

Farm Labor

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FINE OCTOBER WEATHER SPEEDS HARVESTS WORKER NUMBERS 7 PERCENT UNDER LAST YEAR

The Nation's farms claimed the work of 7,049,000 persons during the farm labor survey week of October 18-24, about 7 percent fewer than in the comparable period a year earlier. The downward trend in worker numbers dropped off most sharply for hired workers, who totaled 1,986,000 or 10 percent fewer than in late October of last year. Farm operators and other family workers totaled 5,063,000 persons--down 5 percent from a year earlier.

Harvests of corn, soybeans, and sugar beets were important jobs in Northern States, but cotton topped these crops in precedence through much of the South. Some tobacco was being prepared for market in important growing areas. Apple and grape harvests were being hurried to completion, and vegetable crops and citrus harvests continued in California, Florida, and Texas.

Tabular comparisons presented on page 4 of this report show the general nature of the decreases across the country. The reasons for the decreasing number of workers as indicated by comments of reporters vary from State to State, and are not easy to rank in importance in the complex farm work situations that shift rapidly with weather, crop conditions, labor supplies, market prices, and other factors. Outstanding is the growing adequacy of machinery and improvement of work methods. These were made increasingly effective this year by long stretches of dry, open weather.

The extent of the changes in worker numbers this year is shown most forcefully in the cumulative estimates for the first 10 months of the year. (Page 5). Total worker numbers in the first 10 months averaged 6 percent under last year and 13 percent under the 1958-62 average. The number of hired workers this year averaged 10 percent less than last year and 15 percent under the 1958-62 average for January-October.

Wage Rates for Hand Harvesting Cotton Hold Even

Cotton harvesting has used smaller numbers of hand pickers in each recent season, according to reports from most important producing sections. This year the November 1 reports of wage rates paid for harvesting 100 pounds of seed cotton show a United States average of \$2.75 per cwt. This is 5 cents per cwt. above a year earlier. Hand harvest rates include rates for boll snapping on the basis of equivalent seed cotton. The summary table on page 7 shows comparable averages for 20 years by important cotton States, with this year's rates ranging from \$2.45 per cwt. in Texas to \$3.40 in North Carolina and Arizona.

It is notable that the U.S. average of cotton harvesting wage rates has increased very little since 1947. During the 5 years 1959-63 they averaged \$2.70, 10 cents per cwt. more than in the 5-year period of a decade earlier. The U.S.

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annual average of all cash farm wage rates for 1959-63 was up 29 percent over the 1949-53 average, with increases of this extent generally reported throughout the South as well as other regions. The mechanical cotton picker reduced the pressure for hired workers, and, even when not moving across the white-capped fields, helped keep wage rates from rising. With high per acre yields of recent years, however, workers' daily earnings at piece rates may have averaged somewhat higher than in earlier years.

October Weather Beautiful but SO DRY!

Reporters across the Nation commented on beautiful October weather. It was not only in "Oklahoma" that the buoyant singing line "Oh What a Beautiful Morning, Oh, What a Wonderful Day" seemed to fit as Indian summer smiled on fields and groves. The long periods favorable for field work made for full use of available work power whether from people or equipment. However, the scanty rainfall for the month brought hazards to fall grain seedings in some sections and concern over water supplies for some farms. Some North Central States had one of the driest Octobers of record--notably in Illinois, driest since 1890.

In the Northern States the late-maturing crops were being cleared from fields. In Montana, the Dakotas, and Minnesota, potato digging and sugar beet harvesting were nearing completion. Livestock ranchers in Mountain States were well along with the job of moving cattle and sheep from high summer ranges to winter grounds and with the pay-off job of sorting and shipping.

In Pacific Coast States, growers concentrated on finishing fruit harvests. Apple picking was nearly complete in Washington after a busy season in which pickers reportedly were none too plentiful. Oregon's Hood River apple harvest was nearly done. Klamath potatoes were nearly finished as were potatoes in California's Tule Lake district just across the State line.

California harvests still moved at high volume. Many table grapes were moving from the Southern San Joaquin Valley but the peak of grape tonnage to wineries had passed. Specialties of certain areas being actively harvested included almonds, walnuts, olives, dates, persimmons, avocados, and pomegranates. Field crop harvests in the State included the near finish of rice and rapid progress in cotton, sugar beets, grain sorghum, and dry beans. Fall cantaloupe harvest was at a peak in the Imperial Valley and harvests of market vegetables continued in a number of areas at different stages. The huge deliveries of over three million tons of tomatoes for processing represented the efforts of thousands of workers and a considerable number of tomato harvesting machines. Agricultural engineers, plant breeders, and leading growers are working together to reduce the back-breaking labor of harvesting this important crop.

