

SURVEY SHOWS STRAINS ON RURAL CALIFORNIA

Lost markets and lost off-farm income related to the COVID-19 pandemic have proven doubly difficult for many California farmers and ranchers, according to a survey by the California Farm Bureau Federation. More than half of the farmers responding to the voluntary survey said they had lost customers or sales due to COVID-19, and nearly half said they or someone in their immediate family had lost off-farm income.

CFBF and the Farm Employers Labor Service, a Farm Bureau affiliate, undertook the survey of Farm Bureau members and FELS Newsletter subscribers, clients and customers to quantify the impact of the crisis. The questions in the survey were intended to capture overall, macroeconomic impacts on farmers and ranchers generally, on farm employers and on the economic well-being of farm families.

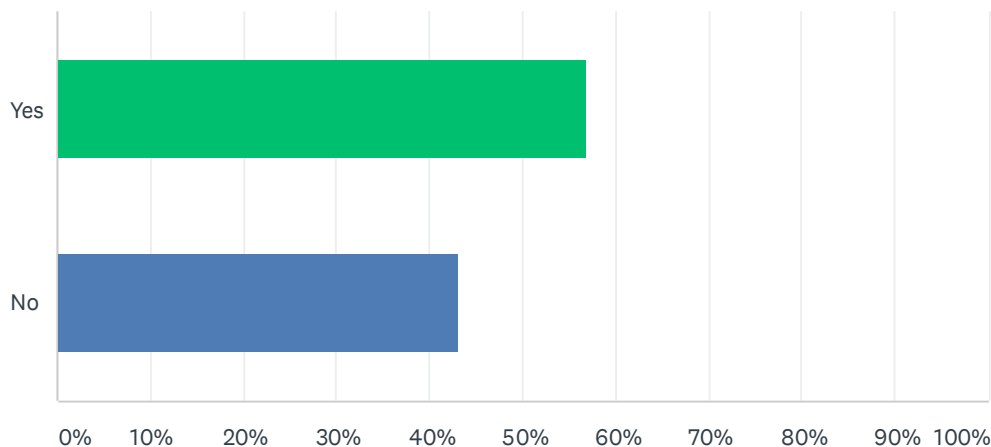
The online survey form was available between April 7 and April 21, 2020. A total of 510 responses were received; not all respondents answered all questions, as the survey directed respondents to skip questions that were not relevant to their situation.

Results:

Nearly 57% of respondents said they had lost customers or sales during the pandemic, with most citing stay-at-home orders that had closed customers' businesses.

Have you lost customers or sales due to COVID-19?

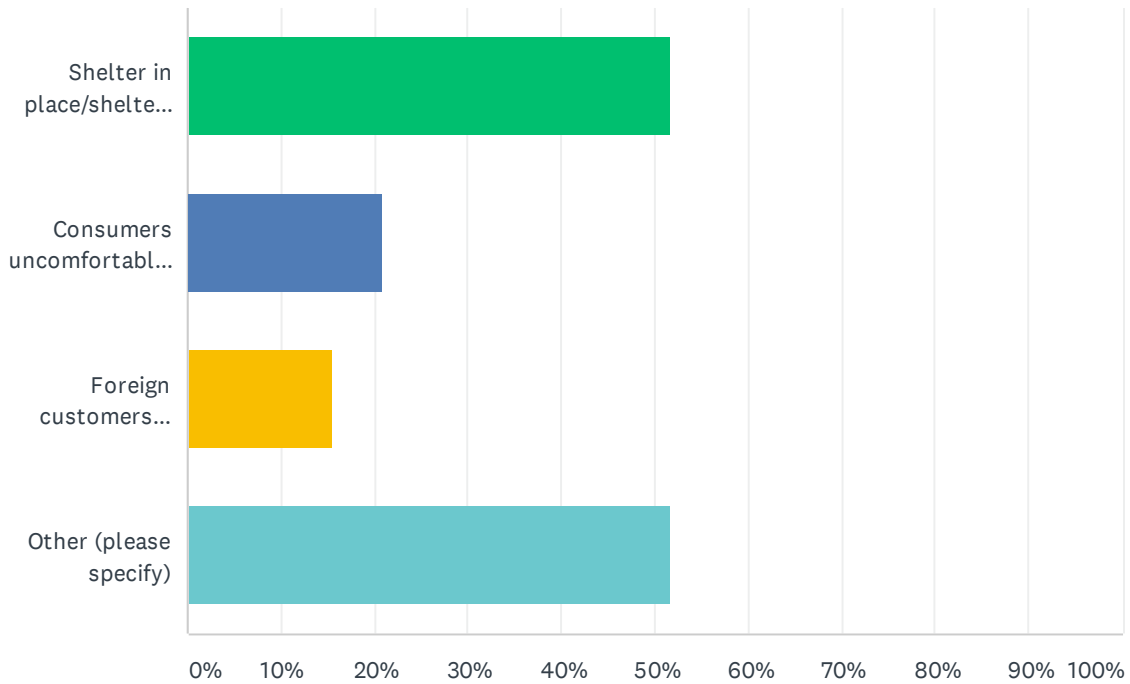
Answered: 495 Skipped: 15



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	56.97%	282
No	43.03%	213
TOTAL		495

