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## Hired Workers Down 3 Percent, Wage Rates up 4 Percent From a Year Ago

There were 1,173,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of July 6-12, 2008, down 3 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 828,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 345,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$10.34 per hour during the July 2008 reference week, up 35 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$9.66 per hour, up 42 cents from last July, while livestock workers earned \$9.98 per hour compared with \$9.73 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$9.74 per hour, was up 37 cents from last year.

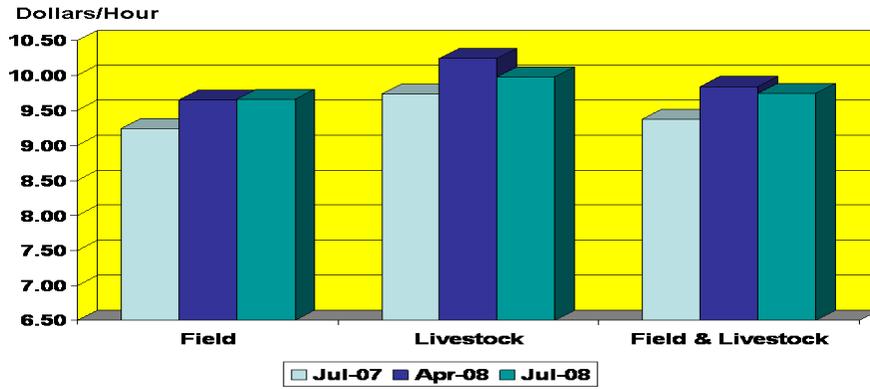
The number of hours worked averaged 40.5 hours for hired workers during the survey week, down 2 percent from a year ago.

The largest decreases 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 Appalachian I (North Carolina and Virginia) regions. In California, lack of available irrigation water caused much acreage to be left fallow. Planted acreage of cotton, dry beans, and sugar beets declined sharply from 2007. Therefore, the demand for field workers was considerably lower. Rain and wet conditions in the Lake and Corn Belt I regions severely hampered most field activities and lessened the need for field workers. In the Appalachian I and II regions, wet conditions compared with the previous year's drier reference week reduced the demand for field workers. Lower cattle inventories in both regions led to fewer livestock workers being needed.

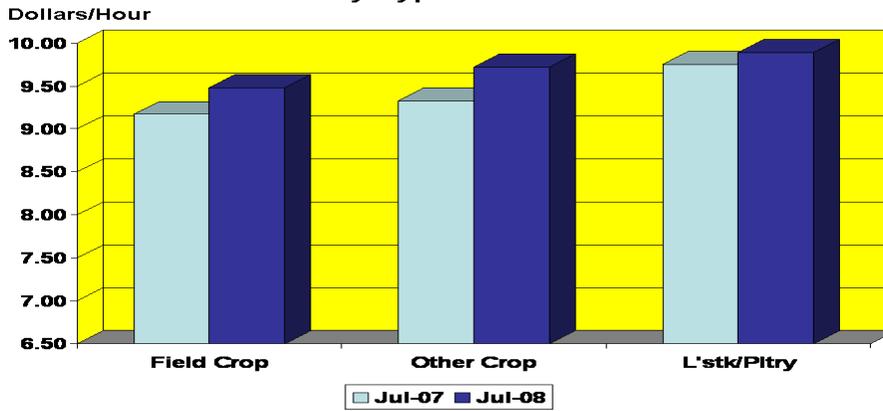
The largest increases in the number of hired workers from last year occurred in the Pacific (Oregon and Washington), Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi), Southeast (Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina), Mountain I (Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming), and Mountain II (Colorado, Nevada, and Utah) regions. Increased acreage of cherries, berries, and grapes in the Pacific region heightened the demand for hired workers. In the Delta region, a drier reference week compared with last year caused more field workers to be hired, and larger cattle and hog inventories increased the demand for livestock workers. Strong demand from the nursery and greenhouse industry in the Southeast region kept worker numbers above the previous year. In the Mountain I region, more acreage planted to field crops led to a greater demand for field workers. Dry conditions caused pastures to deteriorate which required more cattle to be moved and increased the need for livestock workers. Harvests of wheat and hay in the Mountain II region were peaking during the reference week, and vegetable harvest was accelerating. Therefore, more field workers were required.

