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Wage Rates Increase While Number of Hired Agricultural Workers Declines

The timing of the agriculture labor survey was changed such that data were collected for both January and April simultaneously (in April). Hawaii's hired agricultural workforce consisted of 6,300 workers during the reference week of January 8-14, 2012, and 6,500 workers for April 8-14, 2012. These totals from both quarters represent a drop from last year's average of 7,100 workers. The estimated number of sugarcane and pineapple workers in January 2012 was down by 100 workers or 12 percent as compared to the previous January. However, these industries increased their work force again by 50 in the next quarter, April 2012. In January 2012, all other (diversified agriculture) hired workers also decreased by 500 workers or 8 percent compared to January a year ago. For the second quarter of 2012, the number of workers hired in diversified agriculture industries increased by 150 or 3 percent, compared to January 2012.

Mostly clear weather provided conditions which were favorable for agriculture activities and functions. During the reference week in April, 60 percent of the state was designated as being in some stage of drought (abnormally dry to extreme) according to The U.S. Drought Monitor. These drought areas were mostly confined to leeward areas of Hawaii and Maui Counties. Despite drought conditions, state irrigation reservoirs remained adequately full, and ensured proper crop development in areas where available.

Average Wage Rate Increases

The average wage paid to all hired workers during the reference week of January 8-14, 2012 was estimated at \$15.05 an hour; up \$1.54 or 11 percent from the estimated wage rate in January 2011. In the second quarter of 2012, the wage rate increased again to an average of \$15.26 an hour. The jump in wage rates was primarily driven by an increased proportion of supervisory positions, and a higher demand for specialty labor. ■

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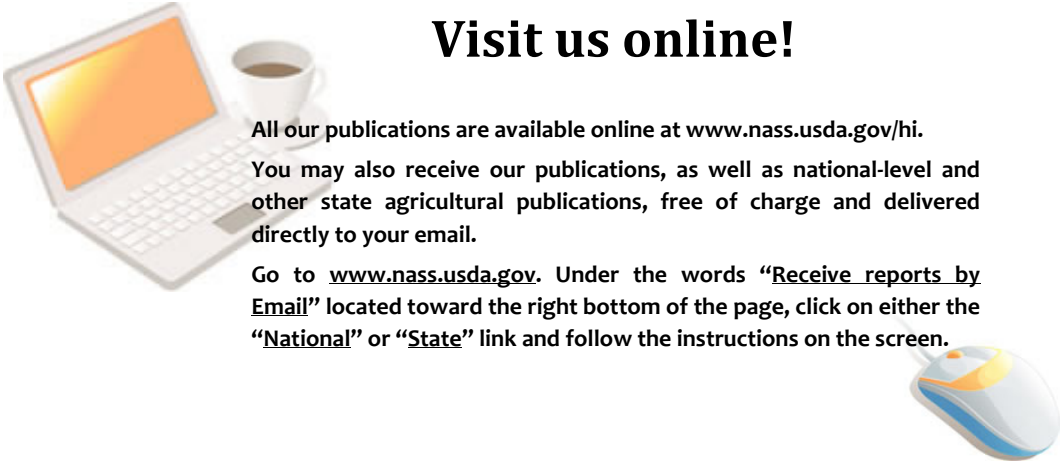
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Labor:

FARM LABOR: Number of Workers on Farms, Quarterly and Annual Averages, State of Hawaii, 2011 and 2012 ¹

Quarter	Hired Workers		
	Total	Sugarcane And Pineapple ²	Other
2011			
January	6,900	850	6,050
April ³			
July	7,000	850	6,150
October	7,300	830	6,470
Annual Average	⁴ 7,100	⁴ 850	⁴ 6,250
2012			
January	6,300	750	5,550
April	6,500	800	5,700
July			
October			
Annual Average			

¹ Estimates for each quarter are based on a survey week that includes the 12th day of the month. Annual averages are based on quarterly estimates.
² Data combined to avoid disclosure of individual operations. ³ The April 2011 Farm Labor Survey was not conducted. ⁴ Average of 3 quarters.



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Labor: U. S. Hired Workers

Beginning in 2012, two quarters of farm labor data are published semi-annually. Additionally, the agricultural service component was discontinued in 2012. Hired worker estimates exclude agricultural service employees.

There were 575,000 workers hired directly by farm operators on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of January 8-14, 2012, down nearly 5 percent from a year ago. Workers hired directly by farm operators numbered 748,000 for the following quarter's reference week of April 8-14, 2012. Because NASS did not publish estimates for the April 2011 quarter, no previous year comparison is available for April.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$11.52 per hour during the January 2012 reference week, up nearly 2 percent from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$10.39 per hour, up more than 1 percent, while

livestock workers earned \$10.96 per hour compared with \$10.52 a year ago. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$10.58 per hour, was up 21 cents from last year. The number of hours worked averaged 39.6 for hired workers during the reference week, up fractionally from a year ago.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$11.41 per hour during the April 2012 reference week, down 11 cents from the January quarter. Field workers received an average of \$10.50 per hour, up 11 cents from January. Livestock workers earned \$10.95, down just 1 cent from January. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$10.62 per hour, was up 4 cents from January. The number of hours worked averaged 39.2 for hired workers during the April reference week. ■

Source: *Farm Labor*, May 17, 2012, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Agricultural Statistics Board, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Hired Workers: Wage Rates for Type of Workers and All Hired Workers for Hawaii, California, and United States, April 8-14, 2012 with Comparison. ¹

Quarter	All Hired Farm Workers			Field and Livestock Workers		
	Hawaii	California	United States ^{2/}	Hawaii	California	United States ²
<i>Dollars per hour</i>						
January 9-15, 2011	13.51	11.12	11.30	11.48	10.14	10.37
April 10-16, 2011 ³						
January 8-14, 2012	15.05	11.38	11.52	12.45	10.42	10.58
April 8-14, 2012	15.26	11.81	11.41	12.65	10.83	10.62

¹ Excludes agricultural service workers. ² Excludes Alaska. ³ The April 2011 Farm Labor Survey was not conducted.