



United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service



FARM LABOR

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FLORIDA

The number of workers paid by farmers and agricultural services totaled 59,000 for the week of April 6 through 12. Farmers hired 51,000 workers compared with 49,000 in January 2008. Agricultural services provided 8,000 paid workers, down 1,000 from last quarter.

Warm temperatures and scattered showers during the survey week contributed to a good combination for field work. The potato harvest began in the Hastings area. Winter wheat was in good condition in Leon County in the Panhandle. Harvesting of spring crops began in areas of the southern Peninsula. Vegetable growers reported a preliminary 162.5 million pounds of vegetables and non-citrus fruits harvested during the survey week, up from the preliminary 102.2 million in January 2008. Citrus growers were putting final applications of pesticides, fertilizing, hedging, and topping behind harvest and conducting tree care. Citrus producers (preliminary) harvested 7,008,000 boxes during the survey week compared to the 6,950,000 a year ago.

The April combined farmers and agricultural all hired worker wage rate average was \$10.22 per hour, 25 cents more than the \$9.97 paid last quarter. Farmers paid an average of \$10.25 per hour, 27 cents higher than the \$9.98 paid in the previous quarter. Agricultural services paid workers an average of \$10.05 per hour, 15 cents higher than the \$9.90 paid last quarter.

UNITED STATES

Hired Workers Down 7 Percent, Wage Rates up 4 Percent from a Year Ago

There were 919,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of April 6-12, 2008, down 7 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 700,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 219,000 workers. Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$10.60 per hour during the April 2008 reference week, up 40 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$9.65 per hour, up 30 cents from last April, while livestock workers earned \$10.32 per hour compared with \$9.59 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$9.87 per hour, was up 45 cents from last year. The number of hours worked averaged 41.0 hours for hired workers during the survey week, up 1 percent from a year ago.

The largest decreases in the number of hired workers from last year occurred in California and in the Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi), Southeast (Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina), Mountain I (Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming), and Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas) regions. In California, planted acreage of cotton, dry beans, and sugar beets declined sharply from 2007. Therefore, the demand for field workers was considerably lower. Excessive rain and flooding in the Delta region curtailed most field activities and lessened the need for field workers. In the Southeast region, wet conditions and low soil temperatures delayed corn and cotton planting in Alabama and Georgia, reducing the demand for field workers. Snow and cold temperatures across most of the Mountain I region halted planting activity until late in the week, and calving and lambing were behind normal. These factors led to reduced demand for field and livestock workers. In the Southern Plains region, heavy rains in Oklahoma more than offset the drier conditions in Texas and delayed planting of row crops, resulting in fewer hired workers.

The largest increases in the number of hired workers from last year occurred in the Appalachian I (North Carolina and Virginia), Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia), Northeast I (New England and New York), Pacific (Oregon and Washington), and Northern Plains (Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota) regions. Strong demand from poultry operations and from the nursery and greenhouse industries in the Appalachian I region caused hired worker numbers to be higher. In the Appalachian II region, strong demand from the equine and cattle industries led to an increase in hired workers. Last year's reference week weather in the Northeast I region was plagued by frigid temperatures and snow. A return to more normal weather patterns this year resulted in a greater need for hired workers. In the Pacific region, increased demand from fruit growers and from the nursery and greenhouse industries kept worker numbers above the previous year. Heavy snow in parts of the Northern Plains region caused livestock stress which led to more supplemental feeding and increased the need for hired workers.

Hired worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Mountain III (Arizona and New Mexico), Corn Belt I (Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio), Corn Belt II (Iowa and Missouri), Southeast and Appalachian I regions. In the Mountain III and Corn Belt I regions, the higher wages were due to a larger proportion of salaried workers putting in fewer hours, which pushed the average hourly wage higher. The wage increase in the Corn Belt II region was due to a smaller percentage of part time workers. In the Southeast and Appalachian I regions, the higher wages resulted from a higher proportion of nursery and greenhouse workers.

