



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE
NEW ENGLAND FIELD OFFICE
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USDA SURVEY TO FOCUS ON FARM LABOR

Concord, NH – How many workers are employed on agricultural operations in New England? Have farm labor jobs and wages been affected by the current economy? These are some of the key questions the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) hopes to shed light on through the July Agricultural Labor Survey.

“Now more than ever, labor issues are a concern in every industry and every community – including New England’s agricultural industry and rural communities,” explained Gary Keough, director of the NASS New England Field Office. “The Agricultural Labor Survey is very timely because it provides vital data that affect the agricultural labor force and farmers and their bottom lines.”

Statistics from the Agricultural Labor Survey are used by USDA and the Department of Labor to establish minimum wage rates for agricultural workers, administer farm labor recruitment and placement service programs, and assist legislators in determining labor policies.

During the last two weeks of July, NASS will contact selected New England farm operators and ask them to provide information on their total number of hired workers, hours worked, and wage rates paid during that week. For their convenience, survey participants have the option of responding online.

NASS will compile, analyze and publish survey results in the quarterly *Farm Labor* report, to be released on August 18, 2011.

“We strongly encourage participation in this survey. Only farmers and ranchers can provide the accurate information needed to build the foundation for reliable agricultural labor estimates,” said Keough.

As with all NASS surveys, information provided by respondents is confidential by law. “NASS safeguards the confidentiality of all responses, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified,” stated Keough. All reports are available on the NASS web site: www.nass.usda.gov. For more information on NASS surveys and reports, call the NASS New England Field Office at 1-800-642-9571.

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