

Farm Labor

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Small Work Force Adequate for Fall Harvests Dry Late October Speeds Work

October worker numbers on the Nation's farms continued at sharply lower levels than in any recent year. The total of 6,387,000 persons working during the survey week of October 24-30 was 9 percent less than a year earlier. Decreases were reported in almost all States, in both family and hired workers, as compared with late October of last year. The 4,637,000 farm family members included as farm workers was 8 percent below last year. The 1,750,000 hired workers working on farms was 12 percent below last year. This is a new low for the month for both family and hired workers.

The average number of persons doing farm work during the first 10 months in 1965 has been almost a tenth smaller than last year. In reporting wage rates for October 1, it was noted that this year's increase in October wage rates was highest since the Korean War year of 1951. Compared with that year the working forces on farms in 1965 to date have been a fifth lower. Crop production is at a record high level; increases in crops that are highly mechanized have offset any reductions made in other crops. Labor has been closely utilized in the face of rising wage rates and widely publicized concern over local shortages of harvest labor for certain crops, chiefly vegetables and fruits. Tobacco acreage this year is nearly a tenth under 1964 and while the cotton crop is only slightly smaller, machine harvest is accounting for a larger part of the crop than ever before.

Farm Hours Lengthen in Fine Fall Weather

The Weather Bureau of the Department of Commerce recently reported that the last week of October was the driest week of the year over most of the Nation. Crop-weather reports issued by many states were studded with superlatives, stressing beautiful weather, absence of rain, and near-ideal harvesting conditions. It is not surprising, then, to see average farm work hours lengthen. The average hours of farm work for farm operators on all reporting farms during the week of October 24-30 was 46.5 hours - nearly 2 hours longer than in the September survey week when rainy weather bogged down field work in so many sections. The increase was most notable in Central States where large acreages of corn and soybeans remained to be picked or combined. Farm operators in West North Central States averaged about 54 hours per week - over 5 hours longer than in the rainy September week.

Farm family members included as farm workers averaged 32.7 hours in the survey week, up only slightly over September. Hired farm workers averaged 35.7 hours

per week - 2.4 hours longer than in the September week. The lower averages for hired workers than for farm operators are caused largely by the inclusion of workers hired for short periods as well as regular employees. The average hours per week for all workers, family and hired, was 39.7 hours, compared with 37.9 hours in the September survey.

Harvest Final Stretch Reached

This year's crops have been a little slower in maturing than last year's and late summer temperatures and some late rains kept crop and field conditions unfavorable for early or speedy harvest. However, with a period of drying late October weather, farmers were ready to move into the final harvest stretch. Combining of soybeans, although later than last year, was about four-fifths completed in the seven leading producing States by the end of October.

Corn harvest has lagged behind last year because of high moisture content of the grain and soft fields in major parts of the Corn Belt. However, fast progress in November is expected when conditions are right for the waiting machines.

Cotton harvest was most advanced in the southeast where picking in October reached 90 percent completion in South Carolina. This work was about 85 percent completed in Mississippi and Louisiana, and 80 percent in Arkansas and Alabama. Over 60 percent of the crop was still to be harvested in the Southern Great Plains and the major part remained in Arizona and California. From here on this is largely a machine job. However, there are many fields where hand-pickers can be used to advantage, if available. For the United States about 59 percent of the crop was ginned to November 1, compared with 59.8 last year and the 1959-63 average of 62.8 percent.

Rates for hand-picking cotton are not published this year in the November issue of FARM LABOR as in past years. Reporters were not asked to supply locality wage rates for cotton. It is notable that rates for hand-picking showed little increase from 1960 to 1964 and, in fact, averaged lower than the peak reached in 1952, before machines so widely dominated the harvest.

Passing of Harvest Peaks Eases Labor Demand

During October many producers of potatoes, vegetables, and fruits could relax a bit after the passing of harvest peaks with critical demand for labor. The California canning tomato crop was nearing final stages after successful harvest of good late-season volume. Harvesting of the State's huge grape crop from nearly a half-million acres was almost nine-tenths completed. Some Florida vegetable fields were flooded by torrential rains.

Sugarcane harvest was starting in Florida and gaining momentum in Louisiana where about a tenth of the crop was harvested.

