

Farm Labor

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FARM WORKER NUMBERS CONTINUE MODERATE DECLINE

The record small farm work force which set new high production records in 1960 is continuing to diminish in 1961 at a moderate rate. The total of 4.9 million workers estimated employed on farms during the week of January 22-28, 1961 is the smallest farm work force of record. Ten years ago about two million more workers were estimated in the January force than were working this year. The January estimates for the years 1955-59 average about half a million more than the present level. The present estimate is 3 percent below the previous low of January 1960.

Family Workers Dominate January Work Force

Farm operators and their family members working on home farms account for 4.0 of the 4.9 million total. This large a proportion, over 80 percent, is not unusual for the midwinter season. The 4-million-strong family-worker force, which represents the entire force on most of the Nation's farms, is about 3 percent smaller than a year earlier and 13 percent smaller than the January average for the 5 years, 1955-59. The continuing downward trend in the number of separate farm units is the dominant factor in this persisting trend. However, the many changes in farm machinery and methods, which have been pushing farming toward fewer and larger family farm units, also have speeded the work and lightened the muscular load for many farm jobs. Output has increased on the enlarged units despite steady decreases in worker numbers.

Hired Work Force 1 percent below January 1960

In extensive areas where winter farm work is mainly livestock work and farmstead chores, the January hired work force consists largely of the regular hired workers needed even at this season to maintain operations on the larger producing farms and ranches. Also, no spot on the calendar can be picked when cropland, tillage, crop planting, or harvest is not active in some of the warmer areas which produce winter or other seasonal vegetables, citrus fruits, or other specialties. The estimated total of 0.9 million hired workers in the Nation in late January, while a record low, is only 1 percent below a year earlier. Compared with the January 1955-59 average this month's hired work force is smaller by 5 percent. This is less than half the percentage reduction which has occurred in the January family work force.

Most Geographic Regions Show Low Winter Level of Farm Work

Comparison of the estimates of worker numbers by regions and States in late January shows that reductions in family workers below January 1960 ranged from 5 percent in the South Atlantic region to about 2 percent in East and West North Central regions. Only the Pacific region showed an increase, which amounted to about 2 percent.

The number of hired workers during the January survey week this year was larger than a year earlier in the Pacific and Mountain regions by 3 percent and in the East South Central region by 2 percent. Decreases were indicated for all other regions. Storms in the Northeast cut hired workers in the small force in New England by nearly a fifth below a year earlier and in the Middle Atlantic States by 5 percent. Other regional reductions were 1 percent in the South Atlantic and West North Central regions, 2 percent in the West South Central, and 3 percent in the East North Central region. The weather influence on worker numbers in the survey periods cannot be accurately assessed but would appear to be somewhat less favorable than a year earlier in the Northeast and somewhat more favorable in Mountain and Pacific regions.

Wage Rate Comparisons Show Continued Annual Uptrend

Composite average wage rates, which are presented on page 6 of this report, show the continued upward trend in farm wages which has been general throughout almost all areas during the years presented, 1950-60. This trend has been consistently reported throughout the period for the several different hiring arrangements appearing in the summary farm wage rate table shown on page 3.

The farm wage index numbers which appear on page 7 show the relation of State, regional, and national annual average wage rates to the 1910-14 base period used in farm parity determinations. Between 1950 and 1960, the U.S. index of farm wage rates rose from 432 percent of the base period to 629 percent. The annual gain during 10 years averaged about 5 percent. Cash wage payments only are considered in these comparisons.

Farm employment and indexes, January 1961, with comparisons, United States

	: Annual : average : 1960	: Annual : average : 1959	: Annual : average : 1955-59 1/2	: January : average : 1955-59 1/2	: January : 24-30, : 1960	: January : 22-28, : 1961
FARM EMPLOYMENT (Thousands)						
Total	7,118	7,384	7,734	5,499	5,006	4,865
Family labor..	5,249	5,459	5,791	4,593	4,139	4,006
Hired labor ..	1,869	1,925	1,943	906	867	859
INDEXES ^{2/} (1910-14=100)						
Total	52	54	57	59	54	52
Family labor..	52	54	57	59	53	51
Hired labor...	55	57	57	61	58	58

1/ Employment during the last full calendar week ending at least one day before the end of the month.

2/ Monthly indexes are adjusted for seasonal variation.