If yes, why did you lose customers or sales (check all that apply):

Answered: 292 Skipped: 218



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Shelter in place/shelter at home orders closed customers' businesses	51.71%	151
Consumers uncomfortable with safety of direct-to-consumer sales	20.89%	61
Foreign customers declined to purchase due to health concerns	15.41%	45
Other (please specify)	51.71%	151
TOTAL RESPONDENTS: 292		

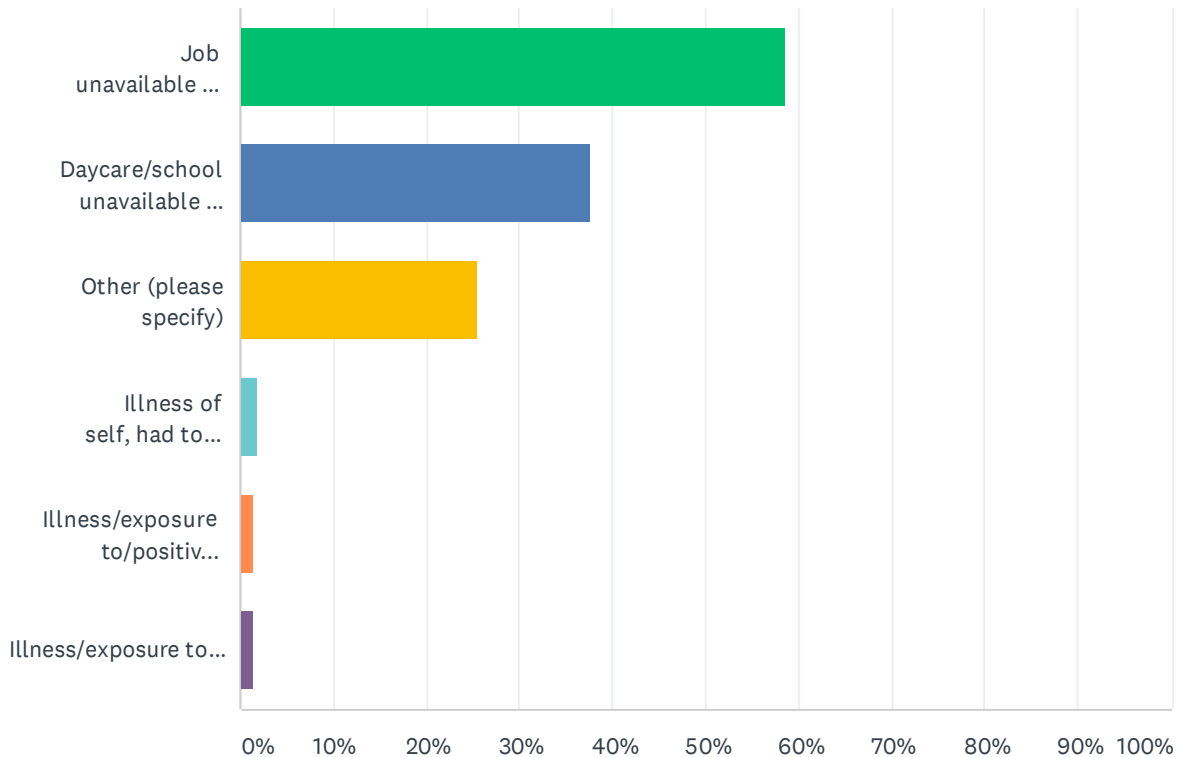
"Other" responses included:

- Difficulty with transportation.
- Harvest curtailed due to short labor.
- Reduced restaurant/food service demand.
- Packinghouse could not process citrus.
- Farmers markets closed.
- Drop in prices.
- Lack of staff to fill orders.

Of the responding farmers, 42% (215 of 510) said they or a family member had lost off-farm income, mainly because of jobs unavailable due to stay-at-home orders or to care for children because of school and child-care closures.

**Has anyone in your immediate family lost off-farm income due to COVID-19?
(check all that apply)**

Answered: 215 Skipped: 295



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Job unavailable due to COVID-19 shelter or shutdown orders	58.60%	126
Daycare/school unavailable due to COVID-19 shelter or shutdown orders	37.67%	81
Other (please specify)	25.58%	55
Illness of self, had to recover	1.86%	4
Illness/exposure to/positive test for family member, had to provide care	1.40%	3
Illness/exposure to COVID-19/positive test for COVID-19, had to isolate	1.40%	3
TOTAL RESPONDENTS: 292		