Farm employment and indexes, October 1965, with comparisons, United States

	: Annual : average <u>1/</u> : 1959-63	: Annual : average <u>1/</u> : 1964	: October : average <u>1/</u> : 1959-63	: October : 18-24, : 1964	: October : 24-30, : 1965
FARM EMPLOYMENT					
(Thousands)					
Total	6,907	6,110	8,004	7,044	6,387
Family labor	5,040	4,506	5,691	5,057	4,637
Hired labor	1,867	1,604	2,313	1,987	1,750
INDEXES <u>2/</u>					
(1910-14=100)					
Total	51	45	51	45	40
Family labor	50	44	49	44	40
Hired labor	55	47	54	47	41
(1957-59=100)					
Total	92	82	92	81	73
Family labor	91	82	91	81	74
Hired labor	95	82	94	81	71

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, 1965, United States

	: Annual : average : 1964	: October : average : 1959-63	: October 1, : 1964	: October 1, : 1965
FARM WAGE RATES				
Composite rate per hour <u>1/</u>	\$ 0.904	\$ 0.847	\$ 0.915	\$ 0.984
Per month with house	212	192	206	220
Per month with board and room ..	162	150	161	172
Per week with board and room ...	38.50	36.25	38.00	40.25
Per week without board or room :	49.50	44.75	47.25	50.25
Per day with house	5.90	5.50	6.00	6.40
Per day with board and room	7.10	6.40	6.90	7.20
Per day without board or room ..	7.30	7.10	7.60	8.00
Per hour with house97	1.02	1.09	1.16
Per hour without board or room ..	1.08	.93	1.01	1.09
INDEXES <u>2/</u>				
(1910-14=100)	695	638	694	746
(1957-59=100)	119	110	119	128

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

2/ Indexes are adjusted for seasonal variation.

Workers on Farms, October 1965

State and division	(Thousands of persons)								
	October average 1959-63 1/			October 1964 Week of 18-24			October 1965 Week of 24-30		
	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired
Maine	30	20	10	28	21	7	27	20	7
N. H.	11	8	3	9	7	2	9	7	2
Vt.	26	20	6	22	18	4	21	17	4
Mass.	36	20	16	28	17	11	26	16	10
R. I.	5	3	2	3	2	1	3	2	1
Conn.	25	16	9	20	14	6	18	12	6
N. Eng.	133	87	46	110	79	31	104	74	30
N. Y.	167	110	57	137	93	44	133	91	42
N. J.	45	25	20	37	22	15	33	19	14
Pa.	190	154	36	154	128	26	139	116	23
M. Atl.	402	289	113	328	243	85	305	226	79
Ohio	251	211	40	223	188	35	189	164	25
Ind.	217	180	37	193	161	32	177	152	25
Ill.	266	213	53	235	190	45	224	182	42
Mich.	208	163	45	184	142	42	170	139	31
Wisc.	260	228	32	242	213	29	218	193	25
E. N. Cent.	1202	995	207	1077	894	183	978	830	148
Minn.	255	226	29	251	227	24	229	203	26
Iowa	312	273	39	293	253	40	268	234	34
Mo.	313	252	61	283	233	50	254	213	41
N. Dak.	87	70	17	76	62	14	80	63	17
S. Dak.	94	83	11	85	76	9	79	70	9
Nebr.	161	138	23	145	127	18	129	115	14
Kans.	166	145	21	140	125	15	137	122	15
W. N. Cent.	1388	1187	201	1273	1103	170	1176	1020	156
Del.	13	8	5	11	7	4	11	7	4
Md.	57	39	18	49	36	13	46	34	12
Va.	197	145	52	187	134	53	161	116	45
W. Va.	70	60	10	56	49	7	49	43	6
N. C.	439	349	90	397	300	97	335	256	79
S. C.	206	150	56	162	116	46	146	106	40
Ca.	229	168	61	221	158	63	188	144	44
Fla.	118	49	69	126	47	79	112	45	67
S. Atl.	1329	968	361	1209	847	362	1048	751	297
Ky.	305	250	55	274	226	48	270	222	48
Tenn.	396	302	94	354	274	80	285	225	60
Ala.	267	196	71	227	170	57	191	155	36
Miss.	353	225	128	297	197	100	277	175	102
E. S. Cent.	1321	973	348	1152	867	285	1023	777	246
Ark.	285	154	131	227	119	108	204	108	96
La.	213	114	99	189	96	93	184	91	93
Okla.	183	134	49	145	114	31	122	100	22
Texas	528	269	259	438	226	212	424	230	194
W. S. Cent.	1209	671	538	999	555	444	934	529	405
Mont.	50	39	11	44	36	8	46	37	9
Idaho	78	55	23	80	58	22	69	51	18
Wyo.	21	14	7	19	12	7	17	11	6
Colo.	81	53	28	67	48	19	63	42	21
N. Mex.	57	28	29	48	23	25	42	22	20
Ariz.	51	10	41	42	9	33	38	8	30
Utah	37	26	11	33	24	9	30	19	11
Nev.	6	3	3	6	3	3	6	3	3
Mount.	381	228	153	339	213	126	311	193	118
Wash.	105	70	35	108	65	43	81	62	19
Oreg.	87	67	20	82	62	20	72	55	17
Calif.	447	156	291	367	129	238	355	120	235
Pac.	639	293	346	557	256	301	508	237	271
U. S.	8004	5691	2313	7044	5057	1987	6387	4637	1750

