IMPROVING THE JOB SATISFACTION OF AGRICULTURAL WORKERS TO BUILD A MORE SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE





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BACKGROUND

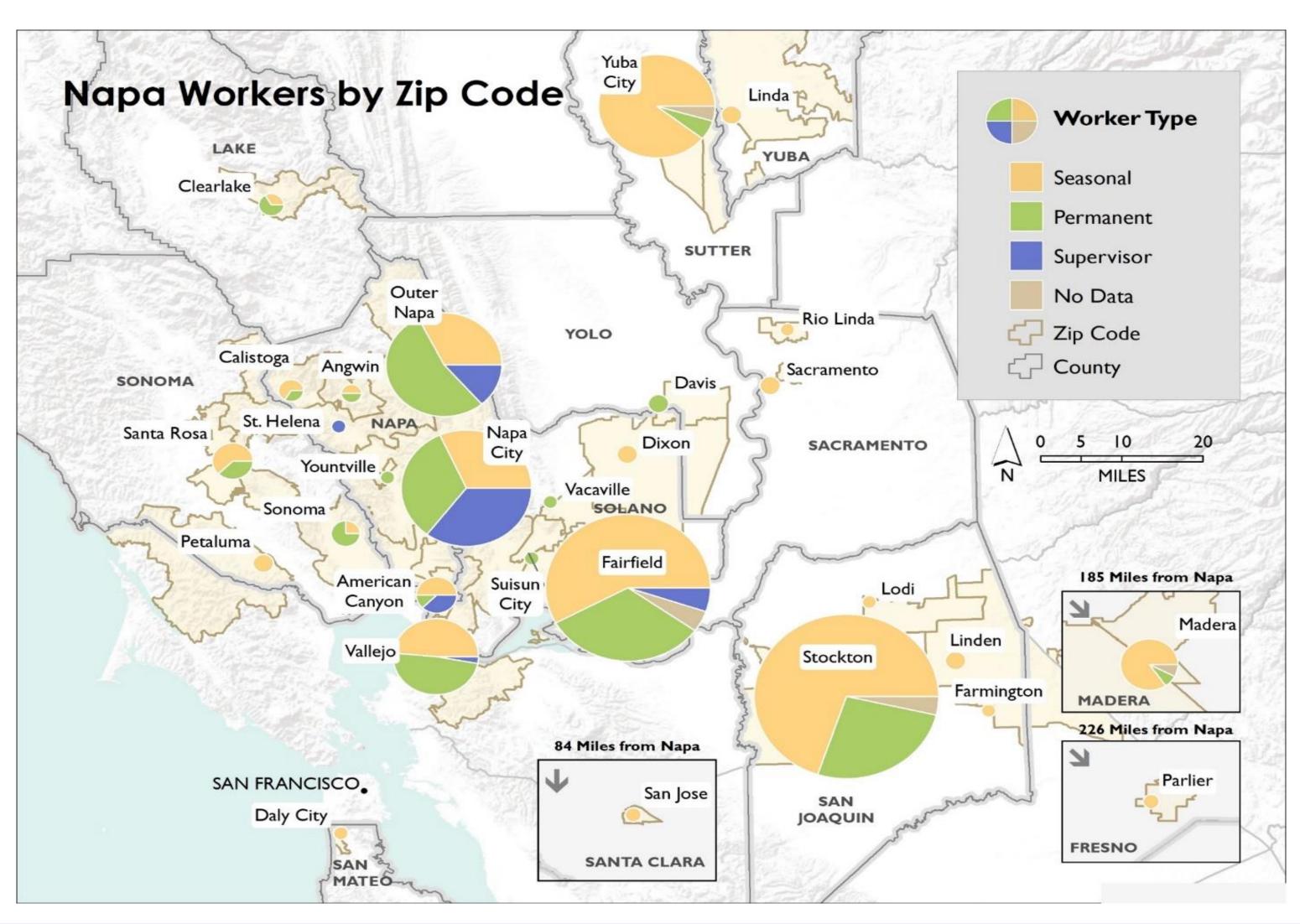
- Job satisfaction associated with employee health and turnover
- Improving job satisfaction can impact health and well-being of farm workers
- Companies can be persuaded to address satisfaction as a method to offset labor shortages

METHOD

- <u>Sample:</u> 611 seasonal and permanent vineyard crew members working in Napa County, California.
- **Quantitative Survey Measures:**
 - 1. Demographics
 - 2. Turnover Intentions (thoughts about quitting)
 - 3. Agricultural Job Satisfaction Survey (AJSS)
- Qualitative Follow-up Interviews: with 22 workers about specific issues they are dissatisfied with and how they might be addressed

QUANTITATIVE SURVEY KEY RESULTS

- Workers dissatisfied with 5 categories (graph, right)
- <u>Commuting rated lowest</u>: very long commutes driven by worker housing shortages (map, below)
- Limited differences based on gender, age, and employment status (seasonal/permanent)
- Regression: 5 categories predicted turnover: pay (-.20); communication (-.22); family commitments (-.19); nature of ag. work (-.18); health consequences (-.09)



INTERVIEWS

Examples of specific issues workers concerned with & strategies to address:

- **A.** Pesticide exposure [health consequences]: improve communication between vineyards when spraying
- **B. Expense and fatigue of commute** [commuting]: rotate crews round sites so commute easier for part of season; fuel allowances; company vanpool (for some)
- C. Lack of differentiation in wages [pay]: implement structured pay scales based on seniority & loyalty
- **D. Respectful treatment** [communication]: 'no yell' policies; training for supervisors.

