

Farm Labor

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Thanksgiving Period Marks Harvest Success for Reduced Work Force

By late November farms were rapidly completing harvest of the Nation's largest total production year, using a record-small work force. The total of 5,063,000 persons working on farms in the survey week of November 21-27 was 3 percent under the previous low for the date reached last year.

The total of 1,151,000 hired workers employed in the survey week was 2 percent below a year earlier and to this extent the lowest of record for this date. This reduced force represented a sharp seasonal decline from the level of more than two million hired workers employed in June, July, and August. Demands for seasonal workers for harvest of vegetable and fruit crops had ended in most areas. In California, extremely heavy rains held farm employment below the usual level for the season. Corn in parts of the Corn Belt and much cotton in the southwest remained to be harvested. However, most regions had smaller numbers of hired farm workers than last year or other recent years.

The farm family working force of 3,912,000 persons was about 3 percent smaller than last year but was able to handle all of the work on over three-fourths of the Nation's more than three million farms. Weather continued open and warm past Thanksgiving over most of the Nation, helping to make good living for both people and livestock.

Hours Per Worker Show Seasonal Decline

The average number of hours worked per person at farm work on reporting farms during the survey week of November 21-27 declined from a month earlier as harvesting operations reached the final or clean-up stages across the country. Farm operators averaged 41.2 hours of farm work during the survey week, a decline of 5.3 hours. Except for the New England States, declines from a month earlier were reported for all regions and ranged from 3.4 hours lower in the South Atlantic States to 7.6 fewer hours in the rain-drenched Pacific States. Other family workers averaged 30.4 hours, a drop of 2.3 hours from the survey week in October 1965.

Hired farm workers averaged a work week of 33.0 hours, down 2.7 hours from a month earlier. Hired workers averaged fewer hours in all regions except the South Atlantic and West South Central regions where the averages were less than one-half hour higher. The average for all farm workers was 36.6 hours, a decline of 3.1 hours from the October survey week.

The Year's Record to Date-Total Farm Worker Numbers 9 Percent Below 1964

A summary of estimates of farm worker numbers representing averages for survey weeks January through November by States appears on page 5. For the 48 conterminous States the average number of persons working in the selected survey week each month this year, 5,737,000 - 9 percent below last year. Compared with the 5 year average (1959-63) for the same months, this year's total farm working force was 19 percent smaller.

The average number of hired workers, at 1,549,000, was 8 percent less than in 1964 and 21 percent less than in the 5 previous years, 1959-63. The numbers reported in such comparisons generally represent the total of jobs in survey weeks. Because of changing personnel, especially among seasonal workers, they are less than the total of persons who did any farm work.

The reduction in hired workers this year has affected growers of different commodities and in different locations in very different ways. In cotton harvest, livestock production, and many other phases of farm work, labor saving machines and methods replaced hired workers at an accelerated rate. The repeal of Public Law 78 by the Congress, effective through 1965, ended an arrangement for hiring Mexican "braceros" and workers from other foreign countries who had come to be highly regarded by growers of certain crops having difficult harvest conditions or peak harvest demands. The arrangements for obtaining such workers under Public Law 414 were such as to greatly restrict the use of foreign workers and to spur new attempts to provide satisfactory domestic replacements. Although the result to some growers was reportedly a difficult and expensive harvest season, the total harvest picture appears to have been generally successful. In some important instances favorable weather helped greatly. Moderate temperatures in California and elsewhere at critical periods aided more even progress of maturity for crops such as asparagus, tomatoes, and fruits than in some years, and prevented larger crop losses than had been feared. Use of specialized harvesting machines increased, and the available seasonal labor was carefully utilized to reduce loss of time between crops. The 1965 experience doubtless will have an important influence on the plans of many growers for next year.

Farm family workers on home farms during January-November this year averaged 4,188,000, or 9 percent less than for the same period last year. This represents a new annual low and is about 18 percent below the 1959-63 average. Included as family workers are all farm operators who work on their farms during the survey weeks and other family members who work as much as 15 hours per week without receiving cash wages. Farm chores, marketing, and other farm business are included as farm work. Housework is excluded.

The representation of this remarkable group of people referred to as "family workers" by a series of numbers such as printed in this report falls far short of conveying their importance to the Nation and the World. An appropriate personal appraisal would need to recognize such characteristics as business and management abilities, reinforced by attitudes such as love of the land and continuing concern for their flocks and herds. To this is added the quick acceptance and mastery of new machines and methods making possible the attainment of new high levels in work and production efficiency.