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 1965 1/
(Thousands of persons)

State and division	January through Oct. : Av. 1959-63			January through Oct. : 1964			January through Oct. : 1965		
	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired
Maine	34	21	13	33	20	13	30	20	10
N. H.	12	9	3	10	7	3	10	7	3
Vt.	27	20	7	23	18	5	22	17	5
Mass.	37	22	15	29	18	11	27	16	11
R. I.	4	3	1	3	2	1	3	2	1
Conn.	25	16	9	23	14	9	22	13	9
N. Eng.	139	91	48	121	79	42	114	75	39
N. Y.	163	105	58	135	90	45	123	83	40
N. J.	45	25	20	40	20	20	36	17	19
Pa.	190	155	35	159	133	26	142	119	23
M. Atl.	398	285	113	334	243	91	301	219	82
Ohio	239	200	39	209	178	31	188	162	26
Ind.	218	190	28	191	169	22	171	151	20
Ill.	248	196	52	225	181	44	203	166	37
Mich.	222	178	44	202	161	41	177	143	34
Wisc.	282	251	31	254	226	28	237	212	25
E. N. Cent.	1209	1015	194	1081	915	166	976	834	142
Minn.	278	235	43	261	224	37	239	203	36
Iowa	299	256	43	275	237	38	256	220	36
Mo.	277	235	42	258	222	36	233	201	32
N. Dak.	95	74	21	83	67	16	80	63	17
S. Dak.	93	81	12	85	75	10	77	68	9
Nebr.	160	134	26	142	121	21	131	112	19
Kans.	163	136	27	152	127	25	140	118	22
W. N. Cent.	1365	1151	214	1256	1073	183	1156	985	171
Del.	14	8	6	10	6	4	10	6	4
Md.	59	39	20	52	36	16	49	34	15
Va.	190	133	57	169	120	49	152	107	45
W. Va.	69	56	13	55	45	10	51	42	9
N. C.	439	321	118	394	278	116	360	250	110
S. C.	194	127	67	154	104	50	131	85	46
Ga.	184	133	51	159	112	47	144	105	39
Fla.	121	47	74	117	44	73	122	43	79
S. Atl.	1270	864	406	1110	745	365	1019	672	347
Ky.	241	188	53	233	181	52	212	167	45
Tenn.	248	188	60	229	177	52	199	156	43
Ala.	151	113	38	134	103	31	124	101	23
Miss.	244	173	71	213	149	64	190	128	62
E. S. Cent.	884	662	222	809	610	199	725	552	173
Ark.	214	120	94	178	100	78	162	88	74
La.	159	93	66	141	80	61	128	72	56
Okla.	159	126	33	133	112	21	121	101	20
Texas	432	257	175	370	228	142	317	197	120
W. S. Cent.	964	596	368	822	520	302	728	458	270
Mont.	52	38	14	48	36	12	46	35	11
Idaho	71	49	22	70	48	22	67	47	20
Wyo.	21	14	7	20	13	7	18	11	7
Colo.	69	49	20	60	45	15	54	39	15
N. Mex.	38	22	16	32	19	13	28	16	12
Ariz.	42	10	32	38	8	30	36	8	28
Utah	36	25	11	32	22	10	29	20	9
Nev.	5	3	2	5	3	2	6	3	3
Mount.	334	210	124	305	194	111	284	179	105
Wash.	123	79	44	114	73	41	100	66	34
Oreg.	100	67	33	100	65	35	92	60	32
Calif.	373	143	230	324	125	199	309	115	194
Pac.	596	289	307	538	263	275	501	241	260
U. S.	7159	5163	1996	6376	4642	1734	5804	4215	1589

1/ Average number during survey week of each month.

