



#FridaysOnTheFarm: Training to Grow Success

From the kitchen table to the boardroom table, the USDA brings people together across the nation for: healthier food, natural resources, and people; a stronger agricultural industry; and economic growth, jobs, and innovation.

Each Friday, meet those farmers, producers, and landowners through our [#FridaysOnTheFarm](#) stories. Visit local farms, ranches, forests, and resource areas where USDA customers and partners *do right and feed everyone*.

This Friday, meet Carlos Gonzalez Torrez, an experienced farmworker and student at [the Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association](#) in Salinas, California. Carlos has spent many years on the farm, hand picking artichokes, strawberries, and Brussels sprouts. He's now working with ALBA to build his own operation.

Worker to Farmer

ALBA's mission is to create economic opportunity for limited-resource and aspiring organic farmers through education in the heart of the Salinas Valley.

New and beginning farmers receive education, experience, and support from ALBA. Carlos took ALBA's Farmer Education Course, which provides 300 hours of bilingual classroom instruction and field-based training over one year. Graduating participants can rent farmland at ALBA for up to five years to help grow their careers.

"I came in to take the course and decided that I wanted to go out and operate on my own," said Carlos.

Coupled with his farm experience and education through the training program, Carlos now rents just over four acres of farmland at the program's 100-acre facility. He currently grows broccoli and kale with plans to grow green beans and peas in the future.

"I love to grow produce and being out in the field," he said. "I've had a love of agriculture ever since I was small."



Support from USDA

USDA's [Farm Service Agency](#) works with non-profit organizations, like ALBA, to provide programs information and outreach to help farmers start and invest in their operations. FSA has worked with ALBA to provide training on how to apply for farm loans and prepare a cash flow statement, how to manage risk through safety-net programs and regional crop insurance options, and how to apply for disaster assistance when operations are impacted by adverse weather.

"These farmers are the future face of American agriculture. It is so important for FSA to help them get a strong start in ensuring the success of their operations," said Vivian Soffa, Salinas FSA County Executive Director. "Carlos will need support when he graduates from the program and FSA will be able to assist him with capital needs when he is farming on his own." USDA provides support to [beginning farmers and ranchers](#), veterans, and people transitioning from other industries to agriculture. For those ready to rent or buy land, USDA offers [a range of loan options](#) and resources for getting started.

In return, farmers like Carlos are growing resources to feed us all.

"I've gotten off to a good start this year," said Carlos. "I just want to be successful at farming."

More Information

USDA offers a variety of risk management, disaster assistance, loan, and conservation programs to help agricultural producers in the United States weather ups and downs in the market and recover from natural disasters as well as invest in improvements to their operations. [Learn about additional programs.](#)

For more information about USDA programs and services, [contact your local USDA service center.](#)

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Photo Credit: Lance Cheung, USDA