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Farm wage rates and indexes, January 1, 1961, United States

	: Annual : average : 1960	: January : average : 1955-59	: January : 1960	: January 1, : 1961
FARM WAGE RATES				
Composite rate per hour ^{1/}	\$ 0.818	\$ 0.784	\$ 0.896	\$ 0.909
Per month with house	\$192.00	\$166.00	\$194.00	\$197.00
Per month with board and room ...	149.00	133.00	152.00	155.00
Per week with board and room	35.50	31.25	34.50	34.75
Per week without board or room...	45.75	40.25	46.25	46.75
Per day with house	5.30	4.70	5.40	5.40
Per day with board and room	6.50	5.60	6.30	6.40
Per day without board or room ...	6.60	5.80	6.60	6.60
Per hour with house88	.71	.81	.83
Per hour without board or room...	.97	.95	1.05	1.08
INDEXES (1910-14=100)				
Farm wage rates	629	555	632	635
(Adjusted for seasonal variation):				
Prices received by farmers ^{2/}	238	233	228	242

1/ Weighted average of all rates on a per hour basis.

2/ Index for 15th of previous month.

Workers on Farms, January 1961

(Thousands of persons)

Region and State	January average 1955-59 1/			January 1960 Week of 24-30			January 1961 Week of 22-28		
	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired
New England	126	91	35	110	79	31	102	77	25
New York	142	108	34	128	96	32	126	95	31
New Jersey	36	27	9	33	25	8	30	22	8
Pennsylvania	174	147	27	154	132	22	144	124	20
Middle Atlantic ...	352	282	70	315	253	62	300	241	59
Ohio	204	187	17	185	170	15	179	166	13
Indiana	188	178	10	170	160	10	163	155	8
Illinois	198	167	31	181	154	27	181	151	30
Michigan	184	162	22	175	149	26	166	142	24
Wisconsin	264	245	19	237	222	15	234	219	15
East North Central.	1,038	939	99	948	855	93	923	833	90
Minnesota	222	206	16	198	185	13	191	180	11
Iowa	224	208	16	219	202	17	213	198	15
Missouri	227	212	15	207	194	13	210	195	15
North Dakota	68	60	8	59	51	8	56	49	7
South Dakota	75	70	5	69	65	4	66	62	4
Nebraska	127	119	8	117	109	8	122	113	9
Kansas	130	122	8	119	112	7	115	107	8
West North Central.	1,073	997	76	988	918	70	973	904	69
Delaware-Maryland ...	49	35	14	47	35	12	46	35	11
Virginia	162	135	27	149	123	26	138	115	23
West Virginia	58	50	8	53	46	7	50	43	7
North Carolina	265	237	28	238	209	29	206	184	22
South Carolina	127	99	28	111	85	26	111	86	25
Georgia	127	104	23	112	91	21	106	87	19
Florida	99	47	52	92	41	51	103	40	63
South Atlantic	887	707	180	802	630	172	760	590	170
Kentucky	184	170	14	175	161	14	161	149	12
Tennessee	175	156	19	166	146	20	159	141	18
Alabama	97	85	12	83	71	12	79	66	13
Mississippi	152	133	19	125	111	14	127	109	18
East South Central.	608	544	64	549	489	60	526	465	61
Arkansas	146	123	23	119	99	20	114	92	22
Louisiana	113	90	23	95	76	19	95	75	20
Oklahoma	153	145	8	125	118	7	129	121	8
Texas	317	250	67	297	219	78	278	206	72
West South Central.	729	608	121	636	512	124	616	494	122
Montana	38	34	4	33	30	3	33	30	3
Idaho	40	35	5	38	34	4	39	35	4
Colorado	42	38	4	42	37	5	39	34	5
New Mexico-Arizona...	71	30	41	72	28	44	71	25	46
Wyoming-Utah-Nevada..	39	31	8	37	30	7	37	30	7
Mountain	230	168	62	222	159	63	219	154	65
Washington	79	69	10	75	64	11	74	62	12
Oregon	64	56	8	57	51	6	61	54	7
California	313	132	181	304	129	175	311	132	179
Pacific	456	257	199	436	244	192	446	248	198
UNITED STATES	5,499	4,593	906	5,006	4,139	867	4,865	4,006	859

1/ Persons employed during the last full calendar week ending at least one day before the end of the month.