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

	: Annual : average : 1959-63 <u>1/</u>	: Annual : average : 1964	: November : average : 1959-63 <u>1/</u>	: November : 22-28, : 1964	: November : 21-27, : 1965
FARM EMPLOYMENT					
(Thousands)					
Total	6,907	6,110	6,248	5,228	5,063
Family labor	5,040	4,506	4,728	4,053	3,912
Hired labor	1,867	1,604	1,520	1,175	1,151
INDEXES <u>2/</u>					
(1910-14=100)					
Total	51	45	50	42	40
Family labor	50	44	49	42	40
Hired labor	55	47	54	42	41
(1957-59=100)					
Total	92	82	90	76	73
Family labor	91	82	89	77	74
Hired labor	95	82	94	72	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 : average : 1964	: 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, November 1965

(Thousands of persons)

State and division	November average 1959-63			November 1964 Week of 22-28			November 1965 Week of 21-27		
	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired
Maine	26	19	7	25	20	5	23	19	4
N. H.	10	7	3	9	7	2	9	7	2
Vt.	23	18	5	21	17	4	20	16	4
Mass.	27	17	10	22	16	6	22	16	6
R. I.	4	3	1	3	2	1	3	2	1
Conn.	21	15	6	18	13	5	15	11	4
N. Eng.	111	79	32	98	75	23	92	71	21
N. Y.	140	102	38	113	84	29	107	80	27
N. J.	34	21	13	24	15	9	21	13	8
Pa.	159	131	28	128	110	18	118	102	16
M. Atl.	333	254	79	265	209	56	246	195	51
Ohio	225	197	28	191	170	21	179	160	19
Ind.	191	171	20	157	140	17	160	143	17
Ill.	241	199	42	198	173	25	202	168	34
Mich.	179	149	30	148	127	21	150	129	21
Wis.	249	228	21	220	201	19	210	190	20
E. N. Cent.	1085	944	141	914	811	103	901	790	111
Minn.	209	192	17	192	179	13	189	175	14
Iowa	273	242	31	235	211	24	235	208	27
Mo.	239	215	24	212	198	14	197	179	18
N. Dak.	65	56	9	52	46	6	52	46	6
S. Dak.	76	69	7	63	58	5	62	56	6
Nebr.	136	121	15	110	100	10	107	98	9
Kans.	135	123	12	114	106	8	115	106	9
W. N. Cent.	1133	1018	115	978	898	80	957	868	89
Del.	11	7	4	8	5	3	8	5	3
Md.	49	35	14	42	31	11	40	31	9
Va.	168	127	41	155	117	38	139	104	35
W. Va.	60	51	9	46	40	6	45	39	6
N. C.	332	253	79	257	200	57	254	207	47
S. C.	146	100	46	106	79	27	105	74	31
Ga.	172	118	54	135	94	41	126	88	38
Fla.	124	43	81	133	41	92	130	38	92
S. Atl.	1062	734	328	882	607	275	847	586	261
Ky.	250	205	45	232	192	40	224	179	45
Tenn.	283	231	52	249	210	39	219	190	29
Ala.	159	119	40	132	100	32	127	102	25
Miss.	228	166	62	158	122	36	151	118	33
E. S. Cent.	920	721	199	771	624	147	721	589	132
Ark.	188	116	72	127	85	42	138	87	51
La.	130	91	39	107	75	32	105	71	34
Okla.	142	116	26	112	98	14	114	94	20
Texas	388	234	154	321	198	123	327	206	121
W. S. Cent.	848	557	291	667	456	211	684	458	226
Mont.	41	33	8	39	32	7	38	30	8
Idaho	52	39	13	50	40	10	48	38	10
Wyo.	15	10	5	15	9	6	15	10	5
Colo.	55	42	13	40	32	8	40	33	7
N. Mex.	41	21	20	33	17	16	29	16	13
Ariz.	52	9	43	46	9	37	42	8	34
Utah	27	22	5	23	19	4	22	18	4
Nev.	4	2	2	4	2	2	4	2	2
Mount.	287	178	109	250	160	90	238	155	83
Wash.	78	60	18	76	58	18	73	56	17
Oreg.	71	58	13	64	52	12	58	48	10
Calif.	320	125	195	263	103	160	246	96	150
Pac.	469	243	226	403	213	190	377	200	177
U.S.	6248	4728	1520	5228	4053	1175	5063	3912	1151

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 November 1965 1/

(Thousand of persons)

