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# Farm Labor



Crop  
Reporting  
Board

Statistical Reporting  
Service

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Washington, D.C. 20250

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## NUMBER OF HIRED WORKERS DOWN - WAGES UNCHANGED

A total of 3.1 million people were working on farms and ranches in the United States during the week of October 6-12, according to the Crop Reporting Board. Included were workers hired directly by the farm operators and agricultural service employees who were working on farms. In October 1985, there were 3.3 percent (106,000) fewer people working on farms than in a corresponding week a year earlier. Hired workers represented 38 percent (1.2 million) of the total. Of these workers, 1.0 million were hired directly by operators of farms and ranches, 1.0 percent fewer than a year earlier. Farm operators and other unpaid workers who worked 15 hours or more accounted for 1.9 million workers, 4.6 percent below October last year.

The all hired farm worker wage rate in October was \$4.56 per hour, unchanged from a year earlier. Workers paid on an hourly basis averaged \$4.41, down 4 cents from October 1984. Wage rates for other categories of workers were: field \$4.47; livestock \$4.24 and piece-rate \$5.51. Seasonal increases in wage rates from July were: all hired workers 32 cents; hourly 23 cents; field 40 cents; livestock 27 cents and piece-rate 78 cents.

Dry weather conditions during the survey week in most areas enabled farm operators to spend long hours in the fields harvesting crops and finishing up fall field activities. The self-employed farm operators worked an average of 47.9 hours, 4.8 hours more than during the comparable week in 1984. Other unpaid workers averaged 38.6 hours for the week, 2.2 hours more than in October 1984. The average work week for the hired workers was 1.6 hours less than a year earlier at 38.6 hours.

## PERQUISITES AND OTHER BENEFITS

Perquisites such as meals, housing or motor vehicles in addition to cash wage were provided to 40 percent of the hired workers in October 1985. Housing was furnished to 14 percent of the hired workers. In October 1984, 49 percent of the farm workers received some type of perquisite.

## FARM WORKERS AND WORKERS PER FARM

Of the work force hired directly by farm operators, 38 percent were on farms where 11 or more hired workers were employed. Farms employing one hired worker during the survey week accounted for 17 percent of the direct hired work force.

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## FARM ACTIVITIES DURING SURVEY WEEK

Harvest activities during the week of October 6-12 were hampered some in the Great Plains and portions of the Corn Belt as precipitation limited the number of days the farmers could get into the fields to three or fewer. However, in most of the Northeast, Southeast, and Delta States, dry weather conditions prevailed and farmers were able to work four to six days during the week. Harvest came to a standstill in Minnesota, Montana, and North Dakota with heavy snowfall. Corn harvest lagged 10 percentage points behind normal while soybean harvest was 15 points below the average. Apple picking and fall vegetable harvest were active during the week. Potato harvest was nearing completion in Maine while snow virtually halted harvest in North Dakota.

## SOURCE AND RELIABILITY OF ESTIMATES

The estimates of agricultural labor are based on multiple frame probability surveys. The surveys utilize two sampling frames -- a list frame of agricultural producers and an area frame. The list sample is a stratified random sample containing employers likely to have hired workers.

The area frame contains all land units in the Nation. A probability sample from the area frame would provide an unbiased estimate for agricultural workers on farms. However, the area frame is a less efficient sampling frame because a large number of workers are hired by a small proportion of farm operators. Therefore, the area frame is used to estimate for the incompleteness in the list. The multiple frame sampling approach utilizes the desirable attributes of both frames. Estimates based on a sample differ somewhat from data that would have been obtained if a complete enumeration had been taken. These differences result from sampling variability. In addition, survey estimates are subject to non-sampling errors. Enumerator training, questionnaire design and testing, and a uniform comprehensive check and review process minimize the number and severity of non-sampling errors.

Standard errors and relative sampling errors are statistical measures of the variation that occur by chance because of sampling of the population. Indications from the survey are expected to be within the range of one standard error below to one standard error above the true value in two out of three cases.

