



News Release

Cooperating with Texas Department of Agriculture

Texas Field Office · Post Office Box 70 · Austin, Texas 78767 · www.nass.usda.gov/tx

On: AGRICULTURAL LABOR SURVEY

Issue No.: SR-102-07

For Immediate Release: April 9, 2007

Contact: Trent Wickwire
(800) 626-3142

USDA TO GATHER DATA ON FARM LABOR

Austin, TX . . . How many workers are employed on agricultural operations? What is the average number of hours worked by employees? What wage rates are paid to workers? These are the key questions the Texas Field Office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will be asking producers statewide as part of the April Agricultural Labor Survey.

"The Agricultural Labor Survey is one of the most critical surveys conducted by NASS," explained David Abbe, director of the NASS Texas Field Office. "Labor expenses account for a significant portion of farmers' production costs. This survey provides the vital information needed to ensure employment regulations affecting farmers and their bottom lines are administered fairly."

Data from the Agricultural Labor Survey are used to establish minimum wage rates for domestic and foreign agricultural workers, administer farm labor recruitment and placement service programs, and assist legislators in determining labor policies.

"Participation in this survey is greatly encouraged – accurate information collected directly from farmers and ranchers will provide the foundation for reliable agricultural labor estimates," added Abbe.

During the last weeks of April, NASS will contact selected Texas producers by mail, telephone and in person and ask them to provide information on their total number of hired workers, hours worked and wage rates paid. The information will be compiled and published in the USDA quarterly *Farm Labor* report, scheduled to be released on May 18. Additional Agricultural Labor Surveys will follow in July, October, and January.

As with all NASS surveys, information provided by respondents is confidential by law. "NASS safeguards the confidentiality of all responses and publishes only state, regional, and national level data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified," stated Abbe. All reports are available on the NASS web site: www.nass.usda.gov. For more information on NASS surveys and reports, call the NASS Texas Field Office at (800) 626-3142.