-65% Choice, Live Weight.	114.64	*	*
Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame, 550-600 lb.	161.83	180.04	168.72
Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame 750-800 lb.	146.93	161.18	150.91
Choice Boxed Beef, 600-750 lb. Carcass.	200.34	206.96	192.30
Western Corn Belt Base Hog Price Carcass, Negotiated	60.53	80.34	65.33
Pork Carcass Cutout, 185 lb. Carcass 51-52% Lean.	75.12	99.67	86.70
Slaughter Lambs, woolled and shorn, 135-165 lb. National.	164.27	177.67	167.98
National Carcass Lamb Cutout FOB.	359.00	430.71	416.93
Crops, Daily Spot Prices			
Wheat, No. 1, H.W. Imperial, bu.	2.73	3.70	2.96
Corn, No. 2, Yellow Columbus, bu.	2.81	3.37	3.11
Soybeans, No. 1, Yellow Columbus, bu.	9.27	9.19	8.54
Grain Sorghum, No.2, Yellow Dorchester, cwt.	4.31	5.64	5.20
Oats, No. 2, Heavy Minneapolis, Mn, bu.	2.35	3.14	2.80
Feed			
Alfalfa, Large Square Bales, Good to Premium, RFV 160-185 Northeast Nebraska, ton.	158.75	165.00	*
Alfalfa, Large Rounds, Good Platte Valley, ton.	72.50	85.50	92.50
Grass Hay, Large Rounds, Good Nebraska, ton.	80.00	90.00	95.00
Dried Distillers Grains, 10% Moisture Nebraska Average.	117.50	109.00	106.50
Wet Distillers Grains, 65-70% Moisture Nebraska Average.	33.00	39.00	39.00
* No Market			

“Community” originates from the Latin “*communis*,” meaning common. A community can be defined as a group of people who know one another and share common cultural traditions, interests, concerns, and objectives mainly because they have always interacted on a regular basis. To most rural people, community means the same familiar faces and places, a daily routine, social systems and norms they understand, things they have always done. This scenario has been changing with the influx of immigrants in rural areas. Nowadays, rural community residents find themselves sharing their place with new people from distant regions and different cultures.

Like the rest of the U. S., the ethnic makeup of Nebraska has changed dramatically in the last 30 years due mainly to a growing Latino population. This increasing diversity is relatively new for many regions which historically have had little ethnic or racial diversity. Nebraska is now home to more than 1,900,000, residents, 11% of whom are Latinos. This means that roughly 1 in every 10 Nebraska resident is of Latino origin. Latinos are the fastest-growing segment of Nebraska’s population due to both immigration and the relatively high birth rate among this population (Cantrell, 2011). According to the U. S Census, the Latino population increased from 36,969 in 1990 to 167,405 in 2010. In 1990, the population of Nebraska was 1,578,385, and Latinos represented only 2.3% of the total population. In 2000, the population of Nebraska was 1,711,263 and the Latino population accounted for 5.5%. In 2010, the population of Nebraska had risen to 1,826,341 and the Latino population accounted for 9.2% of Nebraska’s total population. (See Tables 1 & 2 and Figure 1)

Table 1. Population Estimates by Race/Ethnicity, United States and Nebraska, 2016

Race/Ethnicity	United States	Percent	Nebraska	Percent
Non-Hispanic White	197,969,608	61	1,517,526	80
Black or African American	40,229,236	12	89,218	5
American Indian and Alaska native	2,387,421	1	15,922	1
Asian or Pacific Islanders	18,308,665	6	46,975	2
Two or more races	6,762,296	2	34,155	2
Hispanic/Latinos	57,470,287	18	203,320	11
Total	323,127,513	100	1,907,116	100

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the United States, States, and Counties, July 1, 2016

