



# Farm Labor

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## Hired Workers Down 1 Percent, Wage Rates Up 4 Percent From a Year Ago

There were 884,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches the week of January 12-18, 2003, down 1 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 724,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 160,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$9.32 per hour during the January 2003 reference week, up 35 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$8.29 per hour, up 4 cents from last January, while livestock workers earned \$8.91 per hour compared with \$8.20 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$8.50 per hour, was up 27 cents from last year.

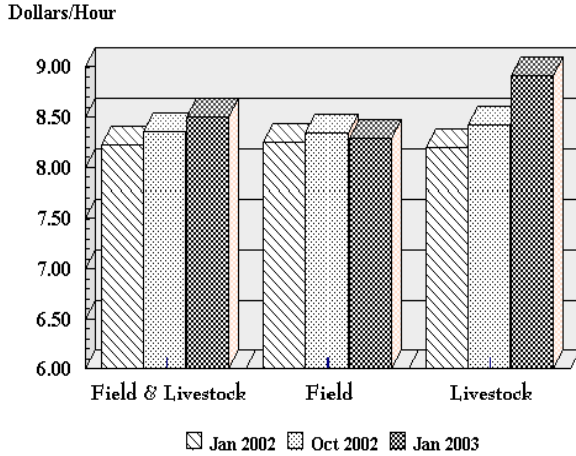
The number of hours worked averaged 37.8 hours for hired workers during the survey week compared with 38.5 hours a year ago.

The largest decreases in number of hired farm workers from a year ago were in the Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas), Northeast II (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania), Mountain I (Idaho, Montana and Wyoming) and Corn Belt I (Indiana, Illinois and Ohio) regions. In the Southern Plains, livestock herding activity was kept at a minimum to reduce pasture trampling and allow grasses to regrow. Unseasonably cold weather kept Christmas tree activity down, and poultry production was down, which lessened the demand for workers in the Northeast II region. The prolonged drought in the Mountain I region kept field work needs at a minimum, and calving, lambing and shearing activities were just getting underway. In the Corn Belt I region, hired worker numbers in January 2002 were much higher than usual due to unseasonably warm weather. This year, a return to more normal weather patterns decreased the demand for hired workers.

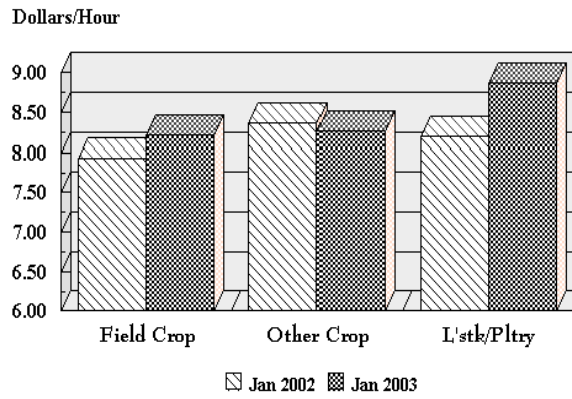
The largest increases in number of hired farm workers over last year occurred in California, Florida, and in the Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee and West Virginia) and Lake (Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin) regions. California's hired farm work force was up considerably due to the much warmer and drier conditions compared to the January 2002 reference week. Winter vegetable harvest was in full swing, along with field preparation for spring vegetable plantings. In Florida, freezing temperatures and ensuing frost protection measures in citrus, strawberry and nursery operations required more part time workers. A major winter storm in Tennessee necessitated more livestock care and feeding in the Appalachian II region, thus increasing the need for hired workers. In the western half of the Lake region, the relative lack of snow cover led to increased herding activity on livestock operations and a higher demand for hired workers.

Hired farm worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Northeast II, Northern Plains (Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota), Southern Plains and Southeast (Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina) regions. The higher wages in the Northeast II and Southeast regions were mainly due to a higher percentage of nursery and greenhouse workers in the work force. Wages in the Northern and Southern Plains were higher due to fewer seasonal workers on the payroll.