AIMS

- 1. Develop new questionnaire measure to assess satisfaction in Napa vineyard workers
- 2. Determine sources of (dis)satisfaction and establish those that predict turnover
- 3. Generate strategies for improving satisfaction in vineyard workers

AGRICULTURAL JOB SATISFACTION SURVEY (AJSS)

45 statements related to satisfaction in 11 categories (rated on 0-5 agreement scale):

Pay: level & raises

Fringe Benefits: non-wage benefits

Promotion: opportunities

Contingent Rewards: recognition and rewards for good work

Communication: within organization

<u>Coworkers:</u> interactions with others in same job role

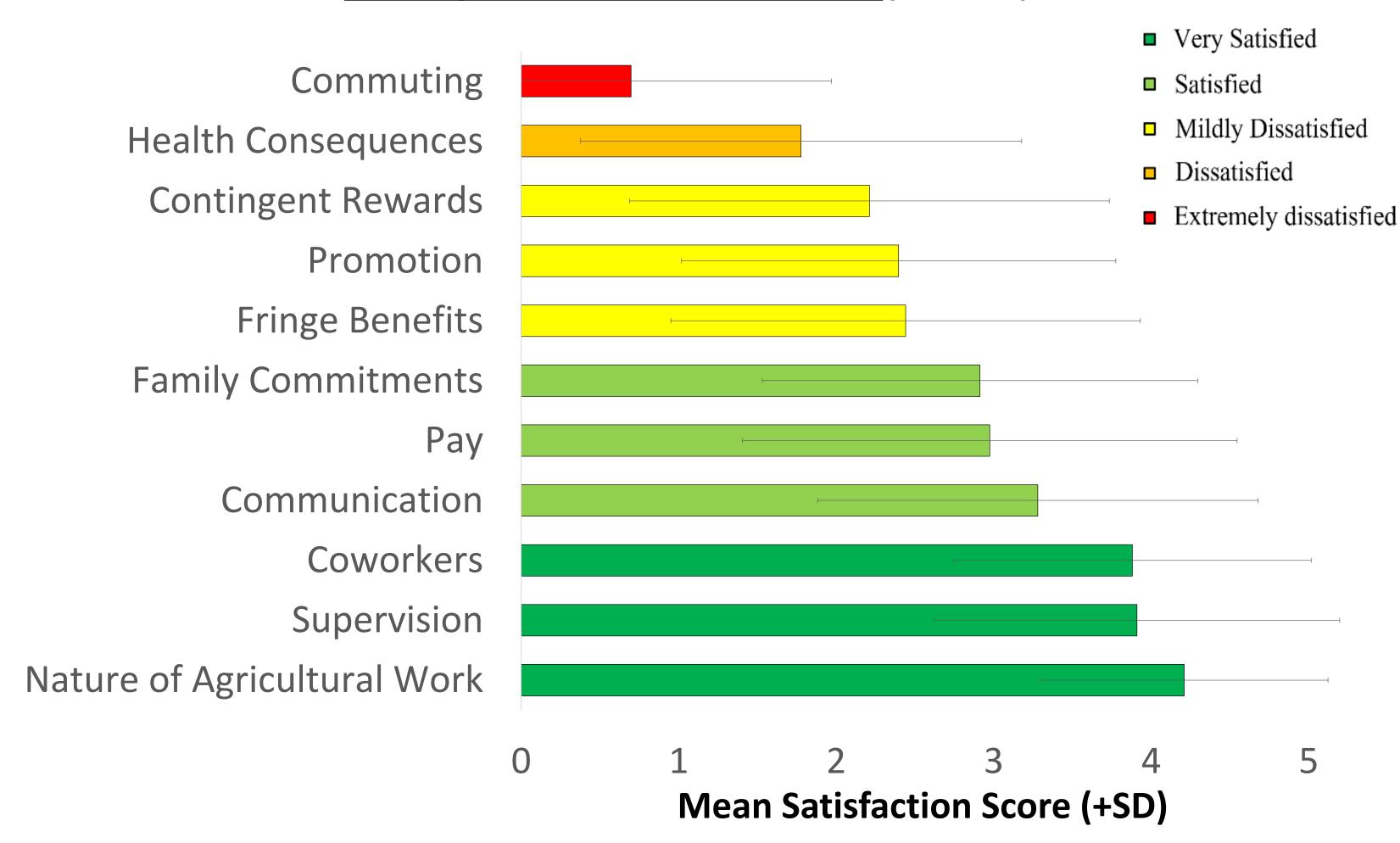
<u>Nature of Ag. Work:</u> work tasks and general environment

<u>Family Commitments:</u> work schedule and convenience

Health Consequences: of agricultural work

Commuting: distance and quality of journey to work

Average Worker Satisfaction (N=611)



CONCLUSIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- AJSS successfully developed as a tool to measure job satisfaction in farm workers
 - Requires further testing to establish validity and wider application for other agricultural industries
 - Plan to make available to industry for free use
- Sources of dissatisfaction for Napa workers likely affect mental and physical health
 - Further development of strategies to address dissatisfaction can help build more sustainable workforce
 - Next study seeks to test link between satisfaction, mental health, and perceived work impairment

Numerous ways companies can be proactive in improving satisfaction

- Many often not considered by managers who tend to focus pay and benefits
- Numerous low-cost strategies were identified
- In industry's interest to reduce turnover
- Currently seeking funding to conduct new study in California & Washington