Workers on farms: Comparative estimates, annual average 1960,
November and December 1960

(Thousands of persons)

Region and State	Annual average			November 1960			December 18-24,		
	1960			Week of 20-26			1960		
	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired
New England	150	91	59	129	83	46	106	74	32
New York	163	107	56	144	104	40	132	95	37
New Jersey	47	28	19	40	27	13	29	20	9
Pennsylvania	194	159	35	168	141	27	148	126	22
Middle Atlantic	404	294	110	352	272	80	309	241	68
Ohio	250	214	36	249	220	29	199	185	14
Indiana	219	192	27	213	189	24	179	166	13
Illinois	249	201	48	273	226	47	203	176	27
Michigan	220	178	42	186	156	30	180	156	24
Wisconsin	282	253	29	259	236	23	245	228	17
East North Central...	1,220	1,038	182	1,180	1,027	153	1,006	911	95
Minnesota	266	228	38	213	194	19	191	177	14
Iowa	289	252	37	288	254	34	219	206	13
Missouri	276	237	39	254	229	25	226	208	18
North Dakota	92	71	21	67	57	10	60	52	8
South Dakota	92	81	11	80	72	8	72	66	6
Nebraska	160	135	25	146	127	19	123	112	11
Kansas	159	134	25	135	122	13	116	107	9
West North Central...	1,334	1,138	196	1,183	1,055	128	1,007	928	79
Delaware-Maryland	70	45	25	64	43	21	49	36	13
Virginia	203	149	54	184	151	33	143	124	19
West Virginia	73	60	13	71	60	11	60	52	8
North Carolina	416	317	99	332	287	45	250	223	27
South Carolina	195	133	62	154	114	40	131	109	22
Georgia	185	135	50	179	125	54	116	93	23
Florida	98	46	52	97	44	53	87	36	51
South Atlantic	1,240	885	355	1,081	824	257	836	673	163
Kentucky	235	188	47	243	210	33	185	172	13
Tennessee	246	195	51	306	256	50	184	165	19
Alabama	149	116	33	164	127	37	106	93	13
Mississippi	252	195	57	244	197	47	159	138	21
East South Central...	882	694	188	957	790	167	634	568	66
Arkansas	212	126	86	212	132	80	123	100	23
Louisiana	153	95	58	127	92	35	86	71	15
Oklahoma	165	131	34	149	124	25	117	109	8
Texas	442	261	181	394	229	165	284	210	74
West South Central...	972	613	359	882	577	305	610	490	120
Montana	49	37	12	40	33	7	34	29	5
Idaho	67	47	20	50	38	12	41	35	6
Colorado	69	51	18	57	44	13	42	37	5
New Mexico-Arizona ...	90	32	58	117	31	86	97	30	67
Wyoming-Utah-Nevada...	59	41	18	47	35	12	39	32	7
Mountain	334	208	126	311	181	130	253	163	90
Washington	113	76	37	77	63	14	64	54	10
Oregon	92	66	26	68	60	8	61	54	7
California	377	146	231	373	143	230	320	129	191
Pacific	582	288	294	518	266	252	445	237	208
UNITED STATES	7,118	5,249	1,869	6,593	5,075	1,518	5,206	4,285	921