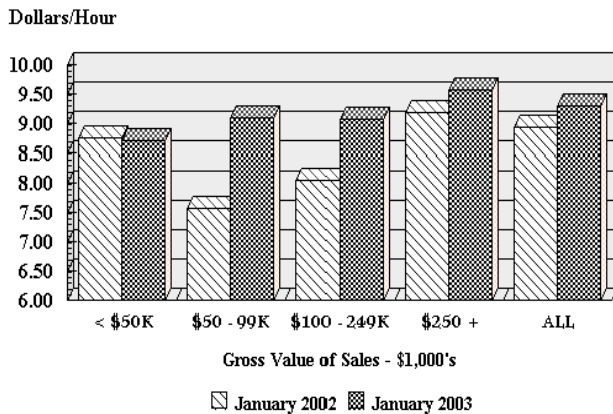
## U.S. Wage Rates by Type of Worker



## Wage Rate of Field & Livestock Workers By Type of Farm



## Wage Rates of All Hired Workers by Economic Class of Farm



**Farm Labor: Employment and Wage Rates, United States,  
January 12-18, 2003, with Comparisons <sup>1</sup>**

Farm Employment	January 6-12, 2002	October 6-12, 2002	January 12-18, 2003
	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>
Hired Workers	707	*940	724
150 Days or More	584	*685	609
149 Days or Less	123	*255	115
Agricultural Services Workers Working on Farms	183	*271	160
Hired Farm & Service Workers	890	*1,211	884
	<i>Hours per Week</i>	<i>Hours per Week</i>	<i>Hours per Week</i>
Hours Worked Hired	38.5	40.4	37.8
	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>
Wage Rate for All Hired Workers <sup>2 3</sup>	8.97	*8.95	9.32
Field & Livestock Combined	8.23	*8.36	8.50
Field	8.25	*8.34	8.29
Livestock	8.20	*8.42	8.91

\* Revised.

<sup>1</sup> Excludes AK.

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

<sup>3</sup> Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

**Hired Workers: Number and Hours Worked by Region  
and United States, January 12-18, 2003 <sup>1</sup>**

U.S. and Region <sup>2</sup>	Hired			
	Number of Workers	Expected to be Employed		Number of Hours Worked
		150 Days or More	149 Days or Less	
	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>Hours per Week</i>
Northeast I	32	29	3	37.3
Northeast II	23	19	4	37.2
Appalachian I	27	24	3	35.3
Appalachian II	32	20	12	29.3
Southeast	24	22	2	35.6
FL	70	56	14	37.2
Lake	45	40	5	31.7
Cornbelt I	23	21	2	33.5
Cornbelt II	20	17	3	27.2
Delta	18	16	2	38.3
Northern Plains	23	22	1	37.8
Southern Plains	50	40	10	37.9
Mountain I	10	9	1	35.7
Mountain II	20	18	2	39.7
Mountain III	22	20	2	47.2
Pacific	48	40	8	37.7
CA	230	190	40	41.2
HI	7	6	1	37.9
US <sup>3</sup>	724	609	115	37.8

<sup>1</sup> Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

<sup>2</sup> Region map on page 13.

<sup>3</sup> Excludes AK.

**Hired Workers: Wage Rates for Type of Workers and All Hired Workers  
by Region and United States, January 12-18, 2003 <sup>1</sup>**

U.S. and Region <sup>2</sup>	Type of Worker			Wage Rates for All Hired Workers
	Field	Livestock	Field & Lvstk Combined	
	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>
Northeast I	10.02	8.36	9.12	10.03
Northeast II	9.16	8.34	8.83	9.83
Appalachian I	8.22	8.58	8.40	9.34
Appalachian II	7.34	7.87	7.60	7.98
Southeast	7.50	8.96	8.12	8.87
FL	7.80	8.30	7.87	8.81
Lake	10.51	9.44	9.65	10.54
Cornbelt I	9.68	8.64	9.01	9.72
Cornbelt II	9.24	9.01	9.08	9.50
Delta	8.56	7.89	8.30	8.63
Northern Plains	9.18	9.43	9.37	10.00
Southern Plains	8.13	8.51	8.29	8.85
Mountain I	8.51	8.17	8.25	8.53
Mountain II	9.15	8.73	8.85	9.66
Mountain III	6.92	8.22	7.48	8.12
Pacific	8.63	9.93	8.87	9.71
CA	8.20	10.10	8.46	9.38
HI <sup>4</sup>	9.31		9.36	11.04
US <sup>3</sup>	8.29	8.91	8.50	9.32

<sup>1</sup> Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

<sup>2</sup> Region map on page 13.

<sup>3</sup> Excludes AK.

<sup>4</sup> Insufficient data for livestock.

