



New England Agricultural Statistics Service

a field office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service
United States Department of Agriculture

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USDA MEASURES AGRICULTURAL LABOR COSTS

There were 43,000 hired workers on farms across New England and New York during the July 11-17, 2004 survey week, a 19 percent decrease from one year ago when there were 53,000 hired farm workers across the region. Nationally, 953,000 hired workers were on farms during the survey week, compared with 943,000 hired workers the previous year. In the Northeast region, hired workers earned an average of \$9.72 per hour during the July 2004 survey week, up 18 cents per hour from July 2003. Across the United States, hired workers were paid an average of \$9.10 per hour in July 2004 compared to \$8.88 in July 2003.

These statistics are summarized from USDA's quarterly **Agricultural Labor** survey. The cost and availability of farm labor are major components of operators' productivity and return on investment. Information about the agricultural labor force is very important to farmers, grower associations, lenders, lawmakers, and local and national agencies.

Beginning the third full week of October 2004, New England Agricultural Statistics Service will contact approximately 240 agricultural producers to ask for their help in a quarterly nationwide effort to measure the agricultural labor force. The producers selected for this project will be mailed a sample questionnaire and a letter requesting their help. Interviewers will conduct the survey through telephone or personal interviews between October 18 and October 29, 2004.

"The cooperation of area farmers is essential in order to ensure that agriculture in New England is clearly represented," said Aubrey Davis, Director of the New England Agricultural Statistics Service. Response to the survey is voluntary, however, cooperation from all growers is essential to provide an accurate picture of agricultural labor in this region. All information about individual farms is held in strict confidence; data are only used in combination with reports from other producers to generate regional and national statistics.

The National survey results will be available in the **Farm Labor Report** from Washington, D.C. on November 19, 2004 at 3:00 p.m. All reports are available on the Internet at www.usda.gov/nass/ within minutes of the scheduled release time and the Northeast and United States statistics are reprinted in our monthly **Ag Review**. The monthly New England **Ag Review** is available on the Internet at www.nass.usda.gov/nh/ and complimentary copies will be mailed to survey participants upon request.

[The New England Agricultural Statistics Service is a field office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. Located in Concord, New Hampshire, it is responsible for agricultural statistics in all six States in the region. The office can be reached at 1-800-642-9571 or through e-mail at nass-nh@nass.usda.gov. All National statistics and State level newsletters are available free from e-mail subscriptions and on the Internet at <http://www.usda.gov/nass/>.]

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