Most Cornbelt farmers had a busy week. Some rode corn pickers as they chewed across the fields of standing stalks; others hauled loads of shining yellow ears to storage. By the end of October the harvest of corn for grain was passing the half-way point in most Cornbelt States, with nearly three-fourth completion reached in Illinois. Nebraska harvesting was over a third finished, somewhat less advanced than usual.

Soybean harvest was further advanced than corn after favorable weather had prevailed in all main production areas. By the end of October, harvest was almost over in the Cornbelt. In the South maturity was less advanced, but combining in Arkansas and Mississippi was from one-fifth to one-third completed.

In mid-Atlantic and New England States the survey week was cold for the date; traces of wet snow and heavy rain fell in New England. New York harvests of grain corn and dry beans were active. Potato digging neared completion upstate and continued on Long Island. Picking late season apples continued in the Lake Ontario region but was nearly finished in the Hudson Valley. Grape harvest was active in the Chautauqua-Erie production area. Continued dry weather in much of Pennsylvania and New Jersey aided rapid harvests of grain and soybeans and brought potato digging toward a close. New Jersey cranberry harvest also was tapering off.

Cotton harvest made good progress in most producing States but still lagged behind usual stage for the date in Texas and Oklahoma where much acreage needed sharp frosts to defoliate late maturing plants. For the U.S. about 58.8 percent of the crop was ginned to November 1, compared with 65.8 percent last year.

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

	: Annual : average : 1958-62 <u>1/</u>	: Annual: : average : 1962	: Annual: : average : 1963	: October : average : 1958-62 <u>1/</u>	: Oct. : 20-26, : 1963	: Oct. : 18-24, : 1964
FARM EMPLOYMENT						
(Thousands)						
Total	7,104	6,700	6,518	8,245	7,553	7,049
Family labor	5,197	4,873	4,738	5,861	5,354	5,063
Hired labor	1,907	1,827	1,780	2,384	2,199	1,986
INDEXES <u>2/</u>						
(1910-14=100)						
Total	52	49	48	52	48	45
Family	51	48	47	51	47	44
Hired labor	56	54	52	56	51	46
(1957-59=100)						
Total	94	90	86	95	87	81
Family labor	94	88	86	94	86	81
Hired labor	97	93	91	97	89	81

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, October 1, 1964, United States

	: Annual : average : 1963	: October : average : 1958-62	: October 1, : 1963	: October 1, : 1964
FARM WAGE RATES				
Composite rate per hour <u>1/</u>	\$ 0.880	\$ 0.826	\$ 0.898	\$ 0.915
Per month with house	206	186	204	206
Per month with board and room ...	159	146	159	161
Per week with board and room	37.50	35.50	38.25	38.00
Per week without board and room...	48.50	43.50	47.75	47.25
Per day with house	5.70	5.40	5.80	6.00
Per day with board and room	6.90	6.20	6.80	6.90
Per day without board or room ...	7.10	6.90	7.50	7.60
Per hour with house94	1.00	1.07	1.09
Per hour without board or room ...	1.05	.91	.99	1.01
INDEXES <u>2/</u>				
(1910-14=100)	677	620	681	694
(1957-59=100)	116	107	117	119

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

2/ Indexes are adjusted for seasonal variation.

Workers on Farms, October 1964 1/

(Thousands of persons)