At the U.S. Level, the number of self-employed and other unpaid workers and the number of hired workers had relative sampling errors of 2.7 and 5.9 percent, respectively. Relative errors at the regional level for hired workers ranged from 2 to 27 percent.

FARM LABOR: EMPLOYMENT AND INDEXES, UNITED STATES, OCTOBER 1985,  
WITH COMPARISONS

ITEM	OCT 7-13, 1984	JUL 7-13, 1985	OCT 6-12, 1985
THOUSANDS			
FARM EMPLOYMENT			
TOTAL	3,059	3,570	2,956
SELF-EMPLOYED	1,467	1,448	1,362
UNPAID	567	749	579
HIRED	1,025	1,373	1,015
EXPECTED TO BE EMPLOYED			
150 DAYS OR MORE	652	695	617
149 DAYS OR LESS	373	678	398
AGRICULTURAL SERVICES WORKERS WORKING ON FARMS	190	345	187
(1910-14=100)			
INDEXES-SEASONALLY ADJUSTED			
TOTAL	22	21	21
HIRED	26	25	26
(1977=100)			
TOTAL HIRED	73	71	71
	75	72	75

FARM WAGE RATES 1/ 2/

ITEM	OCT 7-13, 1984	JUL 7-13, 1985	OCT 6-12, 1985
DOLLARS PER HOUR			
ALL HIRED FARM WORKERS	4.56	4.24	4.56
METHOD OF PAY			
HOURLY	4.45	4.18	4.41
PIECE-RATE	5.32	4.73	5.51
OTHER	4.64	4.31	4.62
TYPE OF WORK PERFORMED			
COMBINED FIELD & LIVESTOCK	4.31	4.05	4.40
FIELD	4.40	4.07	4.47
LIVESTOCK	4.12	3.97	4.24
SUPERVISORY	6.62	6.86	7.07
OTHER	4.78	4.34	4.51
(1910-14=100)			
INDEXES-SEASONALLY ADJUSTED			
ALL HIRED FARM WORKERS	2,862	2,941	2,862
(1977=100)			
ALL HIRED FARM WORKERS	150	154	150

1/ PERQUISITES SUCH AS ROOM AND BOARD, HOUSING, ETC., ARE PROVIDED SOME WORKERS IN ALL CATEGORIES. 2/ EXCLUDES AGRICULTURAL SERVICE WORKERS.

WORKERS ON FARMS, BY STATES AND REGIONS, OCTOBER 6-12, 1985 1/

STATE AND REGION 2/	ALL FARM WORKERS	SELF- EMPLOYED	UNPAID	HIRED		
				NUMBER OF WORKERS	EXPECTED TO BE EMPLOYED 150 DAYS OR MORE	149 DAYS OR LESS
THOUSANDS						
NORTHEAST I	137	51	25	61	38	23
NORTHEAST II	120	48	29	43	35	8
APPALACHIA I	158	76	18	64	38	26
APPALACHIA II	163	87	37	39	14	25
SOUTHEAST	129	55	19	55	33	22
FLORIDA	54	10	3	41	34	7
LAKE	415	198	118	99	53	46
CORNBELT I	313	160	75	78	44	34
CORNBELT II	235	147	48	40	24	16
DELTA	166	72	30	64	39	25
NORTH PLAINS	266	154	69	43	28	15
SOUTH PLAINS	243	142	39	62	44	18
MOUNTAIN I	71	34	10	27	15	12
MOUNTAIN II	66	30	16	20	17	3
MOUNTAIN III	47	12	17	18	14	4
PACIFIC	102	36	12	54	21	33
CALIFORNIA	257	48	13	196	116	80
HAWAII	14	2	1	11	10	1
U. S.	2956	1362	579	1015	617	398

