



Florida Agricultural Statistics Service  
1222 Woodward Street  
Orlando, Florida 32803  
407 / 648-6013

<http://www.nass.usda.gov/fl>



FLORIDA  
AGRICULTURE

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# FARM LABOR

## FLORIDA

The number of workers paid by farmers and agricultural services totaled 56,000 for the week of January 9 through 15. Farmers hired 48,000 workers compared with 52,000 in October 2004 and 61,000 in January 2004. Agricultural services provided 8,000 paid workers, up 5,000 from last quarter, but 6,000 less than those supplied a year ago. The hurricanes of 2004 severely damaged or destroyed several nurseries, lessening the need for hired workers. Warm temperatures kept field work on schedule during the first part of the survey week; however, towards the end of the week significant showers brought much needed rains to many areas. Citrus and vegetable harvesting were active. Grove caretaking practices included limited mowing, hedging and topping, and continued removal of hurricane damaged trees. Spring crop vegetable planting

was active over the southern Peninsula. Sugarcane harvesting continued in the Everglades region with some activity delayed by rains at the end of the week.

The January all hired worker wage rate averaged \$9.52 per hour, 60 cents more than the \$8.92 paid last year and 32 cents more than last quarter. Farmers paid an average of \$9.52 per hour, 38 cents higher than the \$9.14 paid in October, and 67 cents above the \$8.85 paid last year. Agricultural services paid workers an average of \$9.50 per hour, 70 cents lower than the \$10.20 paid last quarter and 25 cents above the \$9.25 paid last year.

## UNITED STATES

There were 749,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of January 9-15, 2005, down 12 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 574,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 175,000 workers.

weather for most of the reference week was in sharp contrast to last year, when a major winter snowstorm in Tennessee had caused peak demand for livestock workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$9.81 per hour during the January 2005 reference week, up 40 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$8.73 per hour, up 34 cents from last January, while livestock workers earned \$9.19 per hour compared with \$8.83 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$8.91 per hour, was up 36 cents from last year.

The largest increases in the number of hired farm workers from a year ago were in the Corn Belt I (Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio), Northern Plains (Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota), Mountain III (Arizona and New Mexico), and Northeast I (New England and New York) regions. In the Corn Belt I region, a snowstorm and flooding in Indiana led to more supplemental feeding and livestock care, increasing the need for hired workers. Dry conditions prevailed over most of the Northern Plains region and allowed for increased movement of grain to market. Therefore, more hired workers were required. In the Mountain III region, vegetable harvest in Arizona was in full swing, necessitating more field workers. A return to more normal weather conditions in the Northeast I region compared to last year's Arctic cold snap led to a slightly higher demand for hired workers.

The number of hours worked averaged 36.8 hours for hired workers during the survey week, down 3 percent from a year ago.

The largest decreases in the number of hired farm workers from last year occurred in California, and in the Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas), Lake (Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin), and Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia) regions. In California, record rainfall prior to and during the reference week severely curtailed field activities in the southern half of the State. Elsewhere, cool, foggy conditions persisted. Therefore, the demand for hired workers was down considerably. In the Southern Plains, heavy rains in Texas slowed vegetable planting and cotton harvest, so fewer workers were required. Lower inventories of hogs and dairy cattle in the Lake region lessened the demand for hired workers. In the Appalachian II region, unseasonably warm

Hired farm worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Southern Plains, Mountain I (Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming), Florida, and Pacific (Oregon and Washington) regions. The higher wages in the Southern Plains were due to a larger concentration of full time workers in the work force. In the Mountain I region, wages were up due to a higher percentage of skilled machine operators in the work force. Wages in Florida and the Pacific region were higher because of more salaried workers putting in fewer hours which pushed their hourly wage higher.

**TABLE 1 -- Florida agricultural workers, number of workers, wage rates, and hours worked, January 9 - 15, 2005, with comparisons**

Employer, Year, and survey week	Hired Workers						
	Number of workers			Hours Worked Per Week	Wages Paid by Type of Work		
	All	Expected to work			All	Field	Livestock
		150 days or more	149 days or less				
<b>HIRED BY FARMERS</b>							
	<i>Thousands</i>			<i>Hours</i>	<i>Dollars Per Hour <sup>1/</sup></i>		
<b>2005</b>							
<b>January 9 - 15</b>	48.0	37.0	11.0	38.7	9.52	8.50	8.60
<b>2004</b>							
<b>October 10 - 16</b>	52.0	44.0	8.0	39.4	9.14	7.95	9.10
July 11 - 17	39.0	33.0	6.0	39.2	9.63	8.70	9.10
April 11 - 17	57.0	53.0	4.0	38.3	8.79	7.85	8.60
<b>January 11-17</b>	61.0	54.0	7.0	41.7	8.85	7.70	8.60
<b>2003</b>							
October 12 -18	49.0	43.0	6.0	39.1	9.53	8.55	7.95
July 6 - 12	45.0	39.0	6.0	39.0	9.55	8.55	8.30
April 6 - 12	53.0	42.0	11.0	38.3	8.86	8.05	8.10
January 12 - 18	70.0	56.0	14.0	37.2	8.81	7.80	8.30
<b>HIRED BY AGRICULTURAL SERVICES</b>							
<b>2005</b>							
<b>January 9 - 15</b>	8.0			40.0	9.50		
<b>2004</b>							
<b>October 10 - 16</b>	3.0			40.0	10.20		
July 11 - 17	3.0			45.0	9.70		
April 11 - 17	9.0			38.0	9.25		
<b>January 11-17</b>	14.0			38.5	9.25		
<b>2003</b>							
October 12 -18	4.0			38.0	9.65		
July 6 - 12	3.0			41.0	9.25		
April 6 - 12	17.0			33.0	9.40		
January 12 - 18	17.0			32.0	9.35		
<b>HIRED BY BOTH FARMERS &amp; AGRICULTURAL SERVICES</b>							
<b>2005</b>							
<b>January 9 - 15</b>	56.0				9.52		
<b>2004</b>							
<b>October 10 - 16</b>	55.0				9.20		
July 11 - 17	42.0				9.64		
April 11 - 17	66.0				8.85		
<b>January 11-17</b>	75.0				8.92		
<b>2003</b>							
October 12 -18	53.0				9.54		
July 6 - 12	48.0				9.53		
April 6 - 12	70.0				8.98		
January 12 - 18	87.0				8.90		