**Hired Workers: Number and Hours Worked by Region  
and United States, October 6-12, 2002 <sup>1</sup>**

U.S. and Region <sup>2</sup>	Hired			
	Number of Workers	Expected to be Employed		Number of Hours Worked
		150 Days or More	149 Days or Less	
	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>Hours per Week</i>
Northeast I	50	36	14	41.2
Northeast II	41	34	7	36.4
Appalachian I	42	25	17	33.1
Appalachian II	36	17	19	30.3
Southeast	33	21	12	36.4
FL	57	51	6	38.9
Lake	64	41	23	34.7
Cornbelt I	42	25	17	38.7
Cornbelt II	25	13	12	34.7
Delta	38	29	9	38.9
Northern Plains	34	25	9	43.8
Southern Plains	58	46	12	41.7
Mountain I	30	21	9	45.1
Mountain II	16	10	6	35.7
Mountain III	19	16	3	45.7
Pacific	77	46	31	39.2
CA	*270	*222	*48	45.5
HI	8	7	1	37.9
US <sup>3</sup>	*940	*685	*255	40.4

\* Revised.

<sup>1</sup> Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

<sup>2</sup> Region map on page 13.

<sup>3</sup> Excludes AK.

**Hired Workers: Wage Rates for Type of Worker and All Hired Workers  
by Region and United States, October 6-12, 2002 <sup>1</sup>**

U.S. and Region <sup>2</sup>	Type of Worker			Wage Rates for All Hired Workers
	Field	Livestock	Field & Lvstk Combined	
	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>
Northeast I	9.16	7.70	8.76	9.36
Northeast II	8.61	8.17	8.51	9.29
Appalachian I	7.57	8.00	7.70	8.21
Appalachian II	7.13	7.46	7.21	7.50
Southeast	7.30	8.25	7.56	8.18
FL	7.50	8.60	7.72	8.67
Lake	9.28	9.11	9.21	9.73
Cornbelt I	8.49	8.89	8.54	8.90
Cornbelt II	8.69	8.30	8.59	8.81
Delta	7.12	7.72	7.27	7.77
Northern Plains	9.01	9.03	9.02	9.32
Southern Plains	7.05	7.32	7.18	7.57
Mountain I	7.84	7.95	7.89	8.13
Mountain II	8.31	8.79	8.50	8.79
Mountain III	7.07	8.24	7.42	8.25
Pacific	8.91	9.36	8.99	9.47
CA	*8.60	*9.30	*8.68	*9.39
HI <sup>4</sup>	9.25		9.32	11.02
US <sup>3</sup>	*8.34	*8.42	*8.36	*8.95

\* Revised.

<sup>1</sup> Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

<sup>2</sup> Region map on page 13.

<sup>3</sup> Excludes AK.

<sup>4</sup> Insufficient data for livestock.

**Hired Workers: Number and Hours Worked by Region  
and United States, January 6-12, 2002 <sup>1</sup>**

U.S. and Region <sup>2</sup>	Hired			
	Number of Workers	Expected to be Employed		Number of Hours Worked
		150 Days or More <sup>3</sup>	149 Days or Less <sup>3</sup>	
	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>Hours per Week</i>
Northeast I	33	31	2	40.0
Northeast II	33	29	4	38.1
Appalachian I	29	26	3	36.6
Appalachian II	25	15	10	34.4
Southeast	25	21	4	35.7
FL	62	50	12	37.2
Lake	38	33	5	33.5
Cornbelt I	30	25	5	40.4
Cornbelt II	24	21	3	33.5
Delta	24	18	6	33.1
Northern Plains	28	25	3	38.5
Southern Plains	61	54	7	41.5
Mountain I	18	16	2	34.5
Mountain II	17	13	4	33.2
Mountain III	18	16	2	47.7
Pacific	48	39	9	34.6
CA	186	145	41	42.1
HI	8	7	1	37.0
US <sup>3</sup>	707	584	123	38.5

<sup>1</sup> Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

<sup>2</sup> Region map on page 13.

<sup>3</sup> Excludes AK.



**Hired Workers: Wage Rates for Type of Worker and All Hired Workers  
by Region and United States, January 6-12, 2002 <sup>1</sup>**

