



New England Agricultural Statistics

a field office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service
United States Department of Agriculture

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USDA MEASURES AGRICULTURAL LABOR COSTS

There were 23,000 hired workers on farms across New England and New York during the survey week of January 9 - 15, 2005, a 15 percent increase from a year earlier when there were 20,000 hired farm workers across the region. Nationally, 574,000 workers were hired on farms during the survey week, compared with 662,000 hired workers the previous year. In the Northeast region, hired workers earned an average of \$10.37 per hour during the January 2005 survey week, up 27 cents per hour from January 2004. Across the United States, hired workers were paid an average of \$9.81 per hour in January 2005 compared to \$9.41 in January 2004.

These and other statistics were summarized from the quarterly Agricultural Labor Survey. The cost and availability of farm labor are major components of operators' productivity and return on investment. Therefore, information about the agricultural labor force is very important to farmers, grower associations, lenders, lawmakers, and local and national agencies.

Beginning the third full week of April, the New England Agricultural Statistics will contact approximately 300 agricultural producers to ask for their help in a quarterly nationwide effort to measure the agricultural labor force. The producers selected to participate are mailed sample questions and a letter requesting their help. Interviewers will conduct the survey through personal or telephone interviews between April 18 and April 29, 2005.

"The cooperation of New England farmers is essential in order to ensure that agriculture in New England is clearly represented," said Aubrey Davis, Director of the New England Agricultural Statistics. Response to the survey is voluntary, however cooperation from all growers is essential to provide an accurate picture of agricultural labor in this region. All information about individual farms is held in strict confidence; data are only used in combination with reports from other producers to generate regional and national statistics.

The national survey results will be available in the **Farm Labor Report** from Washington, D.C. on May 20, 2005, at 3:00 p.m. All reports are available on the Internet at www.usda.gov/nass/ within minutes of the scheduled release time. Northeast and United States statistics are reprinted in the May issue of the **Ag Review**. The monthly New England **Ag Review** is available on the Internet at www.nass.usda.gov/nh/ and complimentary copies will be mailed to survey participants upon request.

[The New England Agricultural Statistics is a field office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. Located in Concord, New Hampshire, it is responsible for agricultural statistics in all six States in the region. The office can be reached at 1-800-642-9571 or through e-mail at nass-nh@nass.usda.gov. All National statistics and State level newsletters are available free from e-mail subscriptions and on the Internet at <http://www.usda.gov/nass/>.]

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