Annual Average Farm Wage Rates, 1950-1960
Composite Rates per Hour 1/

State and Region	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960
	Dollars						Dollars				
Maine	.633	.707	.763	.799	.799	.829	.889	.909	.906	.934	.945
New Hampshire	.693	.757	.815	.846	.849	.867	.918	.936	.949	.964	1.003
Vermont	.655	.739	.764	.796	.792	.797	.850	.889	.906	.915	.952
Massachusetts	.697	.799	.850	.879	.878	.932	.980	1.020	1.035	1.041	1.058
Rhode Island	.712	.813	.853	.874	.878	.932	.999	1.032	1.044	1.061	1.073
Connecticut	.721	.810	.849	.868	.890	.935	1.024	1.045	1.072	1.083	1.108
New England	.673	.759	.802	.829	.831	.863	.922	.949	.964	.982	1.002
New York	.670	.736	.775	.797	.794	.801	.835	.867	.881	.892	.905
New Jersey	.659	.747	.783	.811	.817	.842	.886	.900	.928	.922	.938
Pennsylvania	.566	.636	.677	.703	.700	.714	.756	.789	.799	.816	.839
Middle Atlantic	.622	.694	.734	.758	.757	.770	.810	.841	.859	.872	.890
Ohio	.584	.655	.706	.735	.717	.736	.769	.793	.794	.799	.822
Indiana	.587	.652	.688	.719	.718	.734	.768	.786	.769	.791	.811
Illinois	.632	.708	.763	.779	.783	.791	.812	.833	.843	.859	.877
Michigan	.606	.695	.733	.762	.763	.782	.814	.830	.822	.842	.851
Wisconsin	.607	.694	.735	.748	.727	.737	.774	.807	.821	.840	.852
East North Central	.602	.681	.726	.747	.740	.754	.785	.809	.810	.830	.845
Minnesota	.694	.775	.815	.822	.812	.808	.836	.865	.881	.898	.905
Iowa	.748	.808	.856	.861	.852	.863	.861	.883	.898	.938	.954
Missouri	.515	.574	.625	.676	.644	.659	.686	.704	.713	.739	.754
North Dakota	.718	.801	.810	.816	.796	.789	.818	.853	.850	.864	.874
South Dakota	.718	.802	.805	.815	.801	.792	.784	.816	.823	.840	.856
Nebraska	.710	.790	.847	.836	.823	.824	.834	.840	.859	.895	.925
Kansas	.698	.759	.845	.821	.819	.815	.836	.855	.876	.892	.917
West North Central	.659	.731	.777	.791	.780	.784	.798	.820	.835	.864	.879
Delaware	.597	.700	.726	.777	.748	.782	.847	.868	.896	.924	.929
Maryland	.609	.694	.715	.737	.749	.771	.813	.819	.848	.873	.900
Virginia	.487	.547	.586	.579	.571	.587	.626	.644	.656	.674	.691
West Virginia	.449	.514	.545	.548	.536	.545	.579	.605	.615	.627	.636
North Carolina	.443	.483	.518	.526	.526	.535	.583	.590	.582	.610	.610
South Carolina	.331	.370	.398	.399	.388	.403	.415	.424	.420	.434	.443
Georgia	.376	.424	.441	.448	.440	.454	.492	.497	.506	.518	.535
Florida	.467	.535	.551	.579	.581	.582	.628	.642	.658	.659	.684
South Atlantic	.431	.486	.509	.524	.518	.527	.561	.575	.583	.597	.615
Kentucky	.445	.500	.526	.523	.525	.522	.553	.573	.591	.618	.633
Tennessee	.371	.424	.439	.435	.424	.439	.465	.483	.497	.528	.536
Alabama	.377	.428	.437	.444	.431	.457	.491	.479	.494	.508	.525
Mississippi	.374	.422	.445	.447	.416	.435	.457	.468	.475	.471	.472
East South Central	.387	.439	.457	.456	.442	.457	.485	.492	.507	.525	.535
Arkansas	.427	.490	.515	.513	.507	.520	.565	.587	.599	.637	.652
Louisiana	.412	.450	.474	.494	.487	.506	.541	.561	.554	.570	.573
Oklahoma	.622	.687	.717	.730	.730	.738	.781	.795	.836	.857	.891
Texas	.554	.613	.664	.645	.635	.660	.666	.691	.714	.740	.729
West South Central	.514	.573	.608	.602	.596	.613	.635	.657	.676	.696	.701
Montana	.731	.810	.874	.843	.821	.829	.853	.871	.879	.902	.918
Idaho	.758	.831	.891	.890	.866	.892	.914	.941	.960	.965	.995
Wyoming	.694	.768	.830	.825	.807	.817	.837	.862	.868	.890	.898
Colorado	.647	.706	.779	.765	.740	.771	.780	.836	.843	.869	.912
New Mexico	.531	.608	.617	.622	.600	.645	.649	.659	.673	.694	.716
Arizona	.629	.682	.735	.758	.760	.792	.818	.826	.858	.892	.903
Utah	.714	.801	.851	.884	.855	.891	.898	.925	.934	.953	.991
Nevada	.696	.774	.807	.845	.804	.821	.857	.907	.934	.980	.980
Mountain	.663	.733	.781	.781	.765	.792	.806	.836	.847	.872	.904
Washington	.933	1.033	1.077	1.091	1.097	1.124	1.170	1.209	1.221	1.226	1.228
Oregon	.925	1.024	1.056	1.055	1.037	1.060	1.092	1.116	1.128	1.137	1.165
California	.884	.960	1.016	1.039	1.032	1.054	1.100	1.115	1.133	1.165	1.210
Pacific	.895	.976	1.029	1.048	1.042	1.063	1.107	1.128	1.145	1.170	1.208
UNITED STATES	.561	.625	.661	.672	.661	.675	.705	.728	.757	.798	.818

1/ Weighted average of all rates, cash only.

