Off-farm work—In 1974, 80.8 percent of the operators of individual or family and partnership farms responded to the item on days worked off farm. Of those, 54.9 percent reported that they had worked off their farm during 1974. For farms with sales of $2,500 and over, 46.3 percent of those reporting worked off their farms.

Comparison of 1974 work off-farm data with data for previous census years is uncertain partly because in previous years the work off farm item included operators from all farms regardless of type of organization. In 1969, when no distinction was made between farm operators reporting none and those not responding, 54.3 percent of all operators reported that they worked off their farms. If the same criteria are applied to the 1974 individual and partnership farms, only 44.4 percent of the operators reported working one or more days off their farms. It is not possible to determine how much of this difference could be accounted for by differences in response rates.

Almost two-thirds of those operators who reported working off their farms worked 200 days or more. For farms with sales of less than $2,500, three-fourths of the operators working off the farm worked 200 days or more. It is obvious that for the 1.2 million farms with sales of less than $10,000 some source of income other than the sale of agricultural products is essential. For those farms, 917,000 reported off-farm income and 80 percent indicated that off-farm income was greater than the value of agricultural products sold. The percentage of operators working off the farm decreased as the value of agricultural products increased, but even on farms with sales of $100,000 and over more than 15 percent of the operators reported some off-farm employment (table 15).