Farm Work: Weekly Hours Worked Per Worker

State and division	Average for reporting farms - week of October 24-30, 1965				
	Farm Operator	Other Family 1/ Members	All Family 1/	Hired Workers	All Workers 1/
	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours
Maine	51.9	30.0	45.2	34.4	41.3
N.H.	58.0	34.6	53.0	39.1	48.0
Vt.	62.7	31.6	52.6	46.6	50.5
Mass.	60.8	31.3	50.6	45.7	48.8
R.I.	40.8	32.0	39.5	41.3	40.2
Conn.	53.1	37.3	47.4	37.7	44.2
N.Eng.	56.6	32.2	48.9	41.0	46.1
N.Y.	61.8	31.6	50.9	41.4	47.9
N.J.	48.2	34.2	44.0	43.4	43.8
Pa.	53.9	32.4	46.5	33.3	43.3
M.Atl.	56.7	32.2	48.1	39.4	45.4
Ohio	49.4	33.7	45.1	26.9	40.8
Ind.	44.0	35.4	42.0	34.2	40.2
Ill.	52.9	38.9	49.4	37.5	46.5
Mich.	54.7	36.4	49.1	34.2	46.0
Wis.	61.9	33.2	50.5	42.1	49.3
E.N.Cent.	52.6	35.6	47.3	35.2	44.8
Minn.	59.7	33.9	50.1	33.9	46.9
Iowa	59.9	32.9	51.8	37.3	48.6
Mo.	45.4	32.2	42.3	34.7	41.0
N.Dak.	54.1	38.3	48.6	37.4	46.4
S.Dak.	54.5	35.3	49.0	35.6	46.8
Nebr.	54.9	41.3	50.8	33.7	47.9
Kans.	48.1	33.8	44.6	27.9	40.9
W.N.Cent.	53.9	34.5	48.0	34.7	45.4
Del.	49.3	33.2	44.0	32.2	40.1
Md.	46.9	29.8	41.0	34.9	39.0
Va.	42.6	32.6	39.8	34.3	37.6
W.Va.	35.7	28.1	34.1	26.8	32.8
N.C.	36.0	30.0	34.3	23.4	29.4
S.C.	37.2	26.5	33.8	26.3	29.7
Ga.	38.2	31.8	36.5	26.4	31.7
Fla.	35.1	29.1	34.2	30.2	31.6
S.Atl.	38.1	30.1	35.8	28.1	32.0
Ky.	39.7	28.0	36.5	29.3	33.6
Tenn.	37.0	30.9	35.5	27.2	32.4
Ala.	34.4	31.7	33.7	24.5	29.7
Miss.	44.3	31.3	40.2	41.7	41.2
E.S.Cent.	38.8	30.3	36.4	33.2	34.6
Ark.	35.4	34.0	35.1	37.3	36.0
La.	34.9	29.7	33.7	37.0	35.1
Okla.	41.1	30.2	38.9	29.3	36.8
Tex.	44.2	32.1	41.1	30.0	36.1
W.S.Cent.	40.6	31.7	38.5	33.3	36.0
Mont.	47.5	35.7	43.7	43.7	43.7
Idaho	48.6	30.1	42.7	43.7	42.9
Wyo.	53.6	32.8	47.9	39.3	45.3
Colo.	37.8	31.6	35.8	39.9	37.0
N.Mex.	44.2	35.9	41.6	37.8	40.0
Ariz.	50.0	26.6	47.1	45.0	45.7
Utah	43.7	33.1	40.1	27.3	35.7
Nev.	42.7	29.8	38.3	33.1	36.3
Mount.	45.4	32.5	41.5	40.3	41.1
Wash.	40.6	25.2	36.0	36.9	36.3
Oreg.	36.7	30.1	34.8	30.2	33.6
Calif.	49.2	37.2	46.3	48.9	48.4
Pac.	43.9	32.3	40.8	46.9	44.4
U.S.	46.5	32.7	42.4	35.7	39.7

1/ Includes as "other family" only those farm household members working 15 hours or more per week without receiving cash wages.

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