<sup>1/</sup> Benefits, such as housing and meals, are provided some workers but the values are not included in the wage rates.

**TABLE 2 -- Number of workers hired by farmers, wage rates, and hours worked, selected States, January 9 - 15, 2005, with comparisons <sup>1/</sup>**

Item	Florida	California	Texas & Oklahoma	Arizona & New Mexico	Hawaii	United States <sup>2/</sup>
<i>Thousands</i>						
<b>ALL HIRED WORKERS</b>						
<b>January 9 - 15, 2005</b>	48	128	50	19	7	574
October 10 - 16, 2004	52	200	44	23	8	851
January 11 - 17, 2004	61	190	60	16	7	662
<b>EXPECTED TO WORK</b>						
<b>150 days or more</b>						
<b>January 9 - 15, 2005</b>	37	103	41	17	6	478
October 10 - 16, 2004	44	*156	32	19	7	*606
January 11 - 17, 2004	54	155	45	15	6	549
<b>149 days or less</b>						
<b>January 9 - 15, 2005</b>	11	25	9	2	1	96
October 10 - 16, 2004	8	*44	12	4	1	*245
January 11 - 17, 2004	7	35	15	1	1	113
<i>Dollars per hour <sup>3/</sup></i>						
<b>ALL HIRED WORKER WAGE RATE</b>						
<b>January 9 - 15, 2005</b>	9.52	9.94	9.56	8.61	11.52	9.81
October 10 - 16, 2004	9.14	*9.33	9.34	7.75	11.52	*9.32
January 11 - 17, 2004	8.85	9.47	8.43	8.37	11.11	9.41
<b>WAGES BY TYPE OF WORKER</b>						
<b>Field &amp; Livestock</b>						
<b>January 9 - 15, 2005</b>	8.51	8.88	8.75	8.02	9.98	8.91
October 10 - 16, 2004	8.05	*8.63	8.53	7.36	10.01	*8.69
January 11 - 17, 2004	7.77	8.54	7.73	7.69	9.39	8.55
<b>Field</b>						
<b>January 9 - 15, 2005</b>	8.50	8.60	8.01	7.70	9.94	8.73
October 10 - 16, 2004	7.95	*8.43	8.44	7.03	9.97	*8.62
January 11 - 17, 2004	7.70	8.41	7.46	7.44	9.26	8.39
<b>Livestock</b>						
<b>January 9 - 15, 2005</b>	8.60	10.30	9.35	8.41	<sup>4/</sup>	9.19
October 10 - 16, 2004	9.10	9.57	8.68	8.04	<sup>4/</sup>	8.91
January 11 - 17, 2004	8.60	9.25	7.97	7.98	<sup>4/</sup>	8.83
<i>Average hours per week</i>						
<b>HOURS WORKED BY ALL HIRED WORKERS</b>						
<b>January 9 - 15, 2005</b>	38.7	39.9	37.0	45.2	36.3	36.8
October 10 - 16, 2004	39.4	*45.0	40.3	44.0	37.5	40.5
January 11 - 17, 2004	41.7	41.8	34.0	44.9	39.4	38.1

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

<sup>2/</sup> United States excludes Alaska.

<sup>3/</sup> Value of any perquisites provided are not included in wage rates.

<sup>4/</sup> Insufficient data for this category; included in all hired wages.

\* Revised.

## 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 9-15, 2005.

**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 5 and 22 percent at the regional level. The U.S. all hired farm worker wage rate had a relative sampling error of 1.6 percent. The relative sampling error was 1.6 percent for the combined field and livestock worker wage rate. Relative sampling errors for the all hired farm worker wage rate generally ranged between 4 and 19 percent at the regional levels. Relative sampling errors for wage rates published by type of farm and economic class of farm generally ranged between 3 and 35 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 2004 and October 2004 were subject to revision with this report. If any revisions were made to previous data, they are reprinted in this report for your information, and they are identified as such.