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NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

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USDA Reinstates Farm Labor Survey

WASHINGTON, July 1, 2011 - In July, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will resume its Agricultural Labor Survey after the U.S. Department of Labor agreed to pay its costs. NASS suspended the survey in April due to budget constraints.

“We are very pleased to be able to reinstate this important agricultural survey and provide the Department of Labor with the information it needs,” said NASS Administrator Cynthia Clark. “The Agricultural Labor Survey is critical in helping U.S. farmers and ranchers hire the workers necessary to grow and harvest the food and fiber we need each and every day.”

The Agricultural Labor Survey provides information on the number of agricultural workers, hours worked, and wage rates at the national and regional levels. Prior to the survey suspension, NASS interviewed nearly 12,000 farmers and ranchers every quarter to gather the information. According to the July 2010 Farm Labor Survey, more than 1.2 million hired workers were employed on U.S. farms and ranches, with an average wage of \$10.82 per hour.

The Department of Labor uses the survey information for its H-2A Program, which is a provision under the U.S. Immigration and Control Act. This program allows the department to issue certificates to agricultural producers, allowing admission of temporary non-immigrant alien farm workers for seasonal farm labor. To make accurate decisions, the department relies on NASS' agricultural labor data to analyze the farm labor supply and demand and establish the need for additional certifications.

“The information from this survey is crucial to the Department of Labor's H-2A temporary agricultural program,” said Department of Labor Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training Jane Oates. “It is the only reliable data available for the department to use in determining an appropriate wage to be paid for both H-2A program participants and U.S. employees working in corresponding employment positions.”

To provide the Department of Labor with accurate and updated information, NASS will once again survey producers beginning in July. The survey data from July will be published on Aug. 18, 2011, in the *Farm Labor* report. The report will ensure that the Department of Labor and the U.S. agriculture industry have accurate information available through the end of 2011.

The National Agricultural Statistics Service is committed to providing timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture. All NASS reports, including *Farm Labor*, are available online at www.nass.usda.gov.

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