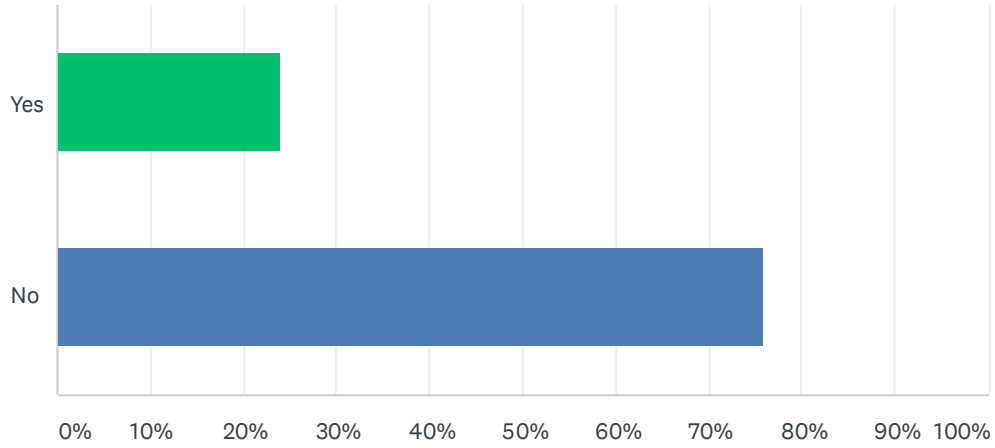
“Other” specified by respondents:

- Unable to operate business.
- Unable to travel.
- Lost revenue from income-producing property.
- Lost revenue from agro-tourism/winery/vacation property.
- Non-farm business shuttered due to shelter-in-place order.

About three-quarters of the responding farmers said they had been able to maintain operations so far.

Have you ceased any operations due to COVID-19?

Answered: 492 Skipped: 18

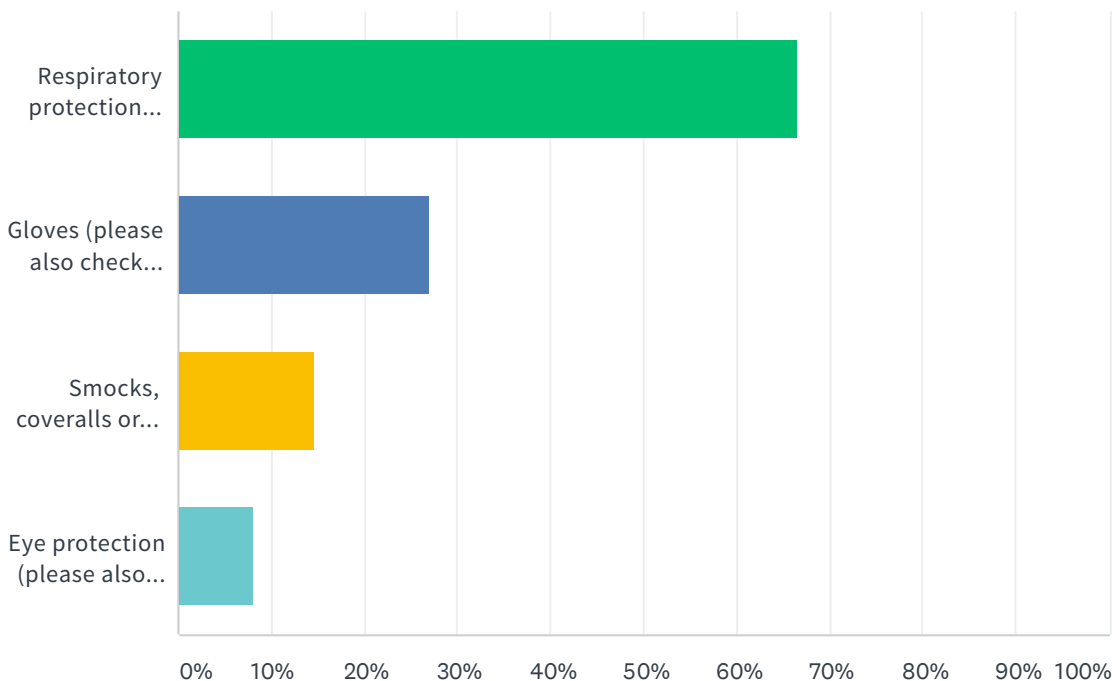


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	23.98%	118
No	76.02%	374
TOTAL		492

However, about one-third of respondents reported being unable to undertake routine planting, cultivation or crop-care activities due to lack of personal protective equipment such as respiratory protection.

Have you been prevented from undertaking any normal planting, cultivation or crop care/ protection other activity due to a lack of personal protective equipment of any type? (check all that apply)

Answered: 170 Skipped: 340



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Respiratory protection (please also check "other" and specify below what respiratory protection is unavailable):	66.47% 113
Gloves (please also check "other" and specify below what type of gloves are unavailable):	27.06% 46
Smocks, coveralls or other protective outerwear (please also check "other" and specify below if disposable or re-usable or both are unavailable):	14.71% 25
Eye protection (please also check "other" and specify below type of eye protection unavailable):	8.24% 14
TOTAL RESPONDENTS: 170	

