

Farm Labor

Release:
February 10, 1964
3:00 P.M. (E.S.T.)

JANUARY WORK FEATURES LIVESTOCK CARE PREPARATIONS ADVANCE FOR NEW CROP SEASON

Mid-winter continued to dominate the work pace on many farms in the farm labor survey week of January 19-25 despite milder weather in the eastern half of the nation. With field work completed or crowded out by winter, attention centered on the work and care required to maintain growth rates and production of dairy cows, other livestock, and poultry.

The number of persons working on farms in the survey week is estimated at a total of 4,495,000. This is the smallest total for any month in over 50 years of record, and a decrease of 3 percent from a year earlier. Farm family members working on their home farms totaled 3,685,000 persons. This number, about 2 percent less than in late January last year, represented nearly four-fifths of the entire working force. The number of hired farm workers, at 810,000 persons, was 6 percent under a year earlier and a new low for any month. State comparisons on pages 2 and 3 show consistent decreases from last year in worker numbers and levels sharply below 5-year averages for the month.

Decreases in the number of family workers are closely associated with continued annual decreases in the number of farms. Between 1959 and 1963 the number of farms decreased almost one-sixth according to totals cited in a recent SRS report. The number of farms to be operated in 1964 is expected to be slightly under 3.5 million, a further decrease of about 3 percent. The estimates of family workers comprise (1) all farm operators who work even a small amount of time on their farms during the survey weeks; (2) other family members working 15 hours or more during the survey week without receiving cash wages. It can be seen that these standards allow some persons to be considered working even when their contribution is limited. But when sizable farms are absorbed by other units or farming is ended on small part-time places, the people living on these places no longer count in family worker totals.

Farm Chore Work Eased but Still Important

Many reports of farm work in mid-winter stress the place of "chores". Despite the many improvements in farm equipment and arrangements for feeding and care of livestock and poultry, the man who knows what to do remains essential. The total volume of chore work reportedly has been lessened, however, by the trend toward larger farm operating units with increased specialization on certain farm enterprises. Dairy herds are less numerous, but the average herd has more milk cows tended by more efficient and costlier equipment. Poultry enterprises of commercial size have continued to expand while farm flocks have become less and less noticeable around the typical farmstead.

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Farm employment and indexes, January 1964, with comparisons, United States

	: Annual : average : 1958-62 1/	: Annual : average : 1962	: Annual : average : 1963	: January : average : 1958-62 1/	: January : 20-26, : 1963	: January : 19-25, : 1964
FARM EMPLOYMENT						
(Thousands)						
Total	7,104	6,700	6,519	5,069	4,627	4,495
Family labor	5,197	4,873	4,736	4,136	3,765	3,685
Hired labor	1,907	1,827	1,783	933	862	810
INDEXES 2/						
(1910-14=100)						
Total	52	49	48	52	48	47
Family labor	51	48	47	52	47	46
Hired labor	56	54	52	56	52	49
(1957-59=100)						
Total	94	90	86	95	87	85
Family labor	94	88	86	95	87	85
Hired labor	97	93	91	97	90	85

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, 1964, United States

	: Annual : average : 1963	: January : average : 1958-62	: January : Jan. 1, : 1963	: Jan. 1, : 1964
FARM WAGE RATES				
Composite rate per hour 1/	\$ 0.880	\$ 0.881	\$ 0.948	\$ 0.962
Per month with house	206	190	205	209
Per month with board and room	159	150	161	163
Per week with board and room	37.50	34.25	36.25	37.25
Per week without board and room ...	48.50	45.25	48.00	48.00
Per day with house	5.70	5.30	5.70	6.00
Per day with board and room	6.90	6.20	6.60	6.80
Per day without board or room	7.10	6.50	6.80	7.00
Per hour with house94	.80	.88	.88
Per hour without board or room	1.05	1.05	1.13	1.14
INDEXES 2/				
(1910-14=100)	677	619	663	673
(1957-59=100)	116	106	114	115

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

2/ Indexes are adjusted for seasonal variation.

Workers on Farms, January 1964
(Thousands of persons)