HOURS WORKED PER WEEK AND WAGE RATES FOR ALL HIRED WORKERS,  
BY STATES AND REGIONS, OCTOBER 6-12, 1985 1/

STATE AND REGION 2/	HOURS WORKED			WAGE RATES FOR ALL HIRED WORKERS
	SELF- EMPLOYED	UNPAID	HIRED	
HOURS				DOLLARS PER HOUR
NORTHEAST I	58.3	41.2	40.1	4.16
NORTHEAST II	55.7	39.7	45.5	4.35
APPALACHIA I	32.5	28.6	31.5	4.35
APPALACHIA II	36.2	31.3	28.8	4.04
SOUTHEAST	38.0	31.9	33.6	3.68
FLORIDA	43.8	33.7	36.8	5.05
LAKE	54.6	34.5	35.9	4.22
CORNBELT I	50.9	36.4	41.3	4.44
CORNBELT II	44.5	39.4	34.8	4.35
DELTA	37.3	29.4	49.0	3.86
NORTH PLAINS	48.4	38.4	36.8	4.58
SOUTH PLAINS	33.3	30.0	38.0	4.71
MOUNTAIN I	49.9	48.4	49.0	4.03
MOUNTAIN II	45.1	41.4	43.8	4.59
MOUNTAIN III	37.7	30.0	40.3	4.78
PACIFIC	38.8	39.4	42.3	5.06
CALIFORNIA	36.3	31.2	40.9	5.51
HAWAII	27.5	27.5	38.9	7.46
U. S.	47.9	38.6	38.6	4.56

WAGE RATES FOR HIRED WORKERS, BY STATES AND REGIONS, OCTOBER 6-12, 1985 1/

STATE AND REGION 2/	TYPE OF WORK					METHOD OF PAY		
	FIELD	LIVESTOCK	FIELD & LIVESTOCK	SUPERVISORY	OTHER	HOURLY	PIECE RATE	OTHER
DOLLARS PER HOUR								
NORTHEAST I	4.15	3.76	4.02	6.32	4.22	4.13	5.29	3.98
NORTHEAST II	4.37	3.81	4.16	6.78	4.65	4.40	4.25	4.30
APPALACHIAN I	4.17	4.15	4.16	7.80	4.16	4.06	3/	4.96
APPALACHIAN II	3.99	3.88	3.96	3/	4.00	3.92	5.51	4.04
SOUTHEAST	3.37	3.86	3.61	5.33	3.72	3.54	3/	3.77
FLORIDA	4.27	4.56	4.35	8.22	5.79	4.57	4.73	6.87
LAKE	3.99	3.84	3.92	6.03	4.77	4.24	4.64	4.08
CORNBELT I	4.24	4.61	4.38	6.69	4.16	4.61	4.48	4.13
CORNBELT II	4.58	3.95	4.31	3/	4.23	4.40	3/	4.16
DELTA	3.76	4.46	3.95	5.71	3.60	3.86	3/	3.88
NORTHERN PLAINS	4.63	4.60	4.62	3/	4.43	4.62	3/	4.50
SOUTHERN PLAINS	4.20	4.43	4.36	6.84	4.74	4.48	3/	5.03
MOUNTAIN I	3.88	3.56	3.73	5.55	4.28	4.09	3/	3.94
MOUNTAIN II	4.32	4.40	4.36	6.26	3/	4.61	3/	4.65
MOUNTAIN III	4.90	4.44	4.69	6.53	4.57	4.59	3/	5.09
PACIFIC	4.88	5.49	4.94	6.56	5.18	4.83	5.37	5.34
CALIFORNIA	5.16	5.60	5.21	7.94	5.82	4.86	6.66	7.10
HAWAII	6.68	3/	6.62	11.22	3/	7.01	3/	3/
U. S.	4.47	4.24	4.40	7.07	4.51	4.41	5.51	4.62

1/ EXCLUDES AGRICULTURAL SERVICE WORKERS.

2/ REGIONS CONSIST OF THE FOLLOWING:

NORTHEAST I: CT, ME, MA, NH, NY, RI, VT.

NORTHEAST II: DE, MD, NJ, PA.

APPALACHIAN I: NC, VA.

APPALACHIAN II: KY, TN, WV.

