



United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service



FARM LABOR

Cooperating with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
2290 Lucien Way, Suite 300, Maitland, FL 32751
(407) 648-6013 · (407) 648-6029 FAX · www.nass.usda.gov/fl

May 27, 2009

FLORIDA

The number of workers paid by farmers and agricultural services totaled 53,000 during the survey week of April 12 through 18. Farmers hired 46,000 workers, 8,000 more than last quarter, and 5,000 less than a year ago. Agricultural services provided 7,000 paid workers, down 2,000 from last quarter, and 1,000 from April 2008.

Warm temperatures and scattered showers during the survey week contributed to a good combination for field work. Potato harvest remained active and digging began in the Hastings area. Blueberry harvesting continued and spring crops began in areas of the southern Peninsula. Vegetable growers reported a preliminary 156.1 million pounds of vegetables and non-citrus fruits, up from the preliminary 134.0 million in January 2009. Citrus caretakers applied nutritional spray, pesticides, hedging, and topping behind harvest, and conducted tree care. Citrus producers harvested 7,057,000 boxes (preliminary) during the survey week compared to 8,300,000 harvested last quarter.

The April combined farmers and agricultural all hired worker wage rate average was \$10.33 per hour, 19 cents more than the \$10.14 paid last quarter, and 11 cents more than the \$10.22 paid a year ago. Farmers paid an average of \$10.33 per hour, 17 cents more than the \$10.16 paid in the previous quarter, and 8 cents more than the \$10.25 paid the previous year. Agricultural services paid workers an average of \$10.30 per hour, 25 cents more than last quarter and last year.

UNITED STATES

Hired Workers Down 2 Percent, Wage Rates up 3 Percent From a Year Ago

There were 903,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of April 12-18, 2009, down 2 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 680,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 223,000 workers. Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$10.84 per hour during the April 2009 reference week, up 27 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$9.99 per hour, up 34 cents from last April, while livestock workers earned \$10.25 per hour compared with \$10.24 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$10.07 per hour, was up 23 cents from last year. The number of hours worked averaged 40.1 hours for hired workers during the survey week, down 2 percent from a year ago.

The largest decreases in the number of hired workers from last year occurred in California and in the Corn Belt I (Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio), Northeast II (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania), Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia), and Pacific (Oregon and Washington) regions. In California, below normal snow pack has led to serious cutbacks in available irrigation water. Therefore, considerable acreage has been left fallow, reducing the demand for field workers. Persistent rain and wet conditions in the Corn Belt I region curtailed most field activities, so fewer hired workers were required. In the Northeast II and Appalachian II regions, the cool, wet spring kept crop development behind normal, lessening the need for field workers. Small grain planting in the Pacific region was considerably behind the normal pace due to cool temperatures and wet soils. Therefore, field worker demand was lower than the previous year.

The largest increases in the number of hired workers from last year occurred in the Southern Plains, (Oklahoma and Texas), Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi), Southeast (Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina), Lake (Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin) and Mountain III (Arizona and New Mexico) regions. Declining pasture conditions in the Southern Plains region led to increased supplemental feeding and increased the demand for livestock workers. Also, cotton planting in southern Texas gained momentum, so more field workers were required. In the Delta region, continued strong demand from the nursery and greenhouse industries resulted in more hired workers. High demand from poultry operations in the Southeast region pushed worker numbers above last year. In the Lake region, drier conditions compared with last year's extremely wet reference week led to increased worker demand. Snowstorms in New Mexico caused livestock stress and more supplemental feeding in the Mountain III region. Also, cotton planting in Arizona was in full swing. These factors led to a greater need for hired workers.

Continued on page 4

TABLE 1 -- Florida agricultural workers, number of workers, wage rates, and hours worked, April 12 through 18, 2009, with comparisons

Employer, Year, and Survey Week	Number of Hired 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					
	<i>Thousands</i>			<i>Hours</i>	<i>Dollars Per Hour^{2/}</i>			
HIRED BY FARMERS ^{1/}								
2009	April 12 - 18	46.0	39.0	7.0	38.3	10.33	9.15	9.35
	January 11 - 17	38.0	31.0	7.0	37.8	10.16	8.95	9.45
2008	October 12 - 18	38.0	32.0	6.0	39.7	10.09	8.90	9.30
	July 6 - 12	42.0	39.0	3.0	40.9	9.90	8.84	9.25
	April 6 - 12	51.0	45.0	6.0	41.5	10.25	9.32	9.59
	January 6 - 12	49.0	45.0	4.0	41.8	9.98	9.00	9.20
2007	October 7 - 13	43.0	39.0	4.0	41.8	9.76	8.70	8.95
	July 8 - 14	41.0	39.0	2.0	41.0	9.49	8.50	8.60
	April 8 - 14	55.0	46.0	9.0	39.2	10.01	9.20	9.00
	January 7 - 13 ^{3/}							
HIRED BY AGRICULTURAL SERVICES								
2009	April 12 - 18	7.0			33.0	10.30		
	January 11 - 17	9.0			36.7	10.05		
2008	October 12 - 18	3.0			42.0	10.05		
	July 6 - 12	2.0			43.0	9.85		
	April 6 - 12	8.0			40.0	10.05		
	January 6 - 12	9.0			41.0	9.90		
2007	October 7 - 13	4.0			42.0	9.55		
	July 8 - 14	2.0			43.0	9.60		
	April 8 - 14	8.0			40.0	10.45		
	January 7 - 13 ^{3/}							
HIRED BY BOTH FARMERS & AGRICULTURAL SERVICES								
2009	April 12 - 18	53.0				10.33		
	January 11 - 17	47.0				10.14		
2008	October 12 - 18	41.0				10.09		
	July 6 - 12	44.0				9.90		
	April 6 - 12	59.0				10.22		
	January 6 - 12	58.0				9.97		
2007	October 7 - 13	47.0				9.74		
	July 8 - 14	43.0				9.50		
	April 8 - 14	63.0				10.07		
	January 7 - 13 ^{3/}							

