

Farm Labor

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WINTER DOMINATES FARM WORK DECREASE IN FARM EMPLOYMENT CONTINUES

Winter still controlled farm work on many of the Nation's farms in late February although weather varied greatly during the month. Livestock care-"chores"-came first on many farms and heavy feeding in many northern and central sections cut deeply into stored forage supplies. On the other hand, periods of warmer weather in many areas, aided preparations for a spring push after waiting fields were ready and snow and cold forgotten. The February survey week (18-24) gave a farm employment total of 5,135,000 persons, representing a decrease of 3 percent from a year earlier. The number of farm operators and other family members working on farms was 4,140,000, down 3 percent. The number of hired workers, estimated at 995,000 during this survey week, was 2 percent under the comparable week of February 1961.

Work Slow Generally Except in West South Central Region

All regions of the country except the West South Central reported the number of both family and hired workers under a year earlier or barely at the same level. The decreases were mostly moderate, reflecting continued reductions in the number of farms and other changes in farming which have required somewhat less man-labor each year recently.

In West South Central States warm weather pushed work ahead rapidly during the month. Texas farmers had shirt-sleeve weather up to the last three days of February, got their machines into fields, and "stepped on the gas". Cotton planting in the Lower Valley was almost one-fifth done in February and grain sorghum and corn were being planted over widening areas. More than one-third of Oklahoma spring oats and barley had been seeded by the end of February; ground preparation was very active in Western sections of the State. In the Arkansas and Louisiana area, field work included ground preparation for cotton, planting potatoes, and work on sugarcane. Farm activity in the West South Central region used 5 percent more family workers than a year earlier and 18 percent more hired workers.

February Progress Showed Wide Sectional Variations

Even while winter influence dominated northern and north central areas, February warm weather moved work ahead in the Southeast. Florida had hot dry weather which increased irrigation needs in citrus groves. The movement of Florida citrus during the week ending February 23 was estimated at 3,900,000 boxes of oranges and 1,245,000 of grapefruit. The total volume of the State's vegetable crops harvested increased moderately, with tomatoes and sweet corn making the largest increases. In Alabama, planting of Irish potatoes was nearly completed in Baldwin County and nearby commercial areas, while bedding of sweet potatoes continued in Cullman County. Georgia and South Carolina peaches have had good winter chilling. Warm days brought some early varieties into heavy bloom, raising hopes for plenty of peaches but making the crop vulnerable to cold damage. Tobacco plant beds in Georgia and South Carolina made excellent growth and promised plentiful supplies of good plants for early planting. In North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia tobacco beds were being prepared and seeded.

Plowing and land preparation were active in New Mexico. In Arizona, citrus harvest continued and vegetable harvests and plantings made progress. In the Yuma area, planting of late cantaloups continued and more potatoes and watermelons were planted in the Salt River Valley.

Most areas in the Mountain States had much February cold and heavy snowfall which added to the work of caring for livestock. Farmers and ranchers who rely on mountain snowpacks for irrigation water found optimism mounting as the snow deepened, bettering prospects for the outcome of their work in 1962. Nevada and Utah growers saw a possible end to the drought which has curtailed water supplies for three years.

Pacific Coast areas had some good weather for fruit tree pruning and other outside work and also benefitted from substantial moisture gains in periods of heavy valley rains and mountain snowfall. Following the heavy rains in California during much of February, the varied harvests of citrus fruits and vegetable crops resumed larger volume and the needs for workers advanced with developing crops.

Although livestock in many sections required more than the usual amount of supplemental feeding, feed and hay supplies generally were adequate. Improvements in barn and farmstead equipment on the larger dairy farms and livestock feeding establishments have contributed to increased labor efficiency and to increased livestock production per farm. In Texas the open weather reduced supplemental feeding and new growth on Panhandle wheat fields furnished pasture for additional cattle. By the month's end much goat shearing had been done and new lambs and kids swelled the States livestock numbers.

Farm employment and indexes, February 1962, with comparisons, United States

	: Annual : average : 1961	: Annual : average : 1960	: Annual : average : 1956-60 1/	: February : average : 1956-60 1/	: February : 19-25 : 1961	: February : 18-24 : 1962
FARM EMPLOYMENT						
(Thousands)						
Total	6,990	7,118	7,485	5,709	5,269	5,135
Family labor	5,104	5,249	5,572	4,677	4,252	4,140
Hired labor	1,886	1,869	1,913	1,032	1,017	995
INDEXES 2/						
(1910-14=100)						
Total	52	52	55	55	51	50
Family labor	50	52	55	55	50	49
Hired labor	55	55	56	56	55	54
(1957-59=100)						
Total	94	94	99	100	92	90
Family labor	91	95	100	100	91	89
Hired labor	96	96	98	98	96	94

