LATINO INITIATIVE
N.C. FARM BUREAU - 2016

Enriching North Carolinians’ understanding of our new neighbors

understand. connect. act.
Members of the North Carolina Farm Bureau Board of Directors traveled to Mexico in February 2016, led by staff members of Go Global NC (formerly the Center for International Understanding). In what several participants termed a “remarkable” experience, the week-long Farm Bureau Latino Initiative provided the opportunity to gain a better understanding of Mexican history and culture and its influence on the Mexican farmworkers who come to North Carolina each year.

N.C. Farm Bureau President Larry Wooten served as head of the 36-member delegation that traveled by bus and van to see farming operations, meet with governmental officials, and spend time with school children and community members in rural areas of the state of Guanajuato.

The North Carolina delegation went from the urban modernity of Mexico City, one of the largest cities in the world, to a rural community, accessible only by dirt road and with only one teacher at a school for grades 1-7. They traveled by boat to see pre-Hispanic farming practices still in use and they toured a state-of-the-art dairy operation that rivals any U.S. farm. Farm Bureau Directors returned home to North Carolina in position to serve as ambassadors, striving for “better relationships with Mexicans in the U.S.”
The N.C. Farm Bureau delegation toured large- and small-scale farming operations, including Rancho Ecologico Llano Grande, an organic egg farm.

“An Amazing Learning Experience”
They are like family.”

N.C. farmers reunite with workers in Mexico

For 16 years, Isaias (known as “Easy”) has traveled from Mexico to North Carolina to work on Richard Whitaker’s tobacco and produce farm in Guilford County. But it was during Richard’s first time in Mexico that he finally met Easy’s wife, Gloria. Easy’s family journeyed six hours by car to greet Richard, who called the reunion “the highlight of my trip,” continuing, “they are like family.”

“We couldn’t do it without them.”

Wake County farmer Jackie Thompson:

“When Armando started working for me he wasn’t even married. Now he has two beautiful daughters. I felt like because he was able to be here [North Carolina] and work, even with the seven months of separation each year, it gave his family a better way of life.”
Mexico City is a city of 21 million people that is organized and works well. It’s vibrant, it’s clean, it’s green, and the people are courteous. Commerce is the order of the day and everybody seems to be going on about their business with a sense of purpose.  

-N.C. Farm Bureau President Larry Wooten

Experiencing traditional culture at the Ballet Folklórico de Mexico de Amalia Hernández

I was struck by their deep faith and pride in their heritage.

You get here and it opens your eyes.
“Makes you look at your life a little differently.”

SHARING LUNCH AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCES WITH STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES FROM LINDERO DE LA PETACA COMMUNITY

“A birthday one farmer will never forget

“I’ll always remember they looked liked they enjoyed being with us.”

VISIT TO TRANCAS COMMUNITY CENTER AND HACIENDA

“Everybody is working together, whether they have a little or a lot.”
RANCHO LOS RODRIGUEZ, A LARGE PRODUCE, DAIRY, AND CATTLE OPERATION IN SAN MIGUEL DE ALLENDE

GUANAJUATO CITY

“What we saw and learned here we need to carry back home.”
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GO GLOBAL NC

68 T.W. Alexander Drive • Box 13628 • Research Triangle Park, NC 27709 • phone: 919.314.2826

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