State and Region	October average			October 1963			October 1964		
	1958-62			Week of 20-26			Week of 18-24		
	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired
Maine	37	21	16	30	20	10	28	21	7
N.H.	13	9	4	10	7	3	9	7	2
Vt.	27	20	7	23	18	5	22	18	4
Mass.	39	22	17	30	19	11	27	17	10
R.I.	5	3	2	2	1	1	3	2	1
Conn.	27	17	10	21	14	7	21	14	7
N.Eng.	148	92	56	116	79	37	110	79	31
N.Y.	176	114	62	151	103	48	137	93	44
N.J.	48	26	22	35	21	14	37	22	15
Pa.	201	162	39	165	135	30	154	128	26
M. Atl.	425	302	123	351	259	92	328	243	85
Ohio	259	218	41	236	195	41	223	188	35
Ind.	221	185	36	219	174	45	193	161	32
Ill.	269	216	53	272	216	56	235	190	45
Mich.	213	167	46	202	158	44	184	142	42
Wis.	267	234	33	255	224	31	242	213	29
E.N. Cent.	1229	1020	209	1184	967	217	1077	894	183
Minn.	258	227	31	255	229	26	254	229	25
Iowa	312	273	39	319	277	42	296	255	41
Mo.	319	255	64	311	253	58	283	233	50
N. Dak.	91	72	19	81	67	14	76	62	14
S. Dak.	95	84	11	91	80	11	85	76	9
Nebr.	163	140	23	157	135	22	145	127	18
Kans.	172	150	22	151	135	16	140	125	15
W.N. Cent.	1410	1201	209	1365	1176	189	1279	1107	172
DeI.	13	8	5	11	7	4	12	7	5
Md.	59	40	19	54	39	15	49	36	13
Va.	197	146	51	199	144	55	187	134	53
W. Va.	74	63	11	61	52	9	56	49	7
N.C.	445	356	89	439	335	104	397	300	97
S.C.	213	155	58	182	129	53	162	116	46
Ga.	242	177	65	202	152	50	223	160	63
Fla.	120	50	70	118	48	70	113	47	66
S. Atl.	1363	995	368	1266	906	360	1199	849	350
Ky.	310	255	55	300	246	54	274	226	48
Tenn.	407	314	93	360	264	96	354	274	80
Ala.	278	206	72	243	175	68	230	170	60
Miss.	379	243	136	308	194	114	297	197	100
E.S. Cent.	1374	1018	356	1211	879	332	1155	867	288
Ark.	298	163	135	255	132	123	227	119	108
La.	220	119	101	195	98	97	189	96	93
Okla.	192	139	53	163	125	38	145	114	31
Texas	544	281	263	459	232	227	438	226	212
W.S. Cent.	1254	702	552	1072	587	485	999	555	444
Mont.	51	40	11	49	39	10	44	36	8
Idaho	77	54	23	81	58	23	80	58	22
Wyo.	21	14	7	21	14	7	19	12	7
Colo.	82	54	28	77	49	28	67	48	19
N. Mex.	60	30	30	56	26	30	48	23	25
Ariz.	59	11	48	42	9	33	42	9	33
Utah	40	27	13	33	24	9	33	24	9
Nev.	6	3	3	6	3	3	6	3	3
Mount.	396	233	163	365	222	143	339	213	126
Wash.	105	71	34	110	71	39	108	65	43
Oreg.	87	67	20	87	64	23	88	62	26
Calif.	454	160	294	426	144	282	367	129	238
Pac.	646	298	348	623	279	344	563	256	307
U.S.	8245	5861	2384	7553	5354	2199	7049	5063	1986

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 averages 1963
August and September 1964 1/

State and Region	(Thousands of persons)								
	Annual Average 1963			August 1964			September 1964		
	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired
Maine	32	20	12	37	22	15	60	22	38
N.H.	10	7	3	11	7	4	11	7	4
Vt.	24	18	6	26	21	5	25	19	6
Mass.	30	18	12	37	19	18	33	18	15
R.I.	3	2	1	3	2	1	3	2	1
Conn.	22	14	8	33	17	16	23	16	7
N.Eng.	121	79	42	147	88	59	155	84	71
N.Y.	143	96	47	156	98	58	164	101	63
N.J.	39	21	18	50	20	30	43	21	22
Pa.	162	134	28	183	149	34	169	138	31
M. Atl.	344	251	93	389	267	122	376	260	116
Ohio	217	183	34	213	171	42	208	166	42
Ind.	199	173	26	185	160	25	183	157	26
Ill.	235	187	48	230	185	45	223	180	43
Mich.	206	165	41	218	164	54	191	150	41
Wis.	258	230	28	271	239	32	261	224	37
E.N. Cent.	1115	938	177	1117	919	198	1066	877	189
Minn.	256	220	36	285	237	48	257	222	35
Iowa	283	243	40	299	248	51	274	238	36
Mo.	256	220	36	288	243	45	306	252	54
N. Dak.	83	67	16	114	83	31	93	76	17
S. Dak.	87	76	11	95	80	15	89	78	11
Nebr.	144	122	22	155	128	27	136	116	20
Kans.	149	126	23	166	131	35	164	140	24
W.N. Cent.	1258	1074	184	1402	1150	252	1319	1122	197
Del.	12	7	5	14	8	6	13	7	6
Md.	54	37	17	66	42	24	55	39	16
Va.	170	119	51	198	126	72	186	127	59
W.Va.	57	47	10	61	52	9	59	49	10
N.C.	407	291	116	620	362	258	458	343	115
S.C.	162	108	54	187	128	59	182	123	59
Ga.	170	124	46	192	134	58	228	163	65
Fla.	121	44	77	83	38	45	107	55	52
S. Atl.	1153	777	376	1421	890	531	1288	906	382
Ky.	238	185	53	276	190	86	262	209	53
Tenn.	235	178	57	232	176	56	300	231	69
Ala.	136	103	33	104	83	21	205	152	53
Miss.	211	146	65	211	155	56	317	197	120
E.S. Cent.	820	612	208	823	604	219	1084	789	295
Ark.	190	106	84	184	90	94	206	112	94
La.	141	82	59	171	81	90	225	120	105
Okla.	144	118	26	116	92	24	126	102	24
Texas	389	241	148	426	236	190	391	215	176
W.S. Cent.	864	547	317	897	499	398	948	549	399
Mont.	48	36	12	56	39	17	52	39	13
Idaho	67	47	20	90	55	35	82	56	26
Wyo.	19	13	6	23	14	9	23	14	9
Colo.	62	45	17	72	53	19	70	46	24
N.Mex.	34	20	14	33	17	16	36	21	15
Ariz.	39	9	30	32	8	24	37	9	28
Utah	31	22	9	40	26	14	41	28	13
Nev.	5	3	2	7	3	4	7	3	4
Mount.	305	195	110	353	215	138	348	216	132
Wash.	111	72	39	134	77	57	111	72	39
Oreg.	93	64	29	126	66	60	98	66	32
Calif.	334	129	205	350	125	225	418	136	282
Pac.	538	265	273	610	268	342	627	274	353
U.S.	6518	4738	1780	7159	4900	2259	7211	5077	2134

