

Farm Labor



National
Agricultural
Statistics
Service

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Washington, D.C.

Released March 13, 1992, by the Agricultural Statistics Board. Estimates refer to the week of February 9-15, 1992.

Number of Hired Workers Down

There were 254,000 hired workers on farms and ranches in the four surveyed States during the week of February 9-15, 1992. This compares with 280,000 workers during the January 1992, survey week. No comparable survey was conducted in February 1991. There were 36,000 agricultural service employees working on farms and ranches in California and Florida compared to 43,000 in January.

Average February wage rates received by hired workers in the four surveyed States ranged from \$5.11 per hour in Texas to \$6.77 per hour in California. Wages were lower when compared with January except in New Mexico. In February, agricultural service workers were paid an average of \$6.55 and \$7.27 per hour in California and Florida, respectively.

Heavy rains fell in portions of California and Texas during the survey week of February 9-15, 1992. In Texas, heavy rains fell in the Central and Upper Coast area. With dry weather in the Rio Grande Valley, lettuce and cabbage harvests were in full swing and some melon planting began. Wet conditions, however, continued to limit field activities in eastern Texas. In the High Plains, land preparation for spring planting was underway. In California, heavy rains interrupted field activities about midweek. Rain slowed harvest of desert grapefruit, mandarins, and minneolas. Rains slowed Navel orange harvest and interrupted planting and harvest of vegetable crops. Sugarcane harvest was active in Florida. Early and midseason orange picking was almost complete, while grapefruit movement remained active on the east coast. Honey tangerine and temple harvests continued in all areas. Planting and harvest of vegetable crops were active.

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

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All Hired Workers: Number and Wage Rates,
Selected States, February 9-15, 1992 1/

State	Number of Workers	Wage Rates <u>2/</u>
	Thousands	Dollars per Hour
FL	68	6.08
TX	50	5.11
NM	9	6.05
CA	127	6.77

Agricultural Service Workers: Number and Wage Rates,
California and Florida, February 9-15, 1992

State	Number of Workers Working on Farms	Wage Rates <u>2/</u>
	Thousands	Dollars per Hour
FL	8	7.27
CA	28	6.55

All Hired Workers: Number and Wage Rates,
Selected States, January 12-18, 1992 1/

State	Number of Workers	Wage Rates <u>2/</u>
	Thousands	Dollars per Hour
FL	78	6.29
TX	47	5.30
NM	5	5.77
CA	150	6.95

Agricultural Service Workers: Number and Wage Rates,
California and Florida, January 12-18, 1992

State	Number of Workers Working on Farms	Wage Rates <u>2/</u>
	Thousands	Dollars per Hour
FL	13	6.38
CA	30	5.75

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.

Reliability of Farm Labor Estimates

Survey Procedures: These data were collected by the National Agricultural Statistics Service during the last two weeks of February 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 February 9-15, 1992.

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 the number of hired workers generally ranged between 15 and 25 percent at the published State level. Relative sampling errors for the all hired farm worker wage rate generally ranged between 2 and 3 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 January 1992 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 April 10, 1992.

The April 10th report will have information for the survey week of March 8-14, 1992. 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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