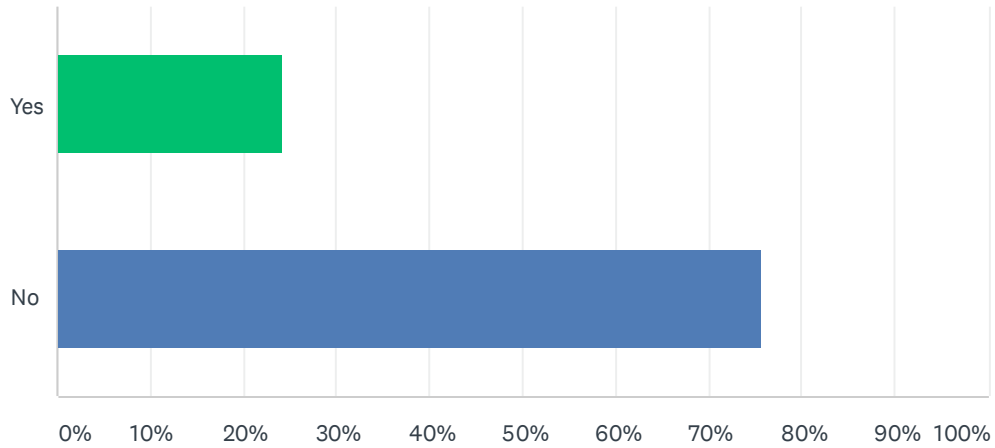
Respondents were asked to specify what types of respirators/gloves/protective outerwear or eye protection was unavailable; most common responses:

- N95 respirators (60).
- Nitrile gloves: (20).
- Disposable protective outerwear (10).

Three-quarters of respondents said they had been able to avoid furloughing or laying off employees.

Have you terminated, furloughed, or laid-off employees or otherwise reduced your work-force due to COVID-19?

Answered: 424 Skipped: 86

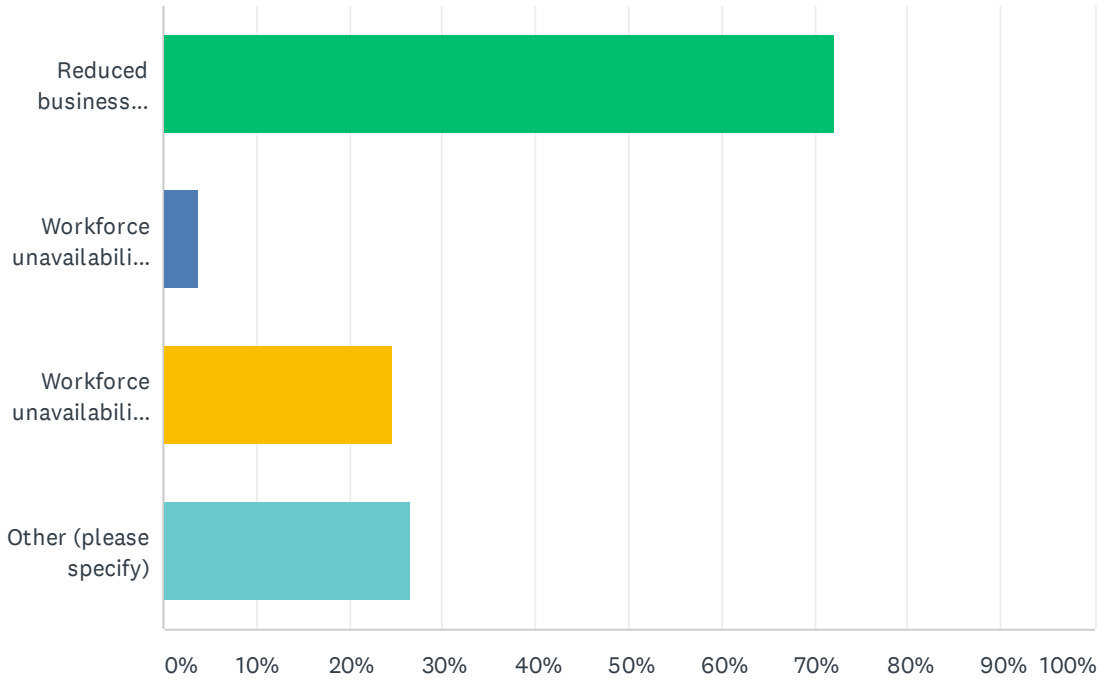


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	24.29%	103
No	75.71%	321
TOTAL		424

Of those who reported reducing operations or staff, most cited cuts to customer orders or revenue.

If yes, why did you answer in the affirmative? (check all that apply)

