

Farm Labor



National
Agricultural
Statistics
Service

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Washington, D.C.

Released June 14, 1991, by the Agricultural Statistics Board. Estimates refer to the week of May 12-18, 1991.

Number of Hired Workers Up

There were 487 thousand hired workers on farms and ranches in the eleven surveyed States during the week of May 12-18, 1991, according to the Agricultural Statistics Board. This compares with 471 thousand workers during the April, 1991, survey week. There were 49 thousand agricultural service employees working on farms and ranches in California and Florida compared to 41 thousand in April.

Average May wage rates received by hired workers in the eleven States ranged from \$4.46 per hour in Wisconsin to \$6.30 per hour in Florida. Wages were lower when compared with April in California, New York, Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin. In May, agricultural service workers were paid an average of \$5.81 and \$7.14 per hour in California and Florida, respectively.

During the survey week of May 12-18, 1991, rain slowed fieldwork in northern California, Oregon, and portions of Washington. In California, cherry and desert peach harvests continued. Table grape and early variety plum harvests were underway. Citrus harvest continued in the southern area. Vegetable harvests were active. Tomato and sweet corn planting continued. Rain slowed fieldwork in Oregon. Flooding was reported in some areas. In Washington, spring small grain seeding was nearly complete and vegetable transplanting began in the central area. Lettuce, radish, rhubarb, and asparagus harvests continued. Fieldwork activity progressed normally in New Mexico. Rain fell in most areas of Texas with the heaviest amounts in the eastern area. Cotton planting was active in the Texas Plains while rain slowed small grain and vegetable harvests in the east. Rain slowed vegetable harvests in the Rio Grande Valley. Peach harvest was nearly complete in southern Texas and was active in other areas. Favorable weather allowed fieldwork to progress well in Michigan and Wisconsin although corn planting still lagged behind normal. Fieldwork also made good progress in New York and Pennsylvania. In New York, vegetable planting was very active under ideal weather conditions and early crops such as asparagus, spinach, and scallions were being harvested. In North Carolina, tobacco transplanting continued with flue cured tobacco transplanting nearly complete by the end of the survey week. Other field work made good progress. Rain fell in Florida with the heaviest amounts in the Panhandle and central areas where some flooding occurred. Vegetable harvests were active in the central area.

For additional information, call (202) 447-3570. Office hours are 8:00 to 4:30 ET.

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All Hired Workers, May 12-18, 1991 1/

| State | Number of Workers | Wage Rates <u>2/</u> |
|-------|-------------------|----------------------|
| | Thousands | Dollars per Hour |
| NY | 22 | 5.48 |
| PA | 26 | 5.45 |
| NC | 31 | 4.90 |
| FL | 43 | 6.30 |
| MI | 29 | 5.87 |
| WI | 35 | 4.46 |
| TX | 41 | 5.37 |
| NM | 6 | 4.91 |
| OR | 19 | 5.89 |
| WA | 35 | 6.00 |
| CA | 200 | 6.26 |

Agricultural Service Workers, May 12-18, 1991

| State | Number of Workers Working on Farms | Wage Rates <u>2/</u> |
|-------|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| | Thousands | Dollars per Hour |
| FL | 8 | 7.14 |
| CA | 41 | 5.81 |

All Hired Workers, April 7-13, 1991 1/

| State | Number of Workers | Wage Rates <u>2/</u> |
|-------|-------------------|----------------------|
| | Thousands | Dollars per Hour |
| NY | 22 | 5.71 |
| PA | 23 | 5.40 |
| NC | 27 | 4.42 |
| FL | 46 | 5.98 |
| MI | 27 | 5.85 |
| WI | 29 | 5.20 |
| TX | 47 | 5.01 |
| NM | 7 | 4.87 |
| OR | 18 | 5.99 |
| WA | 46 | 6.10 |
| CA | 179 | 6.38 |

Agricultural Service Workers, April 7-13, 1991

| State | Number of Workers Working on Farms | Wage Rates <u>2/</u> |
|-------|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| | Thousands | Dollars per Hour |
| FL | 11 | 7.03 |
| CA | 30 | 6.02 |

1/ Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

2/ Benefits such as housing and meals are provided some workers but the values are not included in the wage rates.

Source and Reliability of Estimates

These data were collected by the National Agricultural Statistics Service during the last two weeks of May using a multiple frame probability survey. The survey used two sampling frames - a list frame and an area frame. The survey collected information from approximately 5,000 farm operators sampled from a list of farm operators and supplemented with data from 1,000 producers operating in randomly selected geographic areas. This insured representation of all farms (and ranches) in the eleven States. Additionally, a list of agricultural service firms was sampled in California and Florida. The survey reference week was May 12-18, 1991.

Two types of errors, sampling and nonsampling, are possible in an estimate based on a sample survey. Both of these types of errors determine the "accuracy" of the indication.

Sampling error occurs because a complete census is not taken. The sample of respondents used to calculate this particular indication is one of a large number of samples that could have been selected in accordance with the sampling design. The sampling error measures the variation among the indications from all possible samples. An indication of 100 with a sampling error of 1 would mean that chances are 19 out of 20 that the indications of all possible samples averaged together would be between 98 and 102 (the indication, plus or minus two times the sampling error). The sampling error expressed as a percent of the indication is called the relative standard error. The relative standard errors for the number of hired workers generally ranged between 10 and 20 percent at the State level. Sampling errors for the all hired farm worker wage rate generally ranged between 3 and 7 percent.

Nonsampling errors can occur in complete censuses as well as sample surveys. They are due to such things as inability to obtain correct information from each person sampled, differences in interpreting questions or definitions, mistakes in coding or processing the data, etc. Careful efforts were made at each step of the survey to minimize nonsampling errors.

The next **Farm Labor** report will be released at 3:00 p.m. ET on July 12, 1991.

The July 12th report will have information for the survey week of June 9-15, 1991. The report will include number of All Hired Workers and the All Hired Worker Wage Rates for the monthly and seasonal States. The monthly States are California, Florida, New Mexico, and Texas. The seasonal States are Michigan, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin. No regional or U.S. level information will be included. The number of Agricultural Service Workers and the corresponding All Hired Worker Wage Rate will be published for California and Florida.

Release of Historical Farm Labor Data Series

Statistical Bulletin number 822 titled Farm Employment and Wage Rates 1910-1990 is now available. This publication combines selected farm labor estimates from 1910 through 1990 into a single reference copy. A history of the farm labor data series is highlighted. Also discussed are the Agricultural Labor Survey sample design, survey definitions, and data collection methods. Estimation procedures and publication of data in the Farm Labor release are presented.

An electronic file containing data in this historical report is also available (\$35). These data are in the form of LOTUS 1-2-3 worksheet files on two (2) DOS compatible, 3 1/2" HD diskettes.

To order a printed copy of Farm Employment and Wage Rates 1910-1990, ask for Statistical Bulletin number 822 (\$14). To receive the electronic files, ask for Farm Employment and Wage Rates 1910-1990, order #91005Z.

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