

# Farmers and farmworkers express different concerns and perceptions of health and safety risk due to extreme weather in Western agriculture.

## Smoke, wind, rain: Extreme weather events and occupational safety in agriculture

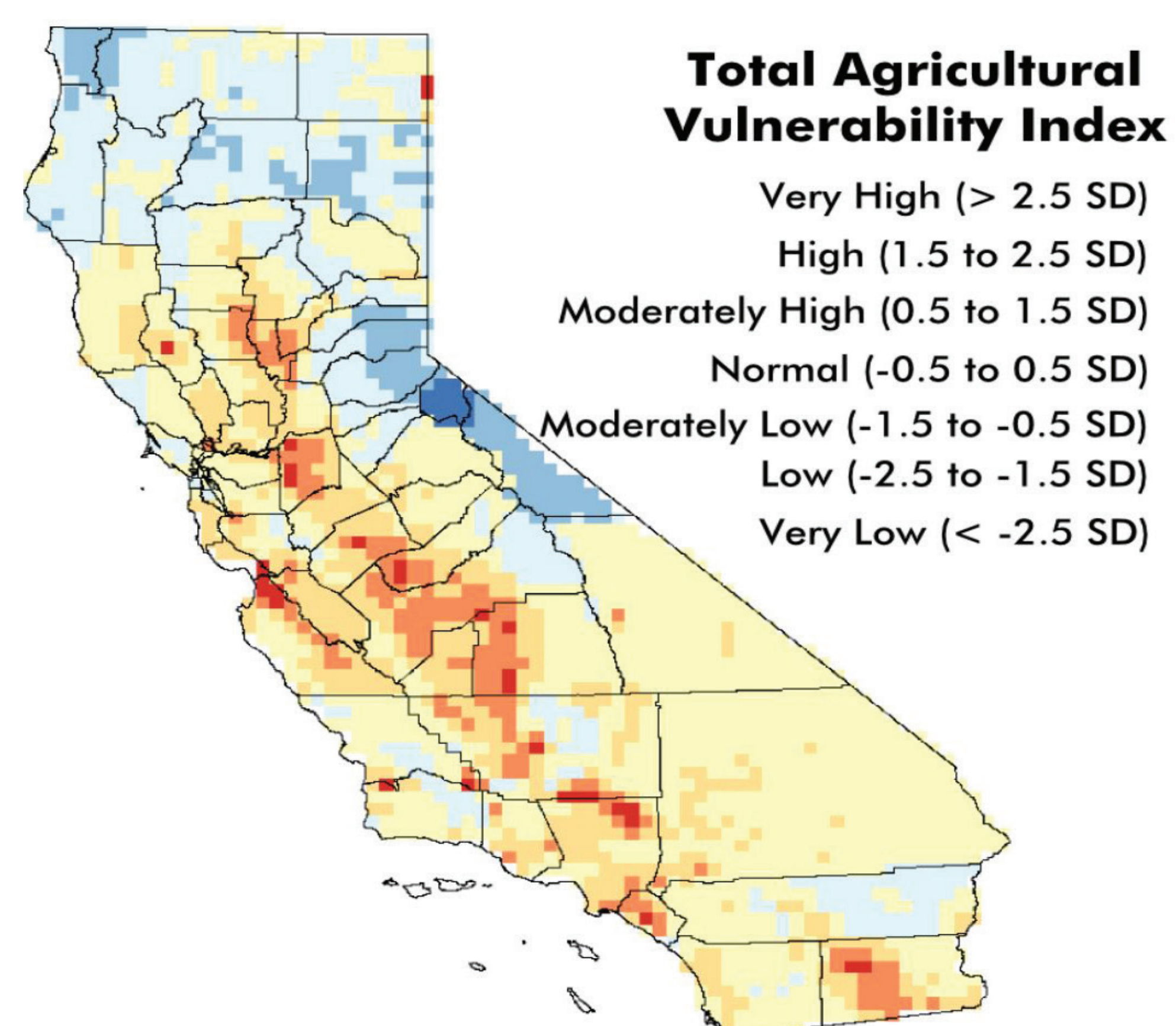
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### Objective

- Western agriculture faces the prospect of increasingly frequent extreme weather events, including wildfires, high precipitation, drought, and heat waves.
- Our objective is to describe occupational health and safety impacts of extreme weather as perceived by California farmers and farmworkers.

### Methods

- Selected three California regions using the Total Agricultural Vulnerability Index:
  - San Joaquin Valley
  - Salinas Valley
  - Imperial Valley
- Conducted interviews with farm owners and farm labor contractors
- Conducted focus groups with farmworkers
- Analyzed transcripts for themes



Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change in California Agriculture, July 2012

### Results

- Farmers – Reported Concerns
  - Heat
  - Drought
  - Wind
  - Labor shortage
  - Pests: black widows, poison oak, West Nile
- Farmworkers – Reported Concerns
  - Heat
  - Air quality
  - Pesticide exposure
  - Asthma
- Farmers did not express need for new safety procedures due to increase in extreme weather.
- Farmworkers reported willingness to work in unsafe conditions due to income need.
- Farmworkers reported fear to report poor safety conditions.
- Farmworkers reported supervisors as having profound impact on the safety culture.

### Discussion & Next Steps

- Tailor safety messaging differently for farmers and farmworkers.
- Develop wildfire smoke exposure resources.
- Disseminate safety resources through community groups/promotores for farmworkers and industry groups and Farm Bureau for farmers.



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