Answered: 158 Skipped: 352

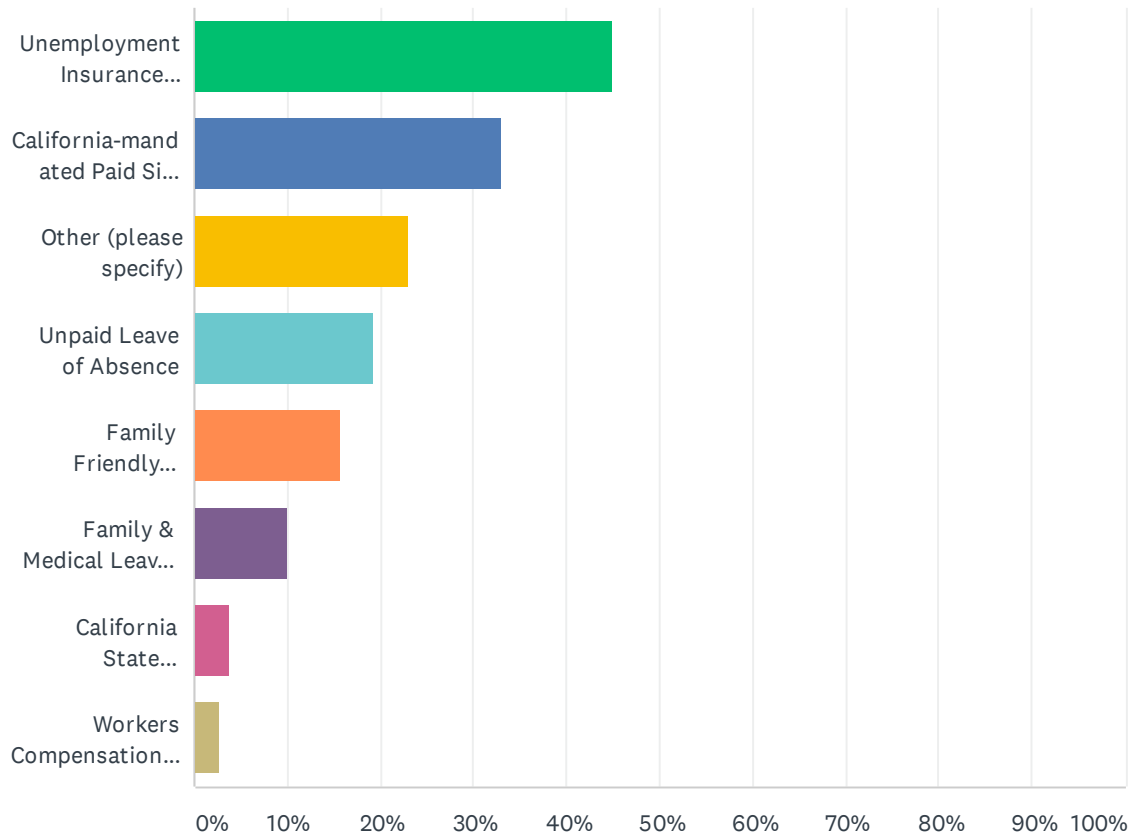


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Reduced business revenue or reduced customer orders	72.15%	114
Workforce unavailability due to employee illness	3.80%	6
Workforce unavailability due to quarantine orders/shelter-at-home/shelter-in-place orders	24.68%	39
Other (please specify)	26.58%	42
TOTAL RESPONDENTS: 158		

The survey asked respondents who had seen their operations or staff reduced what types of leaves or benefits their former employees had used.

If yes on reductions in operations or staff, have any absent employees used any of these types of leaves or benefits in relation to COVID-19? (check all that apply)

Answered: 109 Skipped: 401

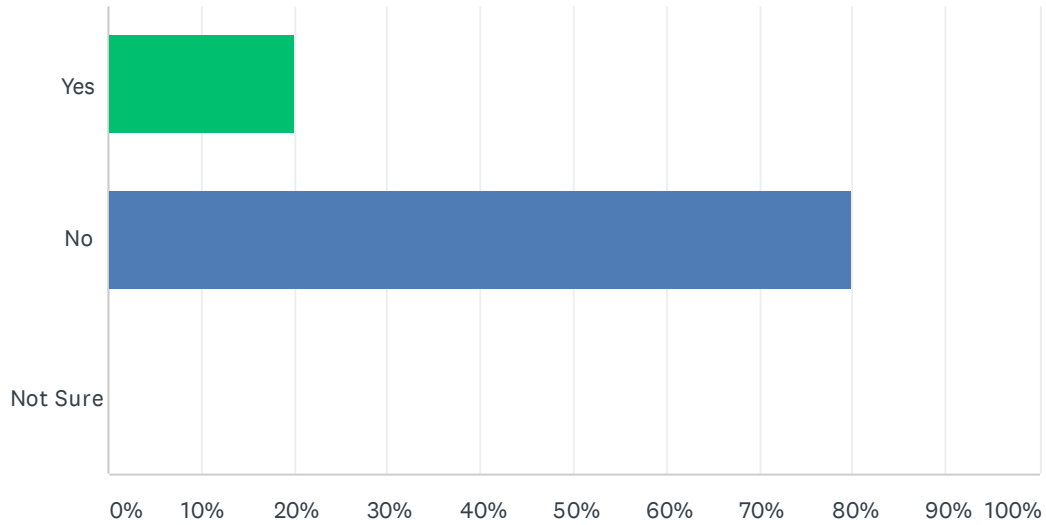


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Unemployment Insurance benefits	44.95% 49
California-mandated Paid Sick Leave	33.03% 36
Other (please specify)	22.94% 25
Unpaid Leave of Absence	19.27% 21
Family Friendly Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) paid sick leave and/or paid family leave	15.60% 17
Family & Medical Leave Act/California Family Rights Act Leave	10.09% 11
California State Disability Leave	3.67% 4
Workers Compensation disability leave	2.75% 3
TOTAL RESPONDENTS: 109	

Only 20% of survey respondents reported employees unable to work, mostly because the employees were considered in a high-risk group for the novel coronavirus.

Have any of your employees been unable to work due to any local or state quarantine, shelter-in-place or shelter-at-home order?