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

Workers on farms: Average January through October 1964 1/

(Thousands of persons)

State and Region	January through Oct. Ave. 1958-62			January through Oct. 1963			January through Oct. 1964		
	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired
Maine	37	22	15	34	20	14	32	20	12
N.H.	13	9	4	11	8	3	11	8	3
Vt.	29	22	7	24	18	6	22	17	5
Mass.	39	24	15	31	19	12	30	18	12
R.I.	4	3	1	3	2	1	3	2	1
Conn.	27	17	10	24	15	9	23	14	9
N.Eng.	149	97	52	127	82	45	121	79	42
N.Y.	170	109	61	148	97	51	135	90	45
N.J.	47	26	21	42	22	20	40	20	20
Pa.	201	163	38	168	138	30	159	133	26
M.Atl.	418	298	120	358	257	101	334	243	91
Ohio	246	206	40	222	184	38	209	178	31
Ind.	225	196	29	205	177	28	191	169	22
Ill.	253	201	52	242	190	52	224	180	44
Mich.	228	184	44	215	170	45	203	161	42
Wisc.	292	260	32	265	235	30	251	225	26
E.N.Cent.	1244	1047	197	1149	956	193	1078	913	165
Minn.	284	240	44	269	228	41	262	225	37
Iowa	300	258	42	293	249	44	277	239	38
Mo.	285	240	45	267	226	41	258	222	36
N.Dak.	98	76	22	88	70	18	83	67	16
S.Dak.	97	84	13	90	78	12	85	75	10
Nebr.	162	136	26	149	125	24	142	121	21
Kans.	168	140	28	155	130	25	152	127	25
W.N.Cent.	1394	1174	220	1311	1106	205	1259	1076	183
Del.	14	8	6	12	7	5	10	6	4
Md.	59	39	20	56	38	18	52	36	16
Va.	198	139	59	178	122	56	168	119	49
W.Va.	72	59	13	60	49	11	55	45	10
N.C.	444	327	117	434	305	129	394	278	116
S.C.	203	133	70	172	113	59	154	104	50
Ga.	190	138	52	178	129	49	161	114	47
Fla.	125	50	75	120	45	75	118	44	74
S.Atl.	1305	893	412	1210	808	402	1112	746	366
Ky.	242	190	52	240	182	58	233	181	52
Tenn.	252	192	60	239	177	62	229	177	52
Ala.	157	119	38	140	105	35	132	103	29
Miss.	258	187	71	222	152	70	213	149	64
E.S.Cent.	909	688	221	841	616	225	807	610	197
Ark.	222	126	96	204	109	95	178	100	78
La.	161	95	66	149	84	65	141	80	61
Okla.	164	129	35	148	120	28	133	112	21
Texas	438	264	174	407	247	160	370	228	142
W.S.Cent.	985	614	371	908	560	348	822	520	302
Mont.	53	39	14	51	37	14	48	36	12
Idaho	73	50	23	71	49	22	70	48	22
Wyoming	21	14	7	21	14	7	20	13	7
Colorado	71	51	20	65	46	19	60	45	15
N.Mex.	39	22	17	34	20	14	32	19	13
Ariz.	45	10	35	38	9	29	37	8	29
Utah	36	25	11	33	23	10	32	22	10
Nev.	5	3	2	5	3	2	5	3	2
Mount.	343	214	129	318	201	117	304	194	110
Wash.	124	80	44	119	76	43	114	73	41
Oreg.	101	68	33	100	65	35	99	65	34
Calif.	380	146	234	345	132	213	324	125	199
Pac.	605	294	311	564	273	291	537	263	274
U. S.	7352	5319	2033	6786	4859	1927	6374	4644	1730