Region and State	January Average			January 1963			January 1964		
	1958-62 1/			Week of 20-26			Week of 19-25		
	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired
Maine	26	19	7	23	17	6	21	16	5
N. H.	10	8	2	8	6	2	8	6	2
Vt.	24	19	5	22	17	5	20	16	4
Mass.	27	19	8	21	16	5	20	15	5
R. I.	3	2	1	3	2	1	2	1	1
Conn.	19	14	5	17	13	4	14	11	3
N. Eng.	109	81	28	94	71	23	85	65	20
N. Y.	130	98	32	116	87	29	106	82	24
N. J.	31	22	9	28	20	8	25	17	8
Pa.	152	130	22	127	110	17	119	104	15
M. Atl.	313	250	63	271	217	54	250	203	47
Ohio	177	163	14	158	145	13	151	140	11
Ind.	173	163	10	159	150	9	154	147	7
Ill.	182	152	30	170	142	28	164	139	25
Mich.	172	149	23	155	133	22	152	131	21
Wis.	244	227	17	220	205	15	214	199	15
E. N. Cent.	948	854	94	862	775	87	835	756	79
Minn.	201	187	14	191	179	12	193	182	11
Iowa	217	201	16	198	184	14	192	178	14
Mo.	209	195	14	196	183	13	198	185	13
N. Dak.	60	52	8	50	45	5	48	44	4
S. Dak.	69	54	5	61	57	4	62	58	4
Nebr.	123	115	8	115	108	7	114	105	9
Kans.	124	116	8	112	105	7	111	105	6
W. N. Cent.	1003	930	73	923	861	62	918	857	61
Del.	8	6	2	8	6	2	7	5	2
Md.	38	28	10	37	27	10	35	27	8
Va.	136	111	25	131	106	25	123	102	21
W. Va.	52	45	7	43	37	6	38	33	5
N. C.	237	209	28	221	192	29	213	189	24
S. C.	115	89	26	104	84	20	90	71	19
Ga.	111	90	21	89	70	19	84	62	22
Fla.	135	44	91	127	37	90	134	40	94
S. Atl.	832	622	210	760	559	201	724	529	195
Ky.	174	157	17	166	149	17	178	158	20
Tenn.	163	142	21	149	131	18	151	135	16
Ala.	87	72	15	76	65	11	78	66	12
Miss.	135	113	22	113	95	18	110	93	17
E. S. Cent.	559	484	75	504	440	64	517	452	65
Ark.	120	99	21	104	84	20	117	95	22
La.	98	77	21	90	74	16	82	64	18
Okla.	125	116	9	116	108	8	114	107	7
Tex.	289	218	71	264	197	67	250	192	58
W. S. Cent.	632	510	122	574	463	111	563	458	105
Mont.	36	31	5	35	30	5	34	29	5
Idaho	41	35	6	39	33	6	38	33	5
Wyo.	13	10	3	12	10	2	12	10	2
Colo.	43	36	7	40	34	6	37	32	5
N. Mex.	27	18	9	23	16	7	25	17	8
Ariz.	44	9	35	37	10	27	37	8	29
Utah	22	18	4	21	17	4	18	15	3
Nev.	3	2	1	3	2	1	3	2	1
Mount.	229	159	70	210	152	58	204	146	58
Wash.	76	63	13	64	52	12	67	52	15
Oreg.	63	54	9	64	54	10	60	51	9
Calif.	305	129	176	301	121	180	272	116	156
Pac.	444	246	198	429	227	202	399	219	180
U. S.	5069	4136	933	4627	3765	862	4495	3685	810

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

(Continued from page 1)

One aspect of the present season continues to add to winter chores on many farms in North Central States--shortage of well water. Electric pumps are of little help when the well is dry, and water hauling is one of the most onerous of chores. Weather in January generally was not severe on livestock, and each open week helped stock men save hay.

Selected Reported Farm Activities

Pruning of orchards and vineyards was active in January in California, Oregon, and Washington. Harvest of California oranges, lemons, avocados, and olives was slowed by heavy rains but could be expected to soon resume normal volume. Cotton harvest in California and Arizona was virtually completed. Potatoes were being planted in both States.

In Wyoming, shed lambing started on sheep ranches and was well underway in early areas in Idaho. In Colorado early calving had started. About 90 percent of Montana range livestock was receiving supplemental feed, near normal for the period. Texas goat shearing started.

Texas vegetables from winter areas moved in good volume, and watermelon planting started in the Falfurrios area. In Oklahoma and Arkansas open and dry weather has pushed field work ahead of last year. The dry and moderate weather in Kansas and Nebraska during much of January eased livestock feeding and care. Some plowing was resumed in Missouri.

Tobacco growers in Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and Maryland did much work stripping and marketing their valuable crops. Work also was starting on preparation of beds for 1964 crop plants.

Southeastern States and some South Central areas had a wet, cold January that hampered many field activities. A few potatoes were planted in the Baldwin County, Alabama, area. Louisiana tung nut harvest made slow progress but was about 80 percent completed by the month's end. Florida sugarcane harvest continued, however. Florida vegetable shipments were up sharply from December, and the harvest of Valencia oranges was increasing with good prospects.

On farms where field activity was not possible, the chore and maintenance work left ample time to figure on tax reports or other farm business and do some scheming on how to do things better or easier in 1964.

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OFFICIAL BUSINESS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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