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## Farmworker Housing: A Photo Essay

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### Abstract

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers often reside in poor housing conditions which expose them to numerous hazards. These housing conditions are an issue of environmental health and justice. The photographs in this essay illustrate the living conditions confronted by farmworkers, offering a visual context for the reviews published in this issue of *New Solutions*. Farmworker housing conditions are often shocking to those who have not visited farmworker communities. Continued research is needed to document these conditions, how they affect the health of farmworkers, and provide leverage in the struggle to improve farmworker housing conditions.

### Keywords

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers; housing; environmental health; migrant labor

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These photographs illustrate the living conditions confronted by farmworkers, offering a visual context for the reviews published in this issue of *New Solutions*. The images are representative of farmworker housing, acknowledging that some housing is better and other housing is far worse. Photographs taken in 2010 for a study of North Carolina migrant farmworker housing provide the foundation for this essay;<sup>1–5</sup> these photographs reflect our observations of farmworker housing over the past two decades.<sup>6–9</sup> Images from other states expand this context.

Farmworkers live in diverse structures, such as the barracks in Ohio and Texas (Photos 1 and 2), old farmhouse in Kentucky (Photo 3), reused mobile homes in North Carolina (Photo 4), and converted barn in Washington State (Photo 5), but the circumstances of these structures are often deplorable. Conditions in the North Carolina (Photo 6) and Kentucky (Photo 7) farmworker kitchens are cramped. The bathroom photographs (Photos 8 and 9) illustrate that privacy and dignity for farmworkers are often limited, with rows of toilets, showers, and basins that do not have privacy screens. Neither federal nor state regulations require

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privacy screens. Current regulations state that the washing machine and wash tub in this camp (Photo 10) are sufficient for sixty workers. Sleeping rooms (Photos 11 and 12) are often crowded and sparsely furnished; they should provide at least fifty square feet of space for each worker, plus sufficient storage for personal possessions.

Housing conditions commonly experienced by farmworkers are often shocking to those who have not visited farmworker communities. Continued research is needed to document these conditions and how they affect the health of farmworkers. This research will provide leverage in the struggle to improve housing standards and occupational safety for farmworkers and other vulnerable workers.

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## Biographies

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**Photo 1.** Farmworker barracks housing in Ohio. Courtesy: Eugenio Mollo, Jr., Advocates for Basic Legal Equality.

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**Photo 2.**  
Farmworker barracks housing in Texas. Courtesy: Kathy Tyler, Motivation Education & Training, Inc.

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**Photo 3.**  
Old farm house used for farmworker housing in Kentucky, Southern Migrant Legal Services.



**Photo 4.** Used mobile homes salvaged for farmworker housing in North Carolina. Courtesy: Phillip Summers, Wake Forest School of Medicine.





**Photo 5.** Washington State barn converted to farmworker housing. Courtesy: Daniel Ford, Columbia Legal Services.

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**Photo 6.**  
Kitchen in a North Carolina farmworker camp. Courtesy: Phillip Summers, Wake Forest School of Medicine.



**Photo 7.**  
Kitchen in a Kentucky farmworker camp, Southern Migrant Legal Services.



**Photo 8.** Bathroom with multiple toilets, showers, and basins in a North Carolina farmworker camp. Courtesy: Phillip Summers, Wake Forest School of Medicine.



**Photo 9.** Multiple toilets in a North Carolina farmworker camp. Courtesy: Phillip Summers, Wake Forest School of Medicine.



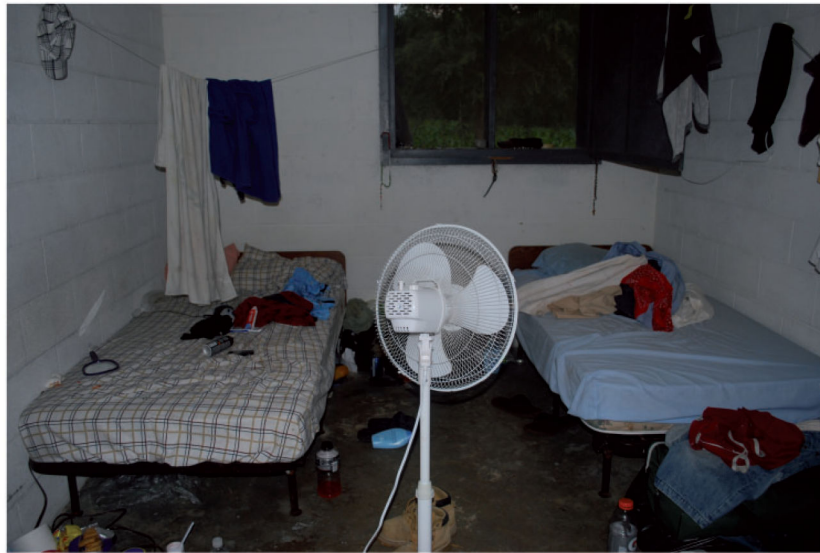
**Photo 10.** Laundry facility in a North Carolina farmworker camp. Courtesy: Phillip Summers, Wake Forest School of Medicine.

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**Photo 11.** Sleeping room in a North Carolina farmworker camp. Courtesy: Maria Weir, Wake Forest School of Medicine.

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**Photo 12.**  
Sleeping room in a North Carolina farmworker camp. Courtesy: Maria Weir, Wake Forest School of Medicine.