1/ Average number during survey week of each month.

Average rates for hand harvesting 100 pounds of seed cotton, 1945-64 1/2

State	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964
	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.
Mo.	2.05	2.80	3.10	3.75	2.95	3.00	3.10	3.85	3.25	3.45	3.40	3.30	3.00	3.15	3.35	3.10	3.00	3.10	3.10	3.10
Va.	2.20	2.70	2.75	2.85	2.55	2.90	3.05	3.20	3.00	2.90	2.90	2.95	2.95	2.85	2.95	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.05
N.C.	2.30	2.85	2.95	3.10	2.70	2.85	3.35	3.50	3.35	3.15	3.25	3.40	3.15	3.20	3.40	3.35	3.40	3.40	3.35	3.40
S.C.	1.75	2.25	2.25	2.50	2.25	2.35	2.85	3.00	2.75	2.45	2.50	2.60	2.45	2.45	2.70	2.70	2.75	2.75	2.70	2.70
Ca.	1.70	2.30	2.35	2.45	2.20	2.45	3.00	3.05	2.90	2.65	2.75	2.80	2.65	2.65	2.85	2.95	2.80	2.80	2.85	2.90
Fla.	1.75	2.30	2.30	2.45	2.20	2.45	3.30	3.15	3.05	3.05	3.25	3.15	2.90	2.95	3.05	3.20	3.10	3.00	3.10	3.00
Tenn.	1.95	2.50	2.60	2.95	2.75	2.70	2.80	3.15	2.75	2.75	2.95	2.75	2.80	2.75	3.15	2.95	2.90	2.90	2.95	3.00
Ala.	1.70	2.40	2.25	2.50	2.10	2.30	2.65	2.70	2.65	2.40	2.60	2.60	2.55	2.50	2.75	2.70	2.60	2.65	2.70	2.75
Miss.	1.95	2.30	2.60	3.25	2.15	2.75	2.80	2.95	2.80	2.55	2.70	2.55	2.50	2.50	2.75	2.60	2.55	2.50	2.55	2.50
Ark.	2.00	2.60	2.80	3.25	2.60	2.85	2.90	3.20	2.90	2.95	3.00	2.85	2.80	2.85	3.10	2.85	2.80	2.90	2.80	2.85
La.	1.80	2.10	2.40	2.80	2.50	2.60	3.05	2.95	2.75	2.50	2.65	2.65	2.60	2.50	2.65	2.60	2.60	2.60	2.60	2.50
Okla.	1.90	2.60	2.60	2.65	2.35	2.65	2.90	2.85	2.85	2.85	2.80	2.55	2.50	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.70	2.80	2.80	2.70
Texas	1.95	2.50	2.75	2.65	2.65	2.45	3.00	2.90	2.65	2.55	2.55	2.35	2.35	2.45	2.45	2.40	2.35	2.50	2.45	2.45
N.Mex.	1.95	2.60	2.60	2.50	2.10	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.35	2.35	2.30	2.30	2.35	2.25	2.35	2.35	2.50	2.50	2.70
Ariz.	2.30	2.60	2.60	3.00	2.85	3.10	3.10	3.35	3.00	3.10	3.25	3.10	3.15	3.25	3.25	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.40
Calif.	2.25	2.90	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.45	3.70	3.60	3.00	3.00	3.15	3.20	3.20	3.25	3.20	3.15	3.20	3.20	3.20	3.30
U. S.	1.93	2.50	2.65	2.90	2.55	2.65	3.00	3.05	2.80	2.70	2.75	2.65	2.60	2.65	2.80	2.70	2.65	2.70	2.70	2.75

1/2 Reported as of November 1. Includes boll snapping, on basis of equivalent seed cotton.

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