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, 1962, United States

	: Annual : average : 1961	: January : average : 1956-60	: January 1, : 1961	: January 1, : 1962
FARM WAGE RATES				
Composite rate per hour 1/	\$ 0.834	\$ 0.818	\$ 0.909	\$ 0.932
Per month with house	\$195.00	\$174.00	\$197.00	\$200.00
Per month with board and room	151.00	139.00	155.00	158.00
Per week with board and room	35.75	32.50	34.75	35.75
Per week without board or room	46.50	42.00	46.75	47.75
Per day with house	5.30	4.95	5.40	5.60
Per day with board and room	6.50	5.30	6.40	6.40
Per day without board or room	6.60	6.00	6.60	6.70
Per hour with house90	.74	.83	.85
Per hour without board or room99	.98	1.08	1.11
INDEXES 2/				
(1910-14=100)	642	577	635	652
(1957-59=100)	110	99	109	112

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

2/ Indexes are adjusted for seasonal variation.

Workers on Farms, February 1962

(Thousands of persons)

Region and State	February average			February 1961			February 1962		
	1956-60 1/			Week of 19-25			Week of 18-24		
	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired
New England	132	92	40	112	78	34	110	76	34
New York	143	105	38	134	97	37	126	93	33
New Jersey	38	28	10	35	26	9	31	24	7
Pennsylvania	184	157	27	162	141	21	146	127	19
Middle Atlantic	365	290	75	331	264	67	303	244	59
Ohio	230	212	18	215	197	18	202	188	14
Indiana	199	186	13	181	169	12	177	165	12
Illinois	205	171	34	188	158	30	185	153	32
Michigan	200	179	21	189	169	20	185	163	22
Wisconsin	271	250	21	253	232	21	242	223	19
East North Central	1,105	998	107	1,026	925	101	991	892	99
Minnesota	221	203	18	206	188	18	203	187	16
Iowa	233	217	16	229	214	15	230	214	16
Missouri	225	208	17	217	202	15	217	202	15
North Dakota	68	60	8	60	53	7	57	50	7
South Dakota	77	71	6	71	65	6	69	64	5
Nebraska	127	118	9	128	117	11	122	114	8
Kansas	133	123	10	122	112	10	116	106	10
West North Central	1,084	1,000	84	1,033	951	82	1,014	937	77
Delaware-Maryland	50	37	13	48	36	12	46	33	13
Virginia	165	137	28	151	126	25	145	121	24
West Virginia	58	49	9	54	45	9	50	42	8
North Carolina	273	238	35	245	212	33	238	202	36
South Carolina	132	98	34	119	85	34	108	77	31
Georgia	150	114	36	129	96	33	121	87	34
Florida	121	52	69	130	45	85	116	44	72
South Atlantic	949	725	224	876	645	231	824	606	218
Kentucky	188	170	18	179	160	19	173	153	20
Tennessee	171	147	24	157	134	23	149	126	23
Alabama	102	86	16	82	69	13	81	67	14
Mississippi	162	134	28	132	106	26	127	103	24
East South Central	623	537	86	550	469	81	530	449	81
Arkansas	157	121	36	137	98	39	137	96	41
Louisiana	127	89	38	98	70	28	116	82	34
Oklahoma	163	151	12	148	136	12	145	133	12
Texas	309	237	72	270	196	74	308	215	93
West South Central	756	598	158	653	500	153	706	526	180
Montana	41	36	5	37	33	4	35	31	4
Idaho	43	37	6	45	38	7	43	37	6
Colorado	48	43	5	45	40	5	43	39	4
N.Mex.-Ariz.	69	29	40	69	27	42	59	25	34
Wyo.-Utah-Nev.	42	33	9	40	32	8	38	30	8
Mountain	243	178	65	236	170	66	218	162	56
Washington	82	69	13	84	65	19	75	59	16
Oregon	70	58	12	67	56	11	73	63	10
California	300	132	168	301	129	172	291	126	165
Pacific	452	259	193	452	250	202	439	248	191
UNITED STATES	5,709	4,677	1,032	5,269	4,252	1,017	5,135	4,140	995

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 1961,
December 1961 and January 1962

(Thousands of persons)

