



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 47,000 for the week of January 11 through 17. Farmers hired 38,000 workers the same as last quarter and 11,000 less than a year ago. Agricultural services provided 9,000 paid workers, up 6,000 from last quarter, and equal to January 2008.

Florida recorded below average temperatures during the survey week with many areas covered in frost. Citrus producer's harvested 8,300,000 boxes (preliminary) during the survey week, up from the preliminary 379,000 boxes during October 2008 reference week. Vegetable growers shipped about 134.0 million pounds of vegetables and non-citrus fruits during the survey week, up from the preliminary 5.72 million in October 2008. Due to cool temperatures, some leaf burn was found on the cabbage crop in Flagler County. Growers protected crops by irrigating during the survey week. Sugarcane harvesting remained active in the Everglades region and potato planting continued in the tri-county agricultural area (Flagler, Putnam, and St. Johns).

The January combined farmers and agricultural all hired worker wage rate average was \$10.14 per hour, 5 cents more than the \$10.09 paid last quarter, and 17 cents more than the \$9.97 paid a year ago. Farmers paid an average of \$10.16 per hour, 7 cents more than the \$10.09 paid in the previous quarter, and 18 cents more than the \$9.98 paid the previous year. Agricultural services paid workers an average of \$10.05 per hour, the same as last quarter, but 15 cents more than the \$9.90 paid last year.

UNITED STATES

Hired Workers Up 2 Percent, Wage Rates up 1 Percent from a Year Ago

There were 785,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of January 11-17, 2009, up 2 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 595,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 190,000 workers. Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$10.93 per hour during the January 2009 reference week, up 12 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$9.96 per hour, up 29 cents from last January, while livestock workers earned \$10.27 per hour compared with \$10.18 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$10.08 per hour, was up 20 cents from last year. The number of hours worked averaged 38.3 hours for hired workers during the survey week, down fractionally from a year ago.

The largest increases in the number of hired workers from last year occurred in the Pacific (Oregon and Washington), Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi), Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas), and Mountain III (Arizona and New Mexico) regions. In the Pacific region, rain and snowstorms in Washington just prior to the reference week caused serious flooding. Therefore, more field workers were needed to help with orchard cleanup. Field preparation for spring planted crops in the Delta region gained momentum under mostly dry conditions. Also, strawberry growers hastened to protect their crops from freeze damage. These two factors combined to cause an increase in worker demand. In the Southern Plains region, dry conditions in Texas allowed cotton harvest and seedbed preparations for spring plantings to accelerate. Therefore, more hired workers were necessary. Above normal temperatures and dry weather in the Mountain III region allowed small grain planting and alfalfa harvest to progress rapidly, resulting in a greater demand for hired workers.

The largest decreases in the number of hired workers from last year occurred in Florida, and in the Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia), Corn Belt II (Iowa and Missouri), and Mountain I (Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming) regions. In Florida, declining demand from the equine, dairy, and horticulture industries due to the continuing economic downturn kept the number of hired workers below last year. Extremely cold conditions in the Appalachian II region, compared with the previous year's reference week, kept agricultural activity minimized, so fewer hired workers were needed. In the Corn Belt II region, record low temperatures severely curtailed most outdoor farm work, and snow-covered roads in Iowa limited grain movement for several days. Therefore, hired worker demand was lower than last year. Unseasonably warm conditions in the Mountain I region reduced the amount of supplemental feeding necessary, so fewer livestock workers were necessary.

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TABLE 1 -- Florida agricultural workers, number of workers, wage rates, and hours worked, January 11 through 17, 2009, with comparisons

Employer, Year, and Survey Week	Number of Hired 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	Dollars Per Hour ^{2/}				
	<i>Thousands</i>			<i>Hours</i>	<i>Dollars Per Hour^{2/}</i>			
HIRED BY FARMERS^{1/}								
2009	January 11 - 17	38.0	31.0	7.0	37.8	10.16	8.95	9.45
2008	October 12 - 18	38.0	32.0	6.0	39.7	10.09	8.90	9.30
	July 6 - 12	42.0	39.0	3.0	40.9	9.90	8.84	9.25
	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
HIRED BY AGRICULTURAL SERVICES								
2009	January 11 - 17	9.0			36.7	10.05		
2008	October 12 - 18	3.0			42.0	10.05		
	July 6 - 12	2.0			43.0	9.85		
	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		
HIRED BY BOTH FARMERS & AGRICULTURAL SERVICES								
2009	January 11 - 17	47.0				10.14		
2008	October 12 - 18	41.0				10.09		
	July 6 - 12	44.0				9.90		
	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		

