

Farm Labor



National
Agricultural
Statistics
Service

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Washington, D.C.

Released December 13, 1991, by the Agricultural Statistics Board. Estimates refer to the week of November 10-16, 1991.

Number of Hired Workers Down

There were 270 thousand hired workers on farms and ranches in the four surveyed States during the week of November 10-16, 1991. This compares with 308 thousand workers during the October 1991, survey week. No comparable survey was conducted in November 1990. There were 51.0 thousand agricultural service employees working on farms and ranches in California and Florida compared to 57.7 thousand in October.

Average November wage rates received by hired workers in the four States ranged from \$4.43 per hour in New Mexico to \$6.31 per hour in California. Wages were down when compared with October in all four surveyed States. In November, agricultural service workers were paid an average of \$6.13 and \$6.30 per hour in California and Florida, respectively.

Rain hampered field activities in portions of New Mexico and Texas during the survey week of November 10-16, 1991. Cotton harvest made good progress in California. Dry bean and sugarbeet harvests were nearly complete. Potato digging was active in the Tulelake-Butte Valley area. Navel orange harvest gathered momentum in the San Joaquin Valley and the Desert area citrus harvest continued. Avocado, kiwifruit, and late variety apple picking remained active. Broccoli, cauliflower, and celery harvests continued in the Salinas-Watsonville and Santa Maria areas, while the volume of lettuce harvested was seasonally declining. Fall quarter fresh market tomato harvest was active as was harvesting of beans, cabbage, and cucumbers. Rain and wet field conditions interrupted cotton and peanut harvests and slowed winter wheat seeding in Texas. Rainfall slowed pecan harvest. Cabbage and pumpkin harvests continued in the High Plains, while onions were being planted in the Rio Grande Valley. Sorghum harvest was slowed by rains in Texas but continued in New Mexico. Lettuce and red chile harvests were active in New Mexico. Florida's harvest of oranges for processing was increasing as was picking of grapefruit, tangerines, and tangelos. Harvest of most fall vegetable crops in central Florida were at or past their peak, while harvested supplies in the southern areas were increasing. Harvest volume leaders were tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, peppers, and sweet corn. Sugarcane planting and harvest were active.

For information, call Tom Kurtz (202) 690-3228. Office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. ET.

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All Hired Workers, November 10-16, 1991 1/

State	Number of Workers	Wage Rates <u>2/</u>
	Thousands	Dollars per Hour
FL	77	6.05
TX	38	4.72
NM	5	4.43
CA	150	6.31

Agricultural Service Workers, November 10-16, 1991

State	Number of Workers Working on Farms	Wage Rates <u>2/</u>
	Thousands	Dollars per Hour
FL	10.0	6.30
CA	41.0	6.13

All Hired Workers, October 6-12, 1991 1/

State	Number of Workers	Wage Rates <u>2/</u>
	Thousands	Dollars per Hour
FL	60	6.37
TX	50	5.26
NM	7	4.92
CA	191	6.32

Agricultural Service Workers, October 6-12, 1991

State	Number of Workers Working on Farms	Wage Rates <u>2/</u>
	Thousands	Dollars per Hour
FL	5.7	5.86
CA	52.0	6.16

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.

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Reliability of Farm Labor Estimates

Survey Procedures: These data were collected by the National Agricultural Statistics Service during the last two weeks of November using sampling procedures to ensure every employer of agricultural workers had a chance of being selected.

Two samples of farm operators are selected. First, NASS maintains a list of farms that hire farm workers. Farms on this list are classified by size and type. Those expected to employ large numbers of workers are selected with greater frequency than those hiring few or no workers. A second sample consists of segments of land scientifically selected from aerial photography. Each June, highly trained interviewers locate each selected land segment and identify every farm operating land within the sample segment's boundaries. The names of farms found in these area segments are matched against the list of farms; those not found on the list are included in the labor survey sample to represent all farms not on the NASS list. This methodology is known as multiple frame sampling, with an area sample used to measure the incompleteness of the list. Additionally, a list of agricultural service firms was sampled in California and Florida. The survey reference week was November 10-16, 1991.

Reliability: Two types of errors, sampling and nonsampling, are possible in an estimate based on a sample survey. Both types affect the "precision" of the estimates.

Sampling error occurs because a complete census is not taken. The sampling error measures the variation in estimates from the average of all possible samples. An estimate of 100 with a sampling error of 1 would mean that chances are 19 out of 20 that the estimates from all possible samples averaged together would be between 98 and 102; which is the survey estimate, plus or minus two times the sampling error. The sampling error expressed as a percent of the estimate is called the relative sampling error. The relative sampling error for number of hired workers generally ranged between 10 and 25 percent at the published State level. Relative sampling errors for the all hired farm worker wage rate generally ranged between 3 and 6 percent.

Nonsampling errors can occur in complete censuses as well as in sample surveys. They are caused by the inability to obtain correct information from each operation sampled, differences in interpreting questions or definitions, and mistakes in coding or processing the data. Special efforts are taken at each step of the survey to minimize nonsampling errors.

Revision Policy: Farm labor information is subject to revision the next time the information is published or the year after the original publication date. The basis for revision must be supported by additional data that directly affect the level of the estimate. Worker numbers and wage rates for October 1991 were subject to revision with this report. No revisions were made but previous data are reprinted in this report for your information.

The next "Farm Labor" report will be released at 3:00 p.m. ET on January 10, 1992.

The January 10th report will have information for the survey week of December 8-14, 1991. The report will include number of All Hired Workers and the All Hired Worker Wage Rates for the monthly States. The monthly States are California, Florida, New Mexico, and Texas. No regional or U.S. level information will be included. The number of Agricultural Service Workers and the corresponding All Hired Service Worker Wage Rate will be published for California and Florida.

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