Indexes of Annual Average Farm Wage Rates, 1950-1960

(1910-14 = 100)

State and region	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960
Maine	381	426	460	481	481	499	536	548	546	563	569
New Hampshire	456	498	536	557	559	570	604	616	624	634	660
Vermont	431	486	503	524	521	524	559	585	596	602	626
Massachusetts	456	522	556	575	574	609	641	667	676	680	692
Rhode Island	494	565	592	607	610	647	694	717	725	737	745
Connecticut	497	559	586	599	614	645	706	721	739	747	764
New England	440	496	524	542	543	564	603	620	630	642	655
New York	416	457	481	495	493	498	519	539	547	554	562
New Jersey	471	534	559	579	584	601	633	643	663	659	670
Pennsylvania	456	513	546	567	565	576	610	636	644	658	677
Middle Atlantic	435	485	513	530	529	538	566	588	601	610	622
Ohio	442	496	535	557	543	558	583	601	602	605	623
Indiana	462	513	542	566	565	578	605	619	606	623	639
Illinois	468	524	565	577	580	586	601	617	624	636	650
Michigan	436	500	527	548	549	563	586	597	591	606	612
Wisconsin	416	475	503	512	498	505	530	553	562	575	584
East North Central	443	501	534	549	544	554	577	595	596	610	621
Minnesota	439	491	516	520	514	511	529	547	558	568	573
Iowa	456	493	522	525	520	526	525	538	548	572	582
Missouri	460	512	558	604	575	588	612	629	637	660	673
North Dakota	413	460	466	469	457	453	470	490	489	497	502
South Dakota	435	486	488	494	485	480	475	495	499	509	519
Nebraska	473	527	565	557	549	549	556	560	573	597	617
Kansas	558	607	676	657	655	652	669	684	701	714	734
West North Central	454	504	536	546	538	541	550	566	576	596	606
Delaware	548	642	666	713	686	717	777	796	822	848	852
Maryland	615	701	722	744	757	779	821	827	857	882	909
Virginia	541	608	651	643	634	652	696	716	729	749	768
West Virginia	356	408	433	435	425	433	460	480	488	498	505
North Carolina	509	555	595	605	605	615	670	678	669	701	701
South Carolina	447	500	538	539	524	545	561	573	568	586	599
Georgia	427	482	501	509	500	516	559	565	575	589	608
Florida	477	546	562	591	593	594	641	655	671	672	698
South Atlantic	484	546	572	589	582	592	630	646	655	671	691
Kentucky	420	472	496	493	495	492	522	541	558	583	597
Tennessee	375	428	443	439	428	443	470	488	502	533	541
Alabama	414	470	480	488	474	502	540	526	543	558	577
Mississippi	402	454	478	481	447	468	491	503	511	506	508
East South Central	399	453	471	470	456	471	500	507	523	541	552
Arkansas	399	458	481	479	474	486	528	549	560	595	609
Louisiana	434	474	499	520	513	533	569	591	583	600	603
Oklahoma	475	524	547	557	557	563	596	607	638	654	680
Texas	458	507	549	533	525	545	550	571	590	612	602
West South Central	455	507	538	533	527	542	562	581	598	616	620
Montana	383	424	458	441	430	434	447	456	460	472	481
Idaho	443	486	521	520	506	522	535	550	561	564	582
Wyoming	371	411	444	441	432	437	448	461	464	476	480
Colorado	440	480	530	520	503	524	531	569	573	591	620
New Mexico	454	520	527	532	513	551	555	563	575	593	612
Arizona	428	464	500	516	517	539	556	562	584	607	614
Utah	455	510	542	563	545	568	572	589	595	607	631
Nevada	387	430	448	469	447	456	476	504	519	544	544
Mountain	420	464	494	494	484	501	510	529	536	552	572
Washington	460	509	531	537	540	554	576	596	601	604	605
Oregon	460	509	525	525	516	527	543	555	561	566	580
California	413	449	475	486	482	493	514	521	529	544	565
Pacific	424	463	488	497	494	504	525	535	543	555	573
UNITED STATES	432	481	508	517	508	519	542	560	582	614	629

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IN THIS ISSUE

	<u>Page</u>
Comments	1 - 2
Farm Employment and Indexes January 22-28, 1961, with compar- isons, United States	3
Farm Wage Rates and Indexes January 1, 1961, United States	3
Workers on Farms January 1961	4
Workers on farms: Comparative estimates, annual average 1960, November and December 1960	5
Annual Average Farm Wage Rates, 1950-1960 Composite rates per hour	6
Indexes of Annual Average Farm Wage Rates 1950-1960	7