^{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, January 11 through 17, 2009, with comparisons ^{1/}

Item	Florida	California	Texas & Oklahoma	Arizona & New Mexico	Hawaii	United States ^{2/}
	<i>Thousands</i>					
ALL HIRED WORKERS						
January 11 – 17, 2009	38	132	65	20	6	595
October 12 – 18, 2008	38	*176	60	21	6	*804
January 6 – 12, 2008	49	132	59	15	6	594
EXPECTED TO WORK						
150 days or more						
January 11 – 17, 2009	31	112	55	18	5	497
October 12 – 18, 2008	32	*141	43	19	5	*577
January 6 – 12, 2008	45	114	52	14	5	506
149 days or less						
January 11 – 17, 2009	7	20	10	2	1	98
October 12 – 18, 2008	6	*35	17	2	1	*227
January 6 – 12, 2008	4	18	7	1	1	88
	<i>Average hours per week</i>					
HOURS WORKED BY ALL HIRED WORKERS						
January 11 – 17, 2009	37.8	41.3	40.4	49.7	37.9	38.3
October 12 – 18, 2008	39.7	*46.1	36.7	44.5	38.9	*41.4
January 6 – 12, 2008	41.8	40.7	38.4	46.6	38.4	38.4
	<i>Dollars per hour ^{3/}</i>					
WAGES BY TYPE OF WORKER						
Field						
January 11 – 17, 2009	8.95	9.81	10.06	9.27	10.70	9.96
October 12 – 18, 2008	8.90	9.95	9.44	9.44	11.00	10.05
January 6 – 12, 2008	9.00	10.20	8.49	8.68	10.80	9.67
Livestock						
January 11 – 17, 2009	9.45	10.95	10.24	10.58	^{4/}	10.27
October 12 – 18, 2008	9.30	*11.90	9.58	10.80	^{4/}	*10.21
January 6 – 12, 2008	9.20	10.70	10.03	10.47	^{4/}	10.18
Field & Livestock Combined						
January 11 – 17, 2009	9.00	10.10	10.15	9.75	10.93	10.08
October 12 – 18, 2008	8.95	*10.22	9.50	10.00	11.21	*10.09
January 6 – 12, 2008	9.03	10.32	9.30	9.41	10.92	9.88
ALL HIRED WORKER WAGE RATE						
January 11 – 17, 2009	10.16	11.16	10.70	10.30	12.69	10.93
October 12 – 18, 2008	10.09	*10.93	10.10	10.70	13.24	10.70
January 6 – 12, 2008	9.98	11.56	9.81	9.95	13.04	10.81

^{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.

*Revised

Hired worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Mountain I, Southeast (Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina), Southern Plains, Appalachian I (North Carolina), Appalachian II, and Delta regions. In the Mountain I region, the higher wages were due to a larger proportion of more highly skilled workers on grain and cattle operations. Cold weather in the Southeast region led to increased supplemental feeding which necessitated more machine operators to assist with hay movement. Therefore, average wages increased. In the Southern Plains region, the higher wages were due to the increased cotton harvest and planting preparation activity which led to greater demand for tractor drivers and combining crews, thereby raising the average wage. A higher percentage of nursery and greenhouse workers in the Appalachian I region caused the average wage to increase. In the Appalachian II region, the higher wages were due to a lower proportion of part time workers. There were more salaried workers working fewer hours in the Delta region. This pushed the average wage higher.

Reliability of Farm Labor Estimates

SURVEY PROCEDURES: These data were collected by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) during the last two weeks of January 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 January 11-17, 2009.

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 8 and 20 percent at the regional level. The U.S. all hired farm worker wage rate had a relative sampling error of 0.9 percent. The relative sampling error was 1.0 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 19 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 October 2008 and January 2008 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.