State and division	January through Nov. Av. 1959-63			January through Nov. 1964			January through Nov. 1965		
	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired
Maine	33	21	12	31	20	11	31	21	10
N. H.	12	9	3	10	7	3	10	7	3
Vt.	26	20	6	23	18	5	22	17	5
Mass.	36	21	15	29	18	11	26	16	10
R. I.	4	3	1	3	2	1	3	2	1
Conn.	25	16	9	23	14	9	21	12	9
N. Eng.	136	90	46	119	79	40	113	75	38
N. Y.	161	105	56	133	90	43	122	83	39
N. J.	44	24	20	39	20	19	35	17	18
Pa.	187	153	34	155	130	25	139	117	22
M. Atl.	392	282	110	327	240	87	296	217	79
Ohio	237	199	38	207	177	30	187	162	25
Ind.	215	188	27	189	167	22	170	150	20
Ill.	247	196	51	222	180	42	203	166	37
Mich.	219	176	43	197	158	39	175	142	33
Wis.	280	250	30	250	223	27	233	209	24
E. N. Cent.	1198	1009	189	1065	905	160	968	829	139
Minn.	271	231	40	255	220	35	232	199	33
Iowa	296	255	41	272	235	37	252	217	35
Mo.	274	233	41	254	220	34	230	199	31
N. Dak.	92	72	20	80	65	15	78	62	16
S. Dak.	92	80	12	82	73	9	78	69	9
Nebr.	158	133	25	139	119	20	129	111	18
Kans.	161	135	26	148	125	23	138	117	21
W. N. Cent.	1344	1139	205	1230	1057	173	1137	974	163
Del.	12	7	5	10	6	4	10	6	4
Md.	57	38	19	50	35	15	48	34	14
Va.	189	133	56	167	119	48	150	106	44
W. Va.	68	56	12	55	45	10	50	42	8
N. C.	430	315	115	382	271	111	351	246	105
S. C.	191	125	66	150	102	48	128	84	44
Ga.	183	132	51	158	111	47	143	104	39
Fla.	122	47	75	118	43	75	123	42	81
S. Atl.	1252	853	399	1090	732	358	1003	664	339
Ky.	241	189	52	232	182	50	214	169	45
Tenn.	251	192	59	230	179	51	201	159	42
Ala.	152	114	38	134	103	31	124	101	23
Miss.	243	172	71	209	147	62	186	127	59
E. S. Cent.	887	667	220	805	611	194	725	556	169
Ark.	213	120	93	173	98	75	160	88	72
La.	155	92	63	138	79	59	126	72	54
Okla.	157	125	32	131	111	20	120	100	20
Texas	428	255	173	366	226	140	318	198	120
W. S. Cent.	953	592	361	808	514	294	724	458	266
Mont.	50	37	13	47	35	12	45	34	11
Idaho	70	49	21	68	48	20	67	47	20
Wyo.	20	14	6	19	12	7	18	11	7
Colo.	67	48	19	59	44	15	53	39	14
N. Mex.	39	22	17	33	19	14	28	16	12
Ariz.	45	10	35	38	8	30	35	8	27
Utah	34	24	10	31	22	9	28	19	9
Nev.	5	3	2	5	3	2	6	3	3
Mount.	330	207	123	300	191	109	280	177	103
Wash.	119	77	42	111	72	39	98	65	33
Oreg.	98	67	31	97	64	33	88	58	30
Calif.	368	141	227	319	123	196	305	115	190
Pac.	585	285	300	527	259	268	491	238	253
U. S.	7077	5124	1953	6271	4588	1683	5737	4188	1549

