



United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service



FARM LABOR

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August 2009

FLORIDA

The number of workers paid by farmers and agricultural services totaled 38,000 during the survey week of July 12 through 18. Farmers hired 36,000 workers, 10,000 less than last quarter, and 6,000 less than a year ago. Agricultural services provided 2,000 paid workers, down 5,000 from last quarter, and unchanged from July 2008.

Hot, humid conditions remained during the survey week. Rainfall totals varied throughout the State. Vegetable growers reported a preliminary 3.4 million pounds of vegetables and non-citrus fruits during the survey week, down from the preliminary 172.9 million pounds in April 2009. Grove activity included fertilizations, nutritional spraying, hedging, and some tree pushing. Some growers combated canker with additional spraying during the rainy season. There were limited citrus shipments during the survey week.

The combined farmers and agricultural all hired worker wage rate average was \$10.52, 19 cents more than last quarter, and 62 cents more than July 2008. Farmers paid an average of \$10.51 per hour, 18 cents more than the \$10.33 paid in the previous quarter, and 61 cents more than the \$9.90 paid the previous year. Agricultural services paid workers an average of \$10.65 per hour, 35 cents more than last quarter and 80 cents more than last year.

UNITED STATES

Hired Workers Up 6 Percent, Wage Rates up 3 Percent from a Year Ago

There were 1,238,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of July 12-18, 2009, up 6 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 875,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 363,000 workers. Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$10.64 per hour during the July 2009 reference week, up 30 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$10.04 per hour, up 38 cents from last July, while livestock workers earned \$10.03 per hour compared with \$9.98 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$10.04 per hour, was up 30 cents from last year. The number of hours worked averaged 39.8 hours for hired workers during the survey week, down 2 percent from a year ago.

The largest increases in the number of hired workers from last year occurred in California, and in the Lake (Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin), Corn Belt I (Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio), Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia), and Pacific (Oregon and Washington) regions. Critically dry, deteriorating pastures in California led to increased supplemental feeding and a stronger demand for livestock workers. In the Lake, Corn Belt I, and Appalachian II regions, a cooler, drier reference week compared with last year's wet conditions allowed field activities to progress rapidly. Therefore, more hired workers were necessary. Increased pear and grape acreage in the Pacific region heightened the demand for hired workers. Also, hot, dry weather caused dryland pasture conditions to decline, which led to more livestock movement to irrigated fields and increased supplemental feeding. These factors led to a stronger demand for hired workers.

The largest decreases in the number of hired workers from last year occurred in Florida and in the Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi), and Mountain II (Colorado, Nevada, and Utah) 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. Wet conditions in the Delta region compared with last year's dry reference week caused hired worker demand to be lower. In the Mountain II region, development of most field crops remained behind normal due to the cool, wet spring. Therefore, fewer hired workers were needed.

Hired worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Pacific, Corn Belt II (Iowa and Missouri), and Mountain III (Arizona and New Mexico) regions, and in Florida. The higher wages in the Pacific region were due to strong demand for highly skilled workers on fruit operations. In the Corn Belt II region and in Florida, there were more salaried workers working fewer hours. This pushed the average wage higher. In the Mountain III region, a higher percentage of nursery and greenhouse workers caused the average wage to increase.

TABLE 1 -- Florida agricultural workers, number of workers, wage rates, and hours worked, July 12 through 18, 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					
	<i>Thousands</i>			<i>Hours</i>	<i>Dollars Per Hour^{2/}</i>			
HIRED BY FARMERS ^{1/}								
2009								
	July 12 - 18	36.0	32.0	4.0	37.3	10.51	9.14	9.50
	April 12 - 18	46.0	39.0	7.0	38.3	10.33	9.15	9.35
	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
HIRED BY AGRICULTURAL SERVICES								
2009								
	July 12 - 18	2.0			43.0	10.65		
	April 12 - 18	7.0			33.0	10.30		
	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		
HIRED BY BOTH FARMERS & AGRICULTURAL SERVICES								
2009								
	July 12 - 18	38.0				10.52		
	April 12 - 18	53.0				10.33		
	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		

^{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.

TABLE 2 -- Number of workers hired by farmers, wage rates, and hours worked, Selected States, July 12 through 18, 2009, with comparisons ^{1/}

Item	Florida	California	Texas & Oklahoma	Arizona & New Mexico	Hawaii	United States ^{2/}
	<i>Thousands</i>					
ALL HIRED WORKERS						
July 12 – 18, 2009	36	170	61	18	6	875
April 12 – 18, 2009	46	138	62	20	6	680
July 6 – 12, 2008	42	160	57	20	6	828
EXPECTED TO WORK						
150 days or more						
July 12 – 18, 2009	32	137	42	16	5	611
April 12 – 18, 2009	39	119	53	19	5	554
July 6 – 12, 2008	39	127	43	17	5	585
149 days or less						
July 12 – 18, 2009	4	33	19	2	1	264
April 12 – 18, 2009	7	19	9	1	1	126
July 6 – 12, 2008	3	33	14	3	1	243
	<i>Average hours per week</i>					
HOURS WORKED BY ALL HIRED WORKERS						
July 12 – 18, 2009	37.3	46.1	39.5	45.4	37.4	39.8
April 12 – 18, 2009	38.3	43.9	40.7	45.2	36.8	40.1
July 6 – 12, 2008	40.9	45.5	39.0	42.0	37.0	40.5
	<i>Dollars per hour ^{3/}</i>					
WAGES BY TYPE OF WORKER						
Field						
July 12 – 18, 2009	9.14	10.10	8.94	10.09	11.60	10.04
April 12 – 18, 2009	9.15	9.96	9.67	9.16	11.30	9.99
July 6 – 12, 2008	8.84	9.85	8.60	9.21	11.10	9.66
Livestock						
July 12 – 18, 2009	9.50	11.15	9.72	10.94	13.60	10.03
April 12 – 18, 2009	9.35	10.85	9.93	9.44	13.20	10.25
July 6 – 12, 2008	9.25	11.00	10.12	11.44	12.50	9.98
Field & Livestock Combined						
July 12 – 18, 2009	9.20	10.28	9.30	10.38	11.81	10.04
April 12 – 18, 2009	9.17	10.14	9.80	9.29	11.40	10.07
July 6 – 12, 2008	8.90	10.00	9.20	9.85	11.21	9.74
ALL HIRED WORKER WAGE RATE						
July 12 – 18, 2009	10.51	10.98	9.88	11.19	13.97	10.64
April 12 – 18, 2009	10.33	11.07	10.40	10.10	13.36	10.84
July 6 – 12, 2008	9.90	10.74	9.80	10.55	13.33	10.34

^{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.

Reliability of Farm Labor Estimates

SURVEY PROCEDURES: These data were collected by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) during the last two weeks of July 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 July 12-18, 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 0.8 percent. The relative sampling error was 0.8 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 6 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 April 2009 and July 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.