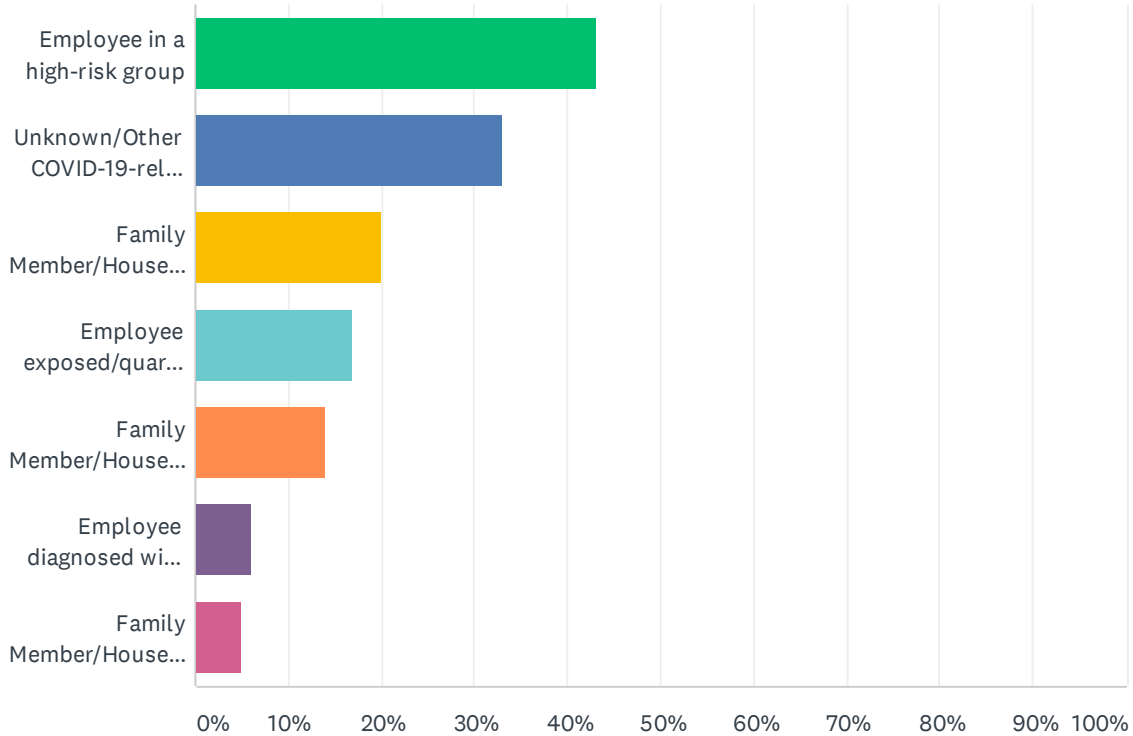
Answered: 505 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	20.00%	101
No	80.00%	404
Not Sure	0.00%	0
TOTAL		505

If yes, have any of your employees been unable to work due to their own episode of COVID-19 or that of someone they are responsible to care for? Why? (If known) (check all that apply):

Answered: 100 Skipped: 410



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Employee in a high-risk group	43.00%	43
Unknown/Other COVID-19-related reason:	33.00%	33
Family Member/Household member/Close Friend in high-risk group	20.00%	20
Employee exposed/quarantined	17.00%	17
Family Member/Household member/Close Friend exposed/quarantined	14.00%	14
Employee diagnosed with or suspected of infection with COVID-19	6.00%	6
Family Member/Household Member/Close Friend needing COVID-19-related care	5.00%	5
TOTAL RESPONDENTS: 100		

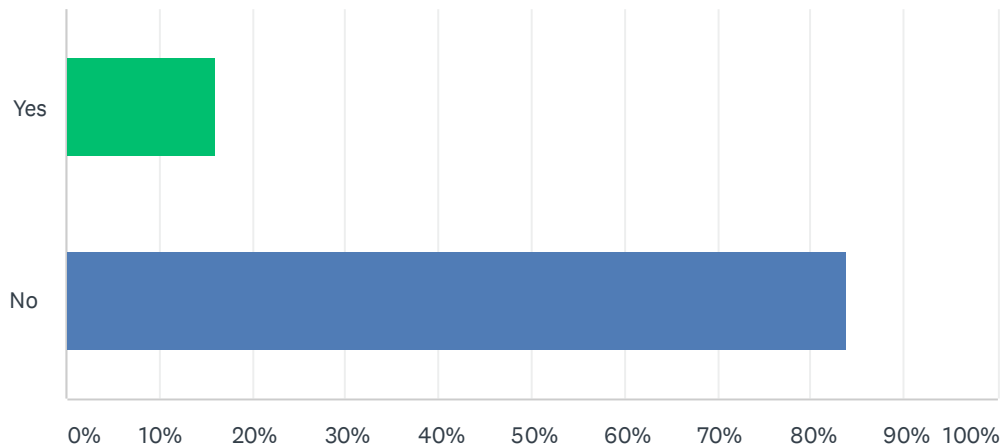
Among answers to “Unknown/Other COVID-19-related reason”:

- Care for a child/absence of day care/school.
- I live in a hotspot, did not want to spread to my employees.
- Employee asked to stay home when not feeling well.
- Business closed.
- Employee traveling when shelter-in-place imposed; was asked to self-quarantine.
- Workers confused by scope of shelter-in-place orders.