U.S. and Region <sup>2</sup>	Type of Worker			Wage Rates for All Hired Workers
	Field	Livestock	Field & Lvstk Combined	
	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>
Northeast I	9.58	7.80	8.69	9.46
Northeast II	8.71	6.88	7.95	8.87
Appalachian I	7.73	7.94	7.83	8.72
Appalachian II	6.72	7.18	6.93	7.29
Southeast	7.56	7.61	7.58	8.08
FL	8.15	8.55	8.20	8.97
Lake	10.22	8.26	8.94	9.91
Cornbelt I	9.03	9.22	9.15	9.75
Cornbelt II	8.62	9.41	9.26	9.74
Delta	7.90	7.21	7.61	7.95
Northern Plains	8.34	8.41	8.39	9.00
Southern Plains	7.82	7.37	7.57	8.05
Mountain I	8.02	7.74	7.81	8.34
Mountain II	8.54	8.48	8.51	9.15
Mountain III	7.57	8.48	7.85	8.42
Pacific	8.18	9.64	8.42	9.21
CA	8.25	9.69	8.36	9.22
HI <sup>4</sup>	9.36		9.33	10.90
US <sup>3</sup>	8.25	8.20	8.23	8.97

<sup>1</sup> Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

<sup>2</sup> Region map on page 13.

<sup>3</sup> Excludes AK.

<sup>4</sup> Insufficient data for livestock.

**Field and Livestock Workers Combined: Wage Rates, by Type  
of Farm, by Region and 48 States <sup>1</sup>**

Region <sup>2</sup>	January 6-12, 2002				January 12-18, 2003			
	Field Crops	Other Crops	L'stk & Poultry	All Farms	Field Crops	Other Crops	L'stk & Poultry	All Farms
	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>
Northeast	9.13	9.32	7.37	8.32	( <sup>3</sup> )	9.63	8.30	9.00
Appalachian	6.43	7.94	7.64	7.40	( <sup>3</sup> )	7.98	7.68	7.99
Southeast	7.58	8.05	8.37	8.07	7.20	7.77	8.59	7.93
Lake	12.92	10.75	7.93	8.94	11.85	9.52	9.57	9.65
Cornbelt	9.82	9.13	8.99	9.19	9.38	8.53	8.95	9.04
Delta	8.42	7.00	7.23	7.61	6.64	( <sup>3</sup> )	7.40	8.30
Northern Plains	9.19	( <sup>3</sup> )	7.90	8.39	9.04	8.25	7.73	9.37
Southern Plains	7.45	8.57	7.24	7.57	7.19	6.83	9.29	8.29
Mountain	7.70	8.33	7.81	8.02	6.86	8.08	8.82	8.14
Pacific	7.42	8.21	9.90	8.39	( <sup>3</sup> )	8.26	9.86	8.53
48 States	7.93	8.37	8.20	8.25	8.20	8.25	8.86	8.50

**All Hired Workers: Wage Rates, by Economic Class of Farm  
by Region and 48 States <sup>1</sup>**

Region <sup>2</sup>	January 6-12, 2002					January 12-18, 2003				
	Gross Value Sales-\$1,000's				All Farms	Gross Value Sales-\$1,000's				All Farms
	<50	50-99	100-249	250+		<50	50-99	100-249	250+	
	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>
N. East	9.63	7.75	8.66	9.32	9.17	10.03	7.60	9.74	10.38	9.95
Appal.	7.08	6.51	7.71	9.03	8.08	8.46	7.42	8.31	9.67	8.67
S. East	7.65	7.50	8.26	8.88	8.76	8.21	7.93	8.74	8.89	8.82
Lake	( <sup>3</sup> )	( <sup>3</sup> )	( <sup>3</sup> )	10.46	9.91	10.61	7.60	9.33	10.80	10.54
Cornbelt	8.53	6.27	9.58	10.03	9.75	9.27	( <sup>3</sup> )	8.76	10.00	9.63
Delta	7.37	7.37	7.14	8.67	7.95	7.00	7.22	7.50	8.93	8.63
N. Plains	( <sup>3</sup> )	7.56	7.98	9.29	9.00	7.47	6.70	9.63	10.23	10.00
S. Plains	6.18	8.08	7.33	8.43	8.05	( <sup>3</sup> )	7.93	8.88	8.49	8.85
Mountain	( <sup>3</sup> )	7.53	7.37	8.54	8.60	7.43	7.68	8.14	9.13	8.75
Pacific	9.64	8.85	8.39	9.21	9.16	8.83	9.36	10.14	9.87	9.43
48 States	8.75	7.57	8.06	9.19	8.94	8.73	9.12	9.09	9.60	9.31

<sup>1</sup> Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

<sup>2</sup> Regions consist of the following States:

Northeast: CT, DE, MD, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT.

Appalachian: KY, NC, TN, VA, WV.

Southeast: AL, FL, GA, SC.

Lake: MI, MN, WI.

Cornbelt: IA, IL, IN, MO, OH.

Delta: AR, LA, MS.

Northern Plains: KS, NE, ND, SD.

