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## **RME Partnership Helps Train Oregon Latino Growers**

News Release

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Adelante Mujeres, which means 'women rise up' in Spanish, is a non-profit organization that works with over 5,500 low income Latina women and families throughout Oregon. On April 9, Don Kaufman, a Risk Management Analyst with the USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) Spokane Regional Office, experienced firsthand how Adelante Mujeres' programs can give this underserved community a better path to success when entering the agricultural world.



***Alejandro Tecum is originally from Guatemala and moved to Oregon in 1999.***

"My favorite part was getting to see the participants graduate from the program after all the hard work they put into it," Kaufman said. He attended Adelante Mujeres' Sustainable Agriculture program – an in-depth, 11-week curriculum focused on soil building, soil conservation, plant nutrients, irrigation, and farm planning, just to name a few.

Adelante Mujeres is one of several recipients of RMA's Risk Management Education cooperative agreements. The funding provided by RMA enables organizations like Adelante Mujeres to train and educate producers, especially limited resource, socially disadvantaged and other traditionally under-served farmers and ranchers about crop insurance and other farm safety net tools.

"Our risk training has improved greatly because of RMA as our guide," said Alejandro Tecum, the Sustainable Agriculture Education Manager for Adelante Mujeres. "We now can talk about the ag-side and the business side and how they integrate because of our RME partnership. There's the financial, legal, and production risks [producers] need to know, too."

The program offered by Adelante Mujeres is designed to give aspiring Latino immigrant farmers and gardeners the training and skills necessary to grow and produce viable goods. This is done by using sustainable methods while also teaching them how to successfully market their products at local farmers' markets.

Tecum says their partnership with RMA has allowed them to expand. "Having the money and the capacity to translate information into Spanish has allowed us to develop more materials for more people," he said.

The class had 17 graduates (10 women and seven men) and focused mostly on vegetable garden crops such as carrots, radishes, lettuce, cabbage, broccoli, and even some cut flowers.



Kaufman will be the first to tell you, "Mi español es muy poquito," or my Spanish is very small, but in visiting with several of the participants, they found some common experiences.

"One of the participants had driven a truck for an orchard about 10 miles from where I grew up," said Kaufman. "So, we talked about the area and how the previous growing season had been. It was nice connecting with someone who had spent time where I grew up (around) Quincy, Washington, a small town in the middle of Washington State."

The graduation took place in Cornelius, Oregon. Cornelius is a small city with a large Latino population located just under an hour drive west of Portland. The graduates are expected to enter a wide range of agricultural endeavors and businesses. Some will use the community gardens for local farmer's markets while several others own or lease land. One graduate runs a catering business and wants to grow his own farm-to-table menu. Many will continue to contribute to Adelante Mujeres by providing produce to the organization's farmer's market, which runs every Wednesday during the summer.

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