^{1/} Excludes Agricultural Services workers.

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

^{3/} The January Farm Labor Survey was not conducted.

TABLE 2 -- Number of workers hired by farmers, wage rates, and hours worked, Selected States, April 12 through 18, 2009, with comparisons ^{1/}

Item	Florida	California	Texas & Oklahoma	Arizona & New Mexico	Hawaii	United States ^{2/}
	<i>Thousands</i>					
ALL HIRED WORKERS						
April 12 – 18, 2009	46	138	62	20	6	680
January 11 – 17, 2009	38	132	65	20	6	595
April 6 – 12, 2008	51	156	45	17	6	700
EXPECTED TO WORK						
150 days or more						
April 12 – 18, 2009	39	119	53	19	5	554
January 11 – 17, 2009	31	112	55	18	5	497
April 6 – 12, 2008	45	135	35	16	5	563
149 days or less						
April 12 – 18, 2009	7	19	9	1	1	126
January 11 – 17, 2009	7	20	10	2	1	98
April 6 – 12, 2008	6	21	10	1	1	137
	<i>Average hours per week</i>					
HOURS WORKED BY ALL HIRED WORKERS						
April 12 – 18, 2009	38.3	43.9	40.7	45.2	36.8	40.1
January 11 – 17, 2009	37.8	41.3	40.4	49.7	37.9	38.3
April 6 – 12, 2008	41.5	43.7	42.1	43.6	38.5	40.8
	<i>Dollars per hour ^{3/}</i>					
WAGES BY TYPE OF WORKER						
Field						
April 12 – 18, 2009	9.15	9.96	9.67	9.16	11.30	9.99
January 11 – 17, 2009	8.95	*9.80	10.06	9.27	10.70	9.96
April 6 – 12, 2008	9.32	10.00	8.51	9.38	10.80	9.65
Livestock						
April 12 – 18, 2009	9.35	10.85	9.93	9.44	^{4/}	10.25
January 11 – 17, 2009	9.45	10.95	10.24	10.58	^{4/}	10.27
April 6 – 12, 2008	9.59	11.00	9.74	10.69	^{4/}	10.24
Field & Livestock Combined						
April 12 – 18, 2009	9.17	10.14	9.80	9.29	11.40	10.07
January 11 – 17, 2009	9.00	*10.09	10.15	9.75	10.93	10.08
April 6 – 12, 2008	9.35	10.16	9.05	9.97	10.91	9.84
ALL HIRED WORKER WAGE RATE						
April 12 – 18, 2009	10.33	11.07	10.40	10.10	13.36	10.84
January 11 – 17, 2009	10.16	*11.15	10.70	10.30	12.69	10.93
April 6 – 12, 2008	10.25	11.05	9.72	10.55	13.28	10.57

^{1/} Excludes Agricultural Service workers.

^{2/} United States exclude Alaska.

^{3/} Benefits, such as housing and meals, are provided some workers but the values are not included in the wage rates.

^{4/} Insufficient data for livestock.

* Revised

Hired worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Pacific, Northeast II, Appalachian I (North Carolina and Virginia), Mountain I (Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming), and Southern Plains regions. The higher wages in the Pacific region were due to more salaried workers working fewer hours. In the Northeast II region, a higher percentage of nursery and greenhouse workers caused the average wage to increase. The higher wages in the Appalachian I, Mountain I and Southern Plains regions were due to a lower proportion of part time workers.

Reliability of Farm Labor Estimates

SURVEY PROCEDURES: These data were collected by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) during the last two weeks of April 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 April 12-18, 2009.

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 8 and 20 percent at the regional level. The U.S. all hired farm worker wage rate had a relative sampling error of 0.9 percent. The relative sampling error was 0.9 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 5 percent at the regional levels. Relative sampling errors for wage rates published by type of farm and economic class of farm generally ranged between 2 and 19 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 2009 and April 2008 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.