Southern Plains: OK, TX.

Mountain: AZ, CO, ID, MT, NM, NV, UT, WY.

Pacific: CA, OR, WA.

48 States: All States, excluding AK and HI.

<sup>3</sup> Insufficient data.

**Field and Livestock Workers: Distribution  
by Type of Farm, 48 States<sup>1 2 3</sup>**

Type of Farm	January 6-12, 2002	October 6-12, 2002	January 12-18, 2003
	<i>Percent of Field and Livestock Workers</i>	<i>Percent of Field and Livestock Workers</i>	<i>Percent of Field and Livestock Workers</i>
Field Crops	13	14	8
Other Crops	50	57	54
Livestock, Dairy, & Poultry	37	29	38

**Hired Workers: Distribution by Economic  
Class of Farm, 48 States<sup>1 3</sup>**

Gross Value of Sales	January 6-12, 2002	October 6-12, 2002	January 12-18, 2003
	<i>Percent of Hired Workers</i>	<i>Percent of Hired Workers</i>	<i>Percent of Hired Workers</i>
Less than \$50,000 <sup>4</sup>	7	11	16
\$50,000-\$99,999 <sup>5</sup>	6	4	29
\$100,000-\$249,999	12	13	9
\$250,000 and over	75	72	46

**Hired Workers: Distribution by Category, United States,<sup>1 3</sup>**

Category	January 6-12, 2002	October 6-12, 2002	January 12-18, 2003
	<i>Percent of Hired Workers</i>	<i>Percent of Hired Workers</i>	<i>Percent of Hired Workers</i>
Employed on Farms Hiring			
1 Worker	10	7	9
2 Workers	9	13	10
3-6 Workers	22	17	19
7-10 Workers	8	9	10
At least 11 Workers	51	54	52

<sup>1</sup> 48 States, excluding AK and HI.

<sup>2</sup> Field and Livestock Workers combined.

<sup>3</sup> Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

<sup>4</sup> Sales category changed from "Less than \$40,000" to "Less than \$50,000" beginning July 2002.

<sup>5</sup> Sales category changed from "\$40,000 - \$99,999" to "\$50,000 - \$99,999" beginning July 2002.

## Agricultural Services

Crew leaders and custom crews provided 160,000 workers for the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of January 12-18, 2003. Service workers in California numbered 75,000 this January, up 6 percent from last year. Florida's number of service workers was 17,000, down 11 percent from last year.

The average wages received by agricultural service workers in California and Florida were \$8.70 and \$9.35 per hour, respectively. Comparable wages in January 2002 were \$8.36 in California and \$8.25 in Florida.

**Agricultural Service Workers: Number, Hours Worked, and Wage Rates,  
for California, Florida, and United States <sup>1</sup>**

State	Number of Workers Working on Farms			Hours Worked <sup>2</sup>			Wage Rates <sup>2 3</sup>		
	Jan 2002	Oct 2002	Jan 2003	Jan 2002	Oct 2002	Jan 2003	Jan 2002	Oct 2002	Jan 2003
	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>
CA	71.0	121.0	75.0	35.4	42.1	35.5	8.36	*8.10	8.70
FL	19.0	5.0	17.0	38.5	31.5	32.0	8.25	9.00	9.35
US	183.0	271.0	160.0						