The survey asked respondents how absence or unavailability of employees had affected day-to-day farming or ranching operations.

Have you been unable to undertake a normal seasonal activity due to COVID-19-related employee absences?

Answered: 496 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	16.13%	80
No	83.87%	416
TOTAL		496

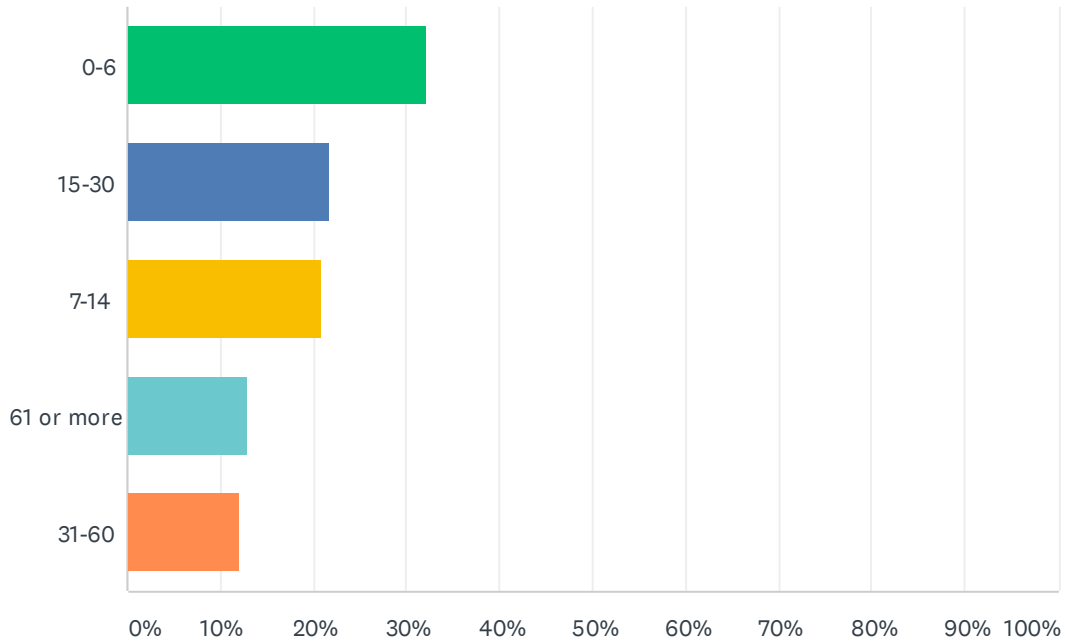
If yes, what activities have you forgone? (81 responses)

Responses included:

- Timing issues due to late arrival of H-2A workers.
- Farm maintenance.
- Reduced production due to lack of labor.
- Harvesting.
- Office support not adequate due to "shelter-at-home" orders.
- Training and education.
- Face-to-face meetings.
- Less production due to absence of employees.
- Pruning/early pick delayed.
- Suckering/weed control/planting.
- Parties/events/wine tasting.
- Shipping orders.
- "Everything."

If some or all of your employees have been unable or unavailable to work, how many aggregate work days (number of workers unavailable times number of days unavailable) has your business lost to COVID-19 suspected cases, diagnosed cases, quarantine/shelter-at-home or similar state or local orders?

Answered: 115 Skipped: 395

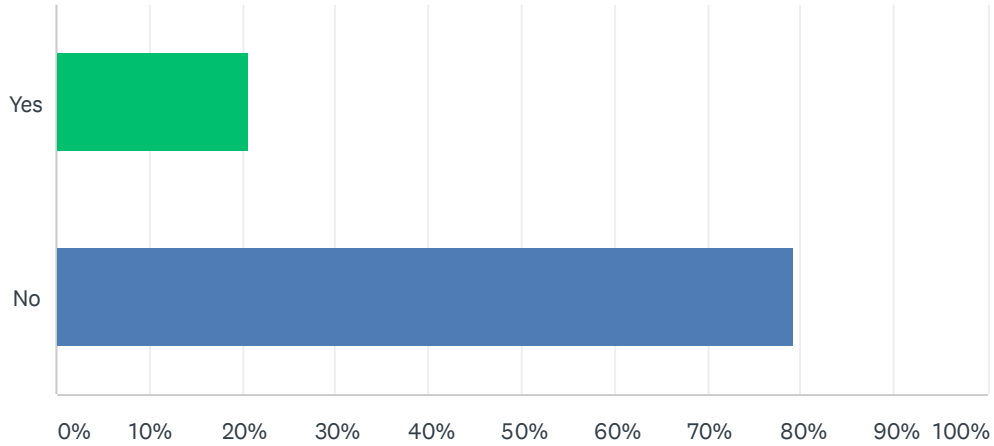


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0-6	32.17%	37
15-30	21.74%	25
7-14	20.87%	24
61 or more	13.04%	15
31-60	12.17%	14
TOTAL		115

The survey asked farmers and ranchers if their ability to recruit employees had been affected by the pandemic.

If yes to reducing operations or staff, have you been able to recruit workers to replace any lost due to any COVID-19-related reason?