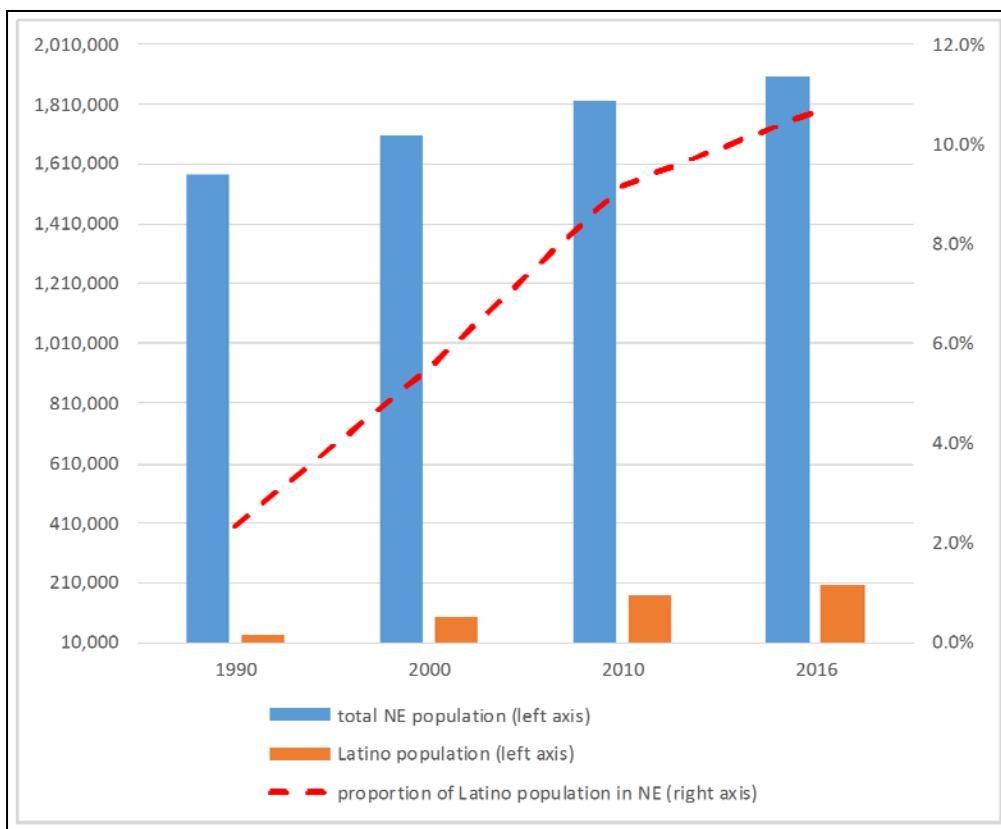


Figure 1. Nebraska Total and Latino Population 1990-2016

Table 2. Nebraska Population Growth

	Total	Latino	NE without Latino
1990-2000	8.4%	155.4%	4.9%
2000-2010	6.7%	77.3%	2.6%
2010-2016	4.4%	21.5%	2.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990-2016 American Community Survey

The rapid growth of the Latino population since 1990 has caused many counties that previously had little or no Latino representation to become home to significant numbers of Latino residents. Latinos are present in 88 of the 93 counties in Nebraska, and 40 counties have 5% or more of their total population comprised of Latinos. Latinos increasingly are moving to rural areas attracted by new job opportunities and the low cost of living outside of major metropolitan areas.

Integrating Latino immigrants in rural communities offers challenges and opportunities. The challenges come from the fact that most are employed in low-income jobs, limiting their upward mobility. Besides, these rural communities are culturally closed and resistant to newcomers. As a result, Latino families typically end up concentrated in areas with low-cost housing (MacDonald et al., 2012). On the other hand, in many rural areas some communities see the growth in Latino population as an opportunity to revive their economies as the newcomers help sustain businesses and housing markets and provide needed tax revenue. Essentially, the arrival of immigrants reduces the effects of population loss in rural areas (which has been a major challenge for many communities). Remember that Nebraska's rural counties nowadays have less population than in 1890. The recent increase in immigration can help attenuate this problem since Latinos are part of several sectors of the local economy. They become business owners and entrepreneurs and are employed in agriculture, construction, services, and other critical sectors of the economy. Just as importantly, they are also consumers in those communities.

The main problem faced by Latino immigrants is that some communities are not financially, socially, and structurally prepared for them (Herndon et al., 2013). Even though the total number of newcomers may be small in some rural areas, the effect of immigration is amplified in tight-knit rural communities. Most Latino immigrants have little formal education and limited English abilities, which hinder their chances of acquiring better paying jobs and participating in community activities (MacDonald, 2012). Outreach programs provided by social services organizations, including Extension, are critical to assist both immigrants and rural communities to adapt to the new challenges and opportunities created by immigration.

In order to serve this growing Latino population in rural communities, it is critical to understand who they are (i.e. their culture and needs) to help them integrate and succeed in the work/business opportunities provided by the Cornhusker State. Similarly, it is necessary to analyze the resources and skills available to many social service organizations (including Extension) assisting these new residents. Koss-Chioino and Vargas (1999) argue that outreach programs must be culturally responsive if they want to effect-

ively engage Latino audiences, particularly first- and second-generation Latinos. These programs must reflect the cultural traditions, beliefs, and values of the target population. It cannot be assumed that programs designed for European-American audiences will be appropriate for Latino families.

Addressing the needs of Latinos in rural areas requires outreach workers to be familiar with the cultural context in which this population lives and the research that has been done on successful programming for Latino audiences. Is Nebraska prepared to take advantage of Latinos as workers, entrepreneurs, neighbors, and students? This is a question yet to be answered.

A final important note on Nebraska immigration is that the state has seen a high increase of other populations, such as Asians and Africans (although Latinos still comprise the largest group of immigrants). As the state population diversifies, effective inclusion programs and assistance not only helps newcomers become more valuable members of the community; it also helps the community itself benefit from better economic conditions.

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