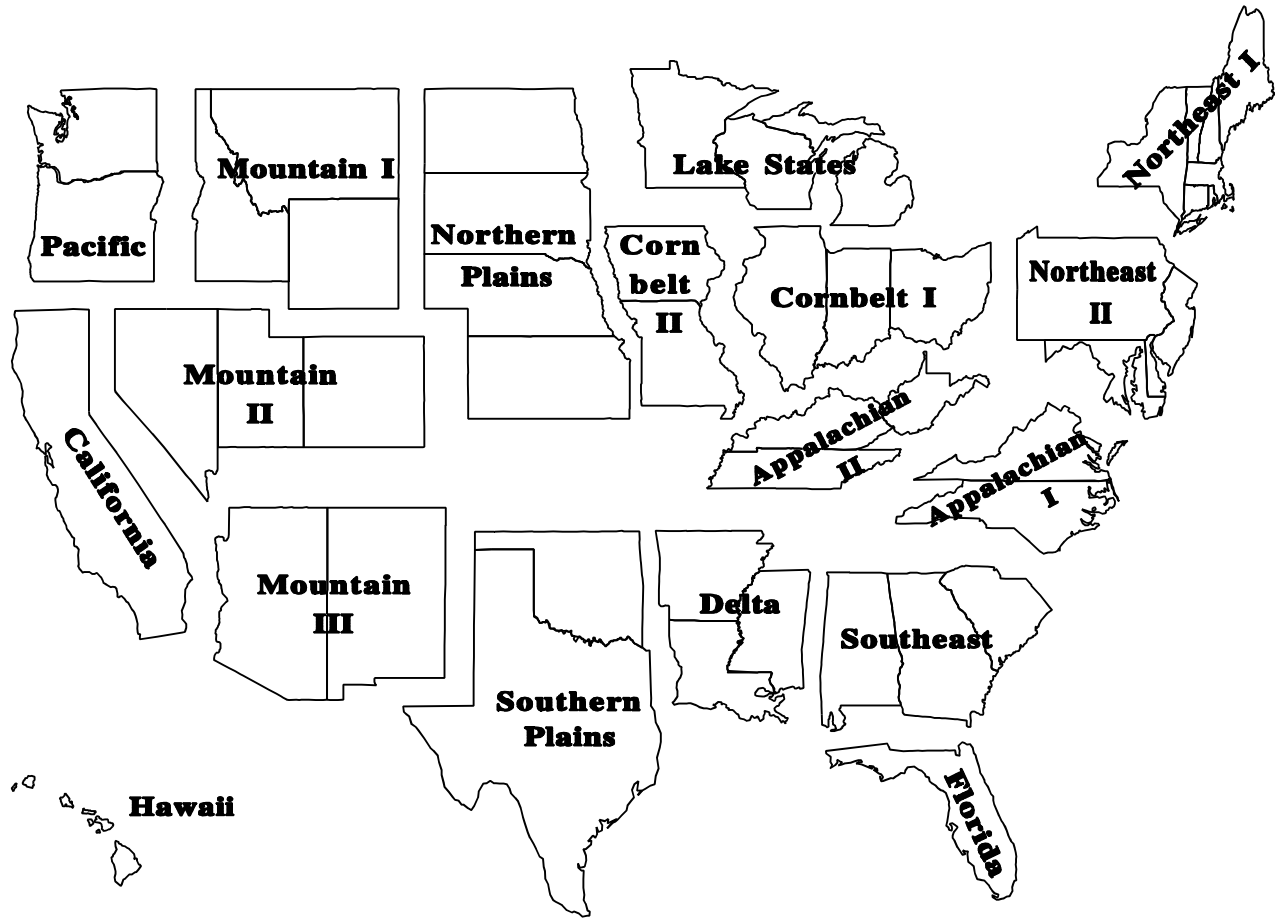
\* Revised.

<sup>1</sup> Data 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.

<sup>2</sup> United States data not available.

<sup>3</sup> Benefits, such as housing and meals, are provided to some workers but the values are not included in the wage rates.

## Farm Labor Regions



Region	States
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	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.

## Reliability of Farm Labor Estimates

**Survey Procedures:** These data were collected by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) during the last two weeks of January 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 an area sampling frame. 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 NASS list of farms; those not found on the list are included in the labor survey sample to represent all farms. 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 January 12-18, 2003.

**Reliability:** Two types of errors, sampling and non-sampling, are always present in an estimate based on a sample survey. Both types affect the "accuracy" 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 at the U.S. level is normally less than 5 percent. The relative sampling error for the number of hired workers generally ranged between 11 and 23 percent at the regional level. The U.S. all hired farm worker wage rate had a relative sampling error of 1.0 percent. The relative sampling error was 0.8 percent for the combined field and livestock worker wage rate. Relative sampling errors for the all hired farm worker wage rate generally ranged between 2 and 6 percent at the regional levels. Relative sampling errors for wage rates published by type of farm and economic class of farm ranged between 1 and 21 percent at the regional level.

Non-sampling errors can occur in a complete census 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 editing, coding or processing the data. Special efforts are taken at each step of the survey to minimize non-sampling 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 2002 and October 2002 were subject to revision with this report. Revisions were made and previous data are reprinted in this report for your information.

**Next Farm Labor Publication Date:** The May 16th report will have information for the survey week of April 6-12, 2003. The report will include the number of All Hired Workers, Average Hours Worked by Hired Workers and the All Hired Worker Wage Rates at the regional and U.S. levels. The wage rate for field, livestock, and combined field and livestock workers will also be available at the regional and U.S. level. The number of Agricultural Service Workers and the corresponding wage rates will be published for California and Florida.

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