SOUTHEAST I: AL, GA, SC.

LAKE: MI, MN, WI.

CORNBELT I: IL, IN, OH.

CORNBELT II: IA, MO.

DELTA: AR, LA, MS.

NORTHERN PLAINS: KS, NE, ND, SD.

SOUTHERN PLAINS: OK, TX.

MOUNTAIN I: ID, MT, WY.

MOUNTAIN II: CO, NV, UT.

MOUNTAIN III: AZ, NM.

PACIFIC: OR, WA.

3/ INSUFFICIENT DATA.



WAGE RATES FOR HIRED WORKERS, BY STATES AND REGIONS, JULY 7-13, 1985 1/

STATE AND REGION 2/	TYPE OF WORK						METHOD OF PAY	
	FIELD	LIVESTOCK	LIVESTOCK	SUPER- VISORY	OTHER	HOURLY	PIECE RATE	OTHER
DOLLARS PER HOUR								
NORTHEAST I	3.79	3.39	3.63	6.40	4.56	4.01	3/	3.61
NORTHEAST II	3.69	3.70	3.69	5.66	4.53	3.91	3/	3.89
APPALACHIAN I	3.50	3.78	3.56	6.18	4.15	3.72	3/	4.14
APPALACHIAN II	3.58	3.69	3.61	3/	4.04	3.72	3/	3.68
SOUTHEAST	3.29	3.74	3.38	6.02	3.45	3.43	3.47	3.57
FLORIDA	4.19	4.37	4.24	8.28	5.88	4.60	4.94	5.76
LAKE	3.67	3.48	3.60	6.64	4.31	3.87	3.58	3.63
CORNBELT I	4.06	4.13	4.08	6.77	4.39	4.23	3/	4.66
CORNBELT II	4.20	4.13	4.18	3/	4.11	4.20	3/	4.13
DELTA	3.74	4.08	3.81	5.77	3.68	3.85	3/	3.87
NORTHERN PLAINS	4.47	4.37	4.46	3/	4.26	4.44	5.39	3.90
SOUTHERN PLAINS	3.68	4.19	3.92	6.04	4.29	3.97	6.00	4.40
MOUNTAIN I	3.68	3.24	3.46	5.08	3.74	3.91	4.38	3.37
MOUNTAIN II	3.66	4.55	3.91	5.80	4.52	4.21	3/	4.42
MOUNTAIN III	3.76	4.14	3.89	6.64	3/	3.92	3/	4.89
PACIFIC	4.43	5.19	4.48	6.07	4.81	4.57	4.52	4.86
CALIFORNIA	4.83	5.00	4.85	8.35	5.91	4.75	6.35	6.70
HAWAII	6.31	3/	6.30	11.55	3/	6.77	3/	3/
U. S.	4.07	3.97	4.05	6.86	4.34	4.18	4.73	4.31

1/ EXCLUDES AGRICULTURAL SERVICE WORKERS.

2/ REGIONS CONSIST OF THE FOLLOWING:

NORTHEAST I: CT, ME, MA, NH, NY, RI, VT.

NORTHEAST II: DE, MD, NJ, PA.

APPALACHIAN I: NC, VA.

APPALACHIAN II: KY, TN, WV.

SOUTHEAST I: AL, GA, SC.

LAKE: MI, MN, WI.

CORNBELT I: IL, IN, OH.

CORNBELT II: IA, MO.

DELTA: AR, LA, MS.

NORTHERN PLAINS: KS, NE, ND, SD.

SOUTHERN PLAINS: OK, TX.

MOUNTAIN I: ID, MT, WY.

MOUNTAIN II: CO, NV, UT.

MOUNTAIN III: AZ, NM.

PACIFIC: OR, WA.

3/ INSUFFICIENT DATA.