Region and State	Annual average			December 1961			January 1962		
	1961			Week of 24-30			Week of 21-27		
	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired
New England	143	88	55	102	72	30	99	72	27
New York	160	105	55	129	92	37	124	93	31
New Jersey	44	27	17	28	20	8	31	24	7
Pennsylvania	185	152	33	142	121	21	136	116	20
Middle Atlantic	389	284	105	299	233	66	291	233	58
Ohio	242	206	36	192	180	12	166	153	13
Indiana	213	187	26	181	167	14	167	158	9
Illinois	246	197	49	199	170	29	174	144	30
Michigan	217	175	42	172	149	23	161	140	21
Wisconsin	273	244	29	231	214	17	233	215	18
East North Central	1,191	1,009	182	975	880	95	901	810	91
Minnesota	262	225	37	180	168	12	191	177	14
Iowa	289	252	37	221	208	13	212	195	17
Missouri	269	232	37	215	200	15	199	184	15
North Dakota	87	70	17	58	51	7	54	48	6
South Dakota	89	78	11	67	62	5	67	62	5
Nebraska	157	132	25	122	112	10	119	111	8
Kansas	154	130	24	112	103	9	111	103	8
West North Central	1,307	1,119	188	975	904	71	953	880	73
Delaware-Maryland	68	45	23	46	34	12	42	31	11
Virginia	203	149	54	138	117	21	141	121	20
West Virginia	69	56	13	59	51	8	47	41	6
North Carolina	413	309	104	249	224	25	222	194	28
South Carolina	190	124	66	115	96	19	102	82	20
Georgia	175	127	48	103	84	19	94	75	19
Florida	104	46	58	93	35	58	96	40	56
South Atlantic	1,222	856	366	803	641	162	744	584	160
Kentucky	236	190	46	191	178	13	165	151	14
Tennessee	236	188	48	176	158	18	137	122	15
Alabama	142	109	33	95	82	13	73	62	11
Mississippi	246	182	64	135	110	25	111	96	15
East South Central	860	669	191	597	528	69	486	431	55
Arkansas	203	118	85	110	90	20	102	83	19
Louisiana	156	92	64	94	76	18	88	69	19
Oklahoma	165	129	36	118	108	10	130	122	8
Texas	444	250	194	290	201	89	252	188	64
West South Central	968	589	379	612	475	137	572	462	110
Montana	48	37	11	34	30	4	32	29	3
Idaho	68	48	20	43	37	6	39	35	4
Colorado	68	49	19	41	36	5	38	34	4
New Mexico-Arizona	85	31	54	90	30	60	62	25	37
Wyoming-Utah-Nevada	57	40	17	39	32	7	36	29	7
Mountain	326	205	121	247	165	82	207	152	55
Washington	111	74	37	67	57	10	66	55	11
Oregon	95	68	27	68	60	8	61	54	7
California	378	143	235	326	127	199	285	121	164
Pacific	584	285	299	461	244	217	412	230	182
UNITED STATES	6,990	5,104	1,886	5,071	4,142	929	4,665	3,854	811

Decrease in Farm Numbers Continues

The number of farms in the United States decreased from 4,105,000 in 1959 to 3,818,000 in 1961, a reduction of 7 percent in the 2-year period. This decrease in number of farms continues the downtrend which started slowly after 1935 and gained speed during the 1950's. Between 1950 and 1959 farm numbers in the then 48 States dropped from 5,648,000 to 4,097,000--down more than one-fourth. The decrease over the entire period from 1950 to 1962 is over one-third.

Many of these farms disappeared as operating units but their acreage was added to other places. The land in farms in 1961 at 1,169 million acres was only about 1 percent less than the 1959 total and only about 3 percent less than in 1950. The small decrease in land in farms reflects the importance of combinations into larger operating units, losses in the number of small farms generally, and the swift decline in sharecropper and tenant operations in some Southern areas. Suburban expansion, commercial forestry, wider highways and other non-farm uses also took land and eliminated farms. The estimates which summarize these changes in number of farms and land in farms from 1950 to 1962 for 48 States are shown in the table below. The estimates for a given year relate to the number of farms in operation during the year. The estimates for years 1954-1961 are based on the more restrictive farm definition used in the 1959 Census and fully described in reports of the 1959 Census of Agriculture. Estimates of number of farms for 1950 are as formerly published, while previously published estimates for 1951-53 were revised downward essentially in a linear manner to tie in with the new 1954 level.

Number of Farms and Land in Farms, U.S. 1950-62 1/

Year	Number of farms	Land in farms	Year	Number of farms	Land in farms
:	:	:(000 acres)	:	:	:(000 acres)
1950	: 5,647,800	1,202,019	1957	: 4,371,700	1,191,340
1951	: 5,427,600	1,203,500	1958	: 4,232,900	1,184,944
1952	: 5,197,500	1,204,930	1959	: 4,097,300	1,179,158
1953	: 4,983,600	1,205,740	1960	: 3,949,000	1,174,065
1954	: 4,798,200	1,206,355	1961	: 3,811,000	1,169,410
1955	: 4,653,800	1,201,900	1962	:	
1956	: 4,514,100	1,197,070	(Prel.):	3,688,100	1,165,355

1/ Excluding Alaska and Hawaii.