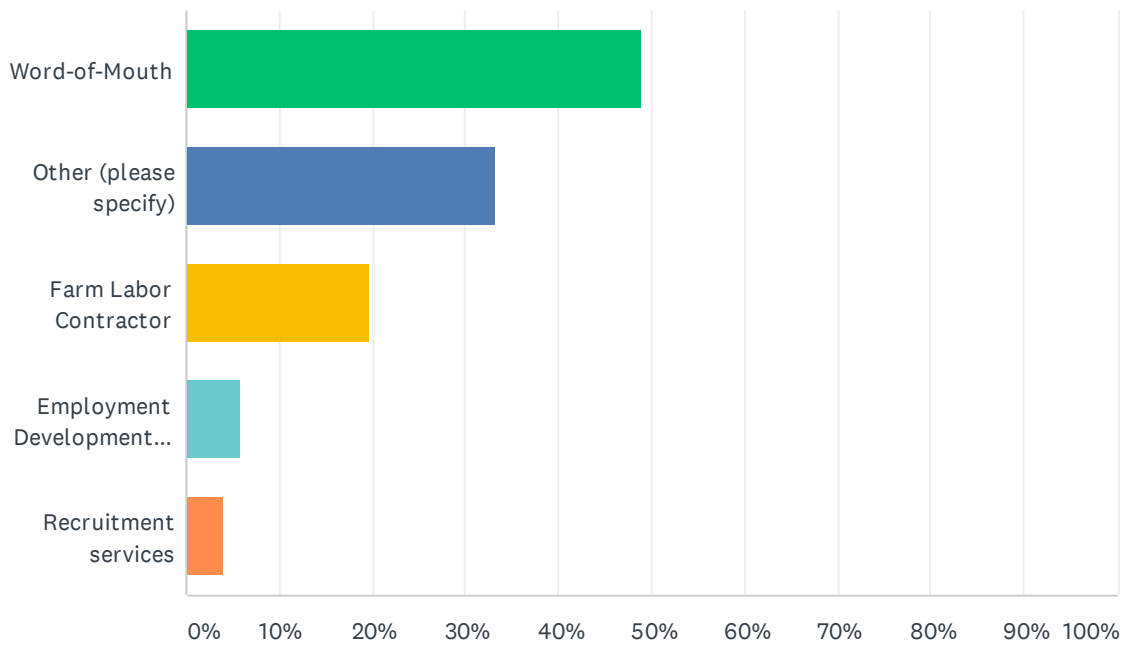
Answered: 135 Skipped: 375



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	20.74%	28
No	79.26%	107
TOTAL		135

If you have attempted to recruit employees, from what source(s)? (check all that apply)

Answered: 51 Skipped: 459

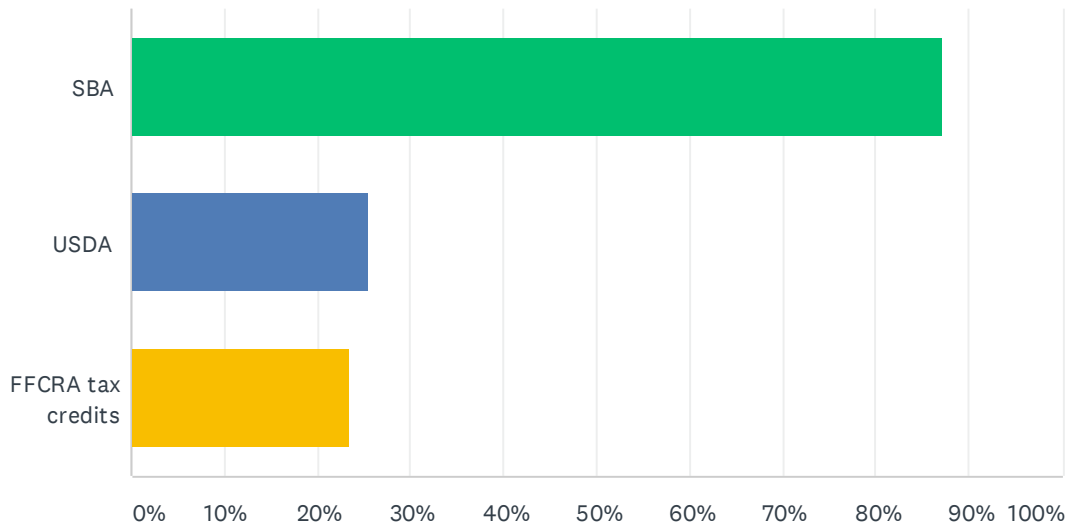


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Word-of-Mouth	49.02%	25
Other (please specify)	33.33%	17
Farm Labor Contractor	19.61%	10
Employment Development Department (EDD) referrals	5.88%	3
Recruitment services	3.92%	2
TOTAL RESPONDENTS: 51		

Of the respondents, 57% (291 of 510) said they had applied or intended to apply for relief through the U.S. Small Business Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture or other avenues.

Do you plan to apply or have you applied for COVID-19 relief funding through SBA or USDA or take tax credits to defray the cost of mandated employee leaves? (check all that apply)

Answered: 291 Skipped: 219



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
SBA	87.29%	254
USDA	25.43%	74
FFCRA tax credits	23.37%	68
TOTAL RESPONDENTS: 291		