ANNUAL AVERAGE WAGE RATES FOR HIRED WORKERS, BY STATES AND REGIONS, 1985 1/ 4/

STATE AND REGION 2/	TYPE OF WORK					METHOD OF PAY			
	ALL HIRED	FIELD	LIVE- STOCK	FIELD & LIVE- STOCK	SUPER- VISORY	OTHER HOURLY	PIECE RATE	OTHER	
DOLLARS PER HOUR									
NORTHEAST I	4.01	4.02	3.47	3.78	6.21	4.48	4.13	4.69	3.73
NORTHEAST II	4.19	4.04	3.84	3.98	6.31	4.73	4.13	3/	4.33
APPALACHIAN I	3.98	3.75	3.95	3.81	6.46	4.00	3.80	3/	4.62
APPALACHIAN II	3.90	3.76	3.93	3.82	3/	3.95	3.81	3/	4.00
SOUTHEAST	3.54	3.29	3.82	3.46	5.80	3.50	3.49	3/	3.61
FLORIDA	4.99	4.51	4.46	4.50	8.12	5.41	4.63	5.18	5.85
LAKE	3.95	3.88	3.51	3.69	6.54	4.62	3.99	4.15	3.81
CORNBELT I	4.39	4.17	4.37	4.24	6.94	4.29	4.39	3/	4.37
CORNBELT II	4.21	4.29	4.00	4.16	3/	4.14	4.23	3/	4.08
DELTA	3.88	3.77	4.19	3.88	5.80	3.67	3.85	3/	4.01
NORTHERN PLAINS	4.51	4.54	4.39	4.50	3/	4.44	4.52	3/	4.33
SOUTHERN PLAINS	4.46	3.98	4.16	4.07	6.40	4.66	4.40	3/	4.56
MOUNTAIN I	3.87	3.78	3.46	3.60	5.16	4.06	3.98	3/	3.72
MOUNTAIN II	4.35	3.89	4.47	4.12	5.87	4.78	4.33	3/	4.62
MOUNTAIN III	4.53	4.28	4.24	4.26	6.44	4.77	4.22	3/	4.93
PACIFIC	4.83	4.64	4.90	4.69	6.25	5.11	4.69	5.08	5.21
CALIFORNIA	5.47	5.12	5.13	5.12	8.16	5.96	4.83	6.57	6.78
HAWAII	7.45	6.51	3/	6.48	11.22	3/	6.97	3/	3/
U. S.	4.42	4.30	4.05	4.22	6.95	4.46	4.30	5.25	4.51

1/ EXCLUDES AGRICULTURAL SERVICE WORKERS.

2/ REGIONS CONSIST OF THE FOLLOWING:

NORTHEAST I: CT, ME, MA, NH, NY, RI, VT.

NORTHEAST II: DE, MD, NJ, PA.

APPALACHIAN I: NC, VA.

APPALACHIAN II: KY, TN, WV.

SOUTHEAST I: AL, GA, SC.

LAKE: MI, MN, WI.

CORNBELT I: IL, IN, OH.

CORNBELT II: IA, MO.

DELTA: AR, LA, MS.

NORTHERN PLAINS: KS, NE, ND, SD.

SOUTHERN PLAINS: OK, TX.

MOUNTAIN I: ID, MT, WY.

MOUNTAIN II: CO, NV, UT.

MOUNTAIN III: AZ, NM.

PACIFIC: OR, WA.

3/ INSUFFICIENT DATA.

4/ ANNUAL AVERAGE WAGE RATES ARE WEIGHTED AVERAGES OF THE PUBLISHED WAGE RATES FROM EACH OF THE SURVEY WEEKS FOR EACH TYPE OF WORKERS WEIGHTED BY THE NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED DURING THE SURVEY WEEK. FOR CALIFORNIA, FLORIDA, HAWAII, THE SOUTHERN PLAINS, AND MOUNTAIN III REGIONS, THE ANNUAL AVERAGE IS BASED ON DATA COLLECTED FOR JAN, APR, JUL, AND OCT. FOR THE REMAINING REGIONS AND THE U.S., THE ANNUAL AVERAGE IS BASED ON DATA COLLECTED FOR APR, JUL, AND OCT 1985.