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 November 21-27, 1965				
	Farm Operator	Other Family Members	All Family ^{1/}	Hired Workers	All Workers ^{1/}
	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours
Maine	53.3	31.7	47.0	30.4	42.0
N. H.	52.6	30.8	47.5	41.1	45.4
Vt.	62.7	40.4	56.1	41.7	51.0
Mass.	61.5	30.3	51.1	39.2	47.2
R. I.	48.2	40.7	47.0	42.9	45.2
Conn.	54.9	36.1	49.8	40.7	46.5
N. Eng.	57.0	34.1	50.3	38.6	46.4
N. Y.	55.9	32.8	49.1	39.5	46.2
N. J.	43.0	32.6	40.8	38.3	40.0
Pa.	51.3	31.1	44.6	33.7	42.3
M. Atl.	52.6	31.9	46.2	37.5	43.8
Ohio	46.0	30.3	41.6	30.3	39.5
Ind.	41.5	29.5	38.8	31.1	37.2
Ill.	44.2	35.2	42.3	34.1	40.5
Mich.	48.7	32.9	44.2	33.2	41.9
Wis.	59.7	30.9	48.4	33.4	45.6
E. N. Cent.	47.9	31.8	43.0	32.7	41.1
Minn.	51.9	30.7	45.2	36.5	43.8
Iowa	52.1	31.4	45.9	32.8	43.2
Mo.	41.5	32.1	39.4	28.0	37.4
N. Dak.	37.5	32.3	36.0	34.8	35.9
S. Dak.	47.3	30.1	42.6	32.3	41.2
Nebr.	44.9	32.9	41.7	26.6	39.5
Kans.	42.3	29.7	39.4	29.0	37.5
W. N. Cent.	46.4	31.3	42.2	31.5	40.5
Del.	38.5	27.2	35.8	28.8	33.5
Md.	41.5	27.8	37.2	37.0	37.1
Va.	37.7	31.0	35.9	28.9	33.1
W. Va.	34.1	27.3	32.4	25.6	31.2
N. C.	32.2	27.3	31.0	21.8	27.5
S. C.	33.1	24.8	30.8	18.4	24.2
Ga.	35.1	29.8	33.8	27.7	31.1
Fla.	37.8	33.4	36.9	34.9	35.9
S. Atl.	34.7	28.5	33.1	28.5	30.5
Ky.	37.8	29.4	35.4	29.8	32.9
Tenn.	31.8	28.5	31.1	24.9	29.2
Ala.	29.8	26.9	29.2	22.7	26.8
Miss.	35.6	28.3	33.6	33.2	33.4
E. S. Cent.	33.9	28.4	32.5	28.2	30.8
Ark.	31.1	33.5	31.6	29.6	30.8
La.	32.4	28.0	31.5	32.4	31.9
Okla.	37.7	27.3	35.2	26.2	33.2
Tex.	38.0	32.2	36.8	36.5	36.7
W. S. Cent.	35.8	30.8	34.7	33.4	34.2
Mont.	36.9	34.5	36.4	36.9	36.5
Idaho	37.8	27.2	34.8	34.5	34.7
Wyo.	44.2	29.1	39.0	36.4	38.3
Colo.	43.0	30.2	39.3	38.6	39.2
N. Mex.	41.1	30.0	38.2	43.3	40.2
Ariz.	39.1	23.8	34.7	41.6	38.2
Utah	39.6	24.4	34.7	30.5	33.8
Nev.	42.0	29.0	38.4	49.5	42.5
Mount.	39.8	29.4	36.8	39.6	37.3
Wash.	33.9	23.7	31.4	33.1	31.9
Oreg.	35.9	31.9	35.0	33.5	34.6
Calif.	37.9	34.0	37.1	39.8	39.1
Pac.	36.3	30.7	35.0	38.8	37.0
U. S.	41.2	30.4	38.2	33.0	36.6

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

Good Weather-Good Fall Work Progress

The November survey week continued a prolonged period of abnormally warm weather for the season over much of the Nation. This permitted the near completion of harvest of most corn and soybeans and picking of cotton except in the far Southwest.

California had some really unusual weather with record rainfall in the southern part of the State. Moderate to heavy precipitation in other sections of the State also slowed seasonal field work in cotton, sugar beets, citrus, and other crops. Snow covered higher levels of the mountains in Western States, starting a build-up of next year's irrigation supplies. Cold weather in Washington State helped the Christmas tree crop, and ski areas began operation. Cotton harvest in Arizona also was rained out for a time, but by the survey week had reached 65 percent completion, ahead of last year's November progress. Texas cotton harvest still lagged a bit behind last year's stage and was less than half finished. Harvest of much acreage in the high plains and in Oklahoma was delayed for the arrival of a hard freeze needed to defoliate plants. Eastward through the Cotton Belt the harvest was over except for some scrapping.

It was a busy period for growers of burley tobacco who were stripping the crop and filling auction floors for opening of markets. Showers in Kentucky and Tennessee improved conditions for tobacco marketing. In Louisiana, sugarcane harvest made rapid progress, reaching about 55 percent completion.

Florida farm work featured harvest of over 2 million boxes of citrus, active harvest of sugarcane, and increasing vegetable movement. Vegetable shipments equaled 1,658 cars for the week of November 21-27, more than one-fourth larger than two weeks earlier. Pecan harvest continued active in Georgia.

The Corn Belt passed Thanksgiving with most corn and soybean fields harvested and available for livestock. Iowa corn was about 90 percent harvested. Incomplete grain recovery by pickers in some sections led to the added work of hand-gleaning nearly a tenth of the State's acreage. Freezes in parts of Wisconsin and other northern corn sections aided harvest where wet soils previously had kept pickers bogged down. Much of north-central and northwest Minnesota had record snow depths for the date.

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