TABLE 1 -- Florida agricultural workers, number of workers, wage rates, and hours worked, April 6 through 12, 2008, with comparisons

Employer, Year, and Survey Week	Hired Workers							
	Number of 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</i> ^{2/}			
HIRED BY FARMERS ^{1/}								
2008	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/}							
2006	October 8 - 14	44.0	40.0	4.0	41.1	9.42	8.50	9.10
	July 9 - 15	43.0	38.0	5.0	41.0	9.40	8.39	9.10
	April 9 - 15	52.0	44.0	8.0	40.4	9.19	8.37	8.50
	January 8 - 14	49.0	38.0	11.0	39.2	9.55	8.80	8.80
HIRED BY AGRICULTURAL SERVICES								
2008	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/}							
2006	October 8 - 14	5.0			42.0	9.90		
	July 9 - 15	3.0			45.0	9.50		
	April 9 - 15	8.0			40.0	9.60		
	January 8 - 14	9.0			40.0	9.20		
HIRED BY BOTH FARMERS & AGRICULTURAL SERVICES								
2008	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/}							
2006	October 8 - 14	49.0				9.47		
	July 9 - 15	46.0				9.41		
	April 9 - 15	60.0				9.24		
	January 8 - 14	58.0				9.49		

^{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 6 through 12, 2008, with comparisons ^{1/}

Item	Florida	California	Texas & Oklahoma	Arizona & New Mexico	Hawaii	United States ^{2/}
	<i>Thousands</i>					
ALL HIRED WORKERS						
April 6 – 12, 2008	51	156	45	17	6	700
January 6 – 12, 2008	49	*132	59	15	6	*594
April 8 – 14, 2007	55	176	50	17	7	736
EXPECTED TO WORK						
150 days or more						
April 6 – 12, 2008	45	135	35	16	5	563
January 6 – 12, 2008	45	*114	52	14	5	*506
April 8 – 14, 2007	46	148	38	16	6	593
149 days or less						
April 6 – 12, 2008	6	21	10	1	1	137
January 6 – 12, 2008	4	18	7	1	1	88
April 8 – 14, 2007	9	28	12	1	1	143
	<i>Average hours per week</i>					
HOURS WORKED BY ALL HIRED WORKERS						
April 6 – 12, 2008	41.5	44.5	42.1	43.6	38.5	41.0
January 6 – 12, 2008	41.8	40.7	38.4	46.6	38.4	38.4
April 8 – 14, 2007	39.2	45.6	37.9	44.5	39.2	40.7
	<i>Dollars per hour ^{3/}</i>					
WAGES BY TYPE OF WORKER						
Field						
April 6 – 12, 2008	9.32	10.00	8.51	9.38	10.80	9.65
January 6 – 12, 2008	9.00	*10.20	8.49	8.68	10.80	*9.67
April 8 – 14, 2007	9.20	9.62	8.35	8.25	10.60	9.35
Livestock						
April 6 – 12, 2008	9.59	11.50	9.74	10.69	^{4/}	10.32
January 6 – 12, 2008	9.20	10.70	10.03	10.47	^{4/}	*10.18
April 8 – 14, 2007	9.00	10.90	9.41	8.88	^{4/}	9.59
Field & Livestock Combined						
April 6 – 12, 2008	9.35	10.26	9.05	9.97	10.91	9.87
January 6 – 12, 2008	9.03	*10.32	9.30	9.41	10.92	*9.88
April 8 – 14, 2007	9.17	9.82	8.80	8.51	10.77	9.42
ALL HIRED WORKER WAGE RATE						
April 6 – 12, 2008	10.25	11.14	9.72	10.55	13.28	10.60
January 6 – 12, 2008	9.98	*11.56	9.81	9.95	13.04	*10.81
April 8 – 14, 2007	10.01	10.71	9.22	9.28	12.85	10.20

* Revised

^{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.

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 6-12, 2008.

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 9 and 20 percent at the regional level. The U.S. all hired farm worker wage rate had a relative sampling error of 0.8 percent. The relative sampling error was 0.7 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 17 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 2008 and April 2007 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.