HIRED WORKERS ON FARMS, UNITED STATES, OCTOBER 1985  
WITH COMPARISONS 1/

NUMBER	OCT 7-13, 1984 2/	JUL 7-13, 1985	OCT 6-12, 1985
	PERCENT		
1 WORKER	15	13	17
2 WORKERS	13	14	13
3-6 WORKERS	22	27	23
7-10 WORKERS	9	11	9
11 AND OVER WORKERS	41	35	38

HIRED WORKERS ON FARMS BY METHOD OF PAY, UNITED STATES, OCTOBER 1985,  
WITH COMPARISONS 1/

PAYMENT METHOD	OCT 7-13, 1984	JUL 7-13, 1985	OCT 6-13, 1985
	PERCENT		
HOURLY	71	72	66
PIECE-RATE	11	8	10
OTHER	18	20	24

HIRED WORKERS ON FARMS RECEIVING PERQUISITES, UNITED STATES, OCTOBER 1985,  
WITH COMPARISONS 1/

PAYMENT METHOD	OCT 7-13, 1984	JUL 7-13, 1985	OCT 6-13, 1985
	PERCENT		
WAGES ONLY	51	59	60
BONUS	4	3	3
ROOM AND BOARD	7	8	7
HOUSING	14	11	14
MEALS OR FOOD	6	8	5
OTHER	18	11	11

1/ EXCLUDES AGRICULTURAL SERVICE WORKERS.  
2/ REVISED.

AGRICULTURAL SERVICES

Crew leaders and custom crews provided 187,000 workers for the Nation's farms during the week of October 6-12, 1985. Compared with the comparable week a year earlier, there were 1.6 percent fewer service workers working on farm this year. The number of agricultural service workers followed the normal seasonal trend by decreasing 46 percent from July. The number of service workers in California was below the corresponding total a year ago. The number of workers was down primarily because the harvest of table grapes, almonds, pistachios and walnuts had been completed earlier than last year. Crews have migrated back to Florida to begin the new crop season.

The average hourly wages received by workers furnished by agricultural service firms in California and Florida were \$6.68 and \$5.42 per hour, respectively. Comparable wage rates in July were \$5.94 in California and \$5.19 in Florida.

AGRICULTURAL SERVICES: NUMBER OF WORKERS, AVERAGE HOURS WORKED FOR ALL HIRED WORKERS, WAGE RATE BY TYPE OF WORK, WITH COMPARISONS, FOR CALIFORNIA, FLORIDA, AND UNITED STATES, OCTOBER 6-12, 1985 1/ 2/

ITEM	OCT 1984			JUL 1985			OCT 1985		
	CALIF	FLA	U S	CALIF	FLA	U S	CALIF	FLA	U S
	THOUSANDS								
NUMBER OF WORKERS WORKING ON FARMS	63	4.8	190	71	3.8	345	43	5.8	187
	HOURS								
AVERAGE HOURS WORKED	37.4	31.9	3/	37.7	38.9	3/	36.9	33.7	3/
	DOLLARS PER HOUR								
WAGE RATES	6.41	5.04	3/	5.94	5.19	3/	6.68	5.42	3/
METHOD OF PAY									
HOURLY	5.50	4.19	3/	5.07	4.62	3/	5.80	4.75	3/
PIECE-RATE	7.00	5.50	3/	6.15	6.44	3/	6.67	4.88	3/
TYPE OF WORK									
FIELD	5.35	4.46	3/	5.51	4.45	3/	5.93	4.78	3/

1/ DATA IN THIS TABLE ARE FOR AGRICULTURAL SERVICES PERFORMED ON THE FARM BY CUSTOM SERVICE UNITS SUCH AS CREW LEADERS OR CUSTOM CREWS. THESE STATISTICS ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE STATE-REGIONAL TABLES.

2/ VALUE OF ANY PERQUISITES PROVIDED ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE WAGE RATE.

3/ NOT AVAILABLE.



March 1985

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March 1985

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