

People picking Calif.'s tomatoes can't afford them

By Sara Rathod, Mother Jones

Spring is upon us, which means the weather is finally nice enough to sit outside and munch on a grilled burger slathered with ketchup. Or, if you prefer, a crispy salad topped with strawberries and walnuts. Either way, chances are that at least a few of the ingredients in your meal were grown in California—the country's cornucopia.

The Golden State cultivates more than a third of all vegetables and two-thirds of all fruits and nuts sold domestically. California is also home to the largest number of farmers markets and, according to the most recent USDA Organic Survey, the highest number of 100 percent organic farms of any state.

But many of the people growing and picking this food would view a fresh spring picnic as a rare luxury. A high percentage of farmworkers in California's agricultural counties struggle with hunger and diet-related health problems, according to a new report by the policy research group California Institute for Rural Studies.

Nearly half of the workers interviewed in Yolo Count have trouble putting dinner on the table, a rate nearly three times higher than national and state averages.

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