Estimates by States for 1959 through 1961, including Alaska and Hawaii are shown in the table on page 7. Estimates by States for 1950-59 will be shown in the near future in a separate publication, available upon request. A discussion of sources of data, effects of farm definition change, and Census comparison studies basic to the revised level of the estimates will be included in the forthcoming publication.

Number of Farms and Land in Farms by States and United States, 1959-1961

State	Number of farms			Land in Farms		
	1959	1960	1961	1959	1960	1961
				000 acres	000 acres	000 acres
Maine	20,000	19,000	18,400	3,500	3,400	3,350
New Hampshire .	7,500	7,000	6,600	1,300	1,250	1,220
Vermont	14,000	13,300	12,800	3,270	3,210	3,170
Massachusetts .	14,000	13,000	12,300	1,300	1,250	1,230
Rhode Island ..	1,700	1,600	1,500	148	145	140
Connecticut ...	10,000	9,400	8,900	1,140	1,100	1,070
New York	92,000	88,000	84,000	14,500	14,300	14,100
New Jersey	17,000	15,800	15,200	1,500	1,460	1,440
Pennsylvania ..	110,000	106,000	101,000	12,500	12,300	12,100
Ohio	154,000	149,000	144,000	19,400	19,200	19,000
Indiana	138,000	134,000	130,000	19,400	19,400	19,300
Illinois	164,000	159,000	155,000	30,900	30,700	30,600
Michigan	123,000	118,000	114,000	15,700	15,400	15,100
Wisconsin	142,000	138,000	136,000	22,400	22,200	22,100
Minnesota	160,000	156,000	154,000	32,500	32,400	32,400
Iowa	187,000	184,000	181,000	34,700	34,700	34,700
Missouri	184,000	180,000	175,000	34,800	34,700	34,600
North Dakota ..	57,000	56,000	55,000	42,200	42,100	42,100
South Dakota ..	59,600	58,400	57,300	45,400	45,400	45,400
Nebraska	94,000	93,000	90,000	48,300	48,200	48,200
Kansas	113,000	110,000	107,000	50,200	50,200	50,100
Delaware	5,700	5,600	5,500	800	800	790
Maryland	28,000	27,200	26,400	3,800	3,750	3,700
Virginia	109,000	105,000	100,000	13,700	13,500	13,400
West Virginia .	50,000	47,000	44,000	6,800	6,700	6,600
North Carolina :	220,000	212,000	205,000	18,000	17,900	17,600
South Carolina :	91,000	86,000	81,000	10,200	10,000	9,800
Georgia	121,000	112,000	105,000	22,600	22,000	21,400
Florida	51,000	50,000	48,000	17,500	17,400	17,000
Kentucky	167,000	161,000	155,000	18,200	18,000	17,800
Tennessee	175,000	169,000	164,000	17,000	16,800	16,600
Alabama	129,000	122,000	115,000	17,600	17,200	16,900
Mississippi ...	154,000	144,000	134,000	20,100	19,800	19,500
Arkansas	107,000	101,000	95,000	17,900	17,700	17,600
Louisiana	83,000	80,000	77,000	11,200	11,000	10,800
Oklahoma	107,000	103,000	99,000	37,500	37,400	37,400
Texas	252,000	240,000	232,000	154,000	154,000	154,000
Montana	32,400	32,000	31,600	66,600	66,700	66,800
Idaho	37,600	37,200	36,800	15,300	15,300	15,300
Wyoming	10,800	10,500	10,200	36,200	36,100	36,000
Colorado	38,000	37,000	36,000	41,000	41,000	41,000
New Mexico	19,000	18,200	17,400	51,900	51,800	51,800
Arizona	8,500	8,200	7,900	45,000	45,000	45,000
Utahh.....	19,800	19,000	18,200	13,600	13,600	13,600
Nevada	2,700	2,600	2,500	9,200	9,200	9,200
Washington	57,000	56,000	55,000	18,200	18,200	18,200
Oregon	48,000	47,000	46,500	21,200	21,200	21,200
California	112,000	108,000	104,000	39,000	39,000	39,000
48 States ...	4,097,300	3,949,000	3,811,000	1,179,158	1,174,065	1,169,410
Alaska	410	410	400	900	900	900
Hawaii	6,800	6,800	6,800	2,600	2,600	2,600
United States	4,104,510	3,956,210	3,818,200	1,182,658	1,177,565	1,172,910

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