

Loss of dairy farm immigrant workers would double retail milk prices

September 21 2015, by Blair Fannin

A recent dairy labor study found that a reduction of immigrant workers would lead to a doubling of retail milk price, costing the U.S. economy more than \$32 billion.

The study, commissioned by the National Milk Producers Federation, was conducted by Texas A&M AgriLife Research.

The study team consisted of Dr. Parr Rosson, head of the department of agricultural economics at Texas A&M University; Flynn Adcock, assistant director of the Center for North American Studies at Texas A&M; and Dr. David Anderson, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service livestock economist, all in College Station.

The report surveyed [dairy](#) operations across the U.S. and found one-third employ foreign-born workers, and those [farms](#) produced 80 percent of the nation's milk.

A loss of immigrant labor would result in 208,000 fewer jobs nationwide and 77,000 directly on dairy farms.

Retail milk prices could top \$6.40 a gallon as a result, according to the study.

"The findings of the study clearly illustrate the importance of immigrant labor on dairy operations across the U.S. and the impact of their potential loss on consumer retail prices," Rosson said.

The survey conducted last fall, was an update to the 2009 study. Comparing the two surveys showed the number of immigrants working on dairy farms increased by 35 percent, or nearly 20,000, in six years. The portion of the [milk](#) supply coming from farms with immigrant labor increased by 27 percent.

For more on the findings of the study, visit www.nmpf.org .

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Provided by Texas A&M University

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