Hired worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Appalachian II, Mountain II, Mountain III (Arizona and New Mexico), Delta, and Mountain I regions. In the Appalachian II and Mountain II regions, the higher wages were due to a larger proportion of nursery and greenhouse workers. Also, a larger percentage of equine workers in the Appalachian II region contributed to the increase. Salaried workers in the Mountain III region were putting in fewer hours, due to unusually wet conditions, which caused the average wage to be higher. In the Delta and Mountain I regions, the higher wages were due to a lower percentage of part time workers.

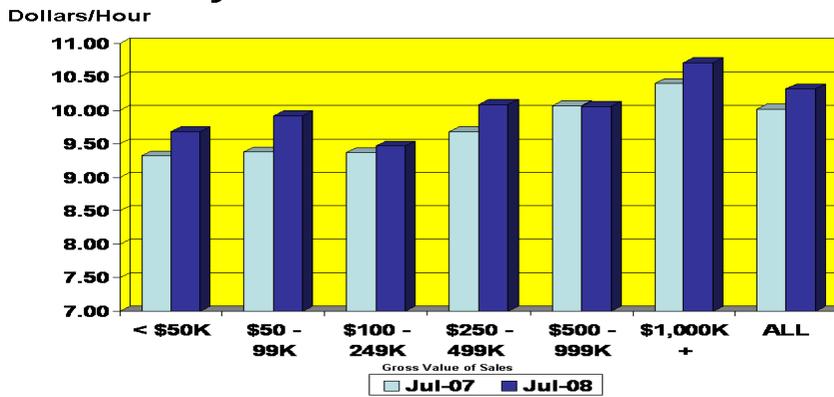
## U.S. Wage Rates By Type of Workers



## Wage Rate of Field & Livestock Workers By Type of Farm



## Wage Rates of All Hired Workers By Economic Class of Farm



**Farm Labor: Employment and Wage Rates, United States,  
July 6-12, 2008, with Comparisons <sup>1</sup>**

Farm Employment	July 8-14, 2007	April 6-12, 2008	July 6-12, 2008
	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>
Hired Workers	843	700	828
150 Days or More	596	563	585
149 Days or Less	247	137	243
Agricultural Services Workers Working on Farms	363	219	345
Hired Farm & Service Workers	1,206	919	1,173
	<i>Hours per Week</i>	<i>Hours per Week</i>	<i>Hours per Week</i>
Hours Worked Hired	41.4	*40.8	40.5
	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>
Wage Rate for All Hired Workers <sup>2 3</sup>	9.99	*10.57	10.34
Type of Worker			
Field & Livestock Combined	9.37	*9.84	9.74
Field	9.24	9.65	9.66
Livestock	9.73	*10.24	9.98

\* Revised.

<sup>1</sup> Excludes AK.

<sup>2</sup> Benefits, such as housing and meals, are provided some workers but the values are not included in the wage rates.

<sup>3</sup> Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

**Hired Workers: Number and Hours Worked by Region  
and United States, July 6-12, 2008 <sup>1</sup>**

U.S. and Region <sup>2</sup>	Hired			
	Number of Workers	Expected to be Employed		Number of Hours Worked
		150 Days or More	149 Days or Less	
	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>Hours per Week</i>
Northeast I	37	24	13	38.0
Northeast II	35	20	15	41.5
Appalachian I	35	26	9	40.3
Appalachian II	21	13	8	33.5
Southeast	41	29	12	36.6
FL	42	39	3	40.9
Lake	64	44	20	36.5
Cornbelt I	44	33	11	35.0
Cornbelt II	28	21	7	35.6
Delta	39	31	8	39.4
Northern Plains	36	23	13	44.0
Southern Plains	57	43	14	39.0
Mountain I	30	24	6	44.0
Mountain II	23	15	8	43.0
Mountain III	20	17	3	42.0
Pacific	110	51	59	40.6
CA	160	127	33	45.5
HI	6	5	1	37.0
US <sup>3</sup>	828	585	243	40.5

<sup>1</sup> Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

<sup>2</sup> Region map on page 14.

<sup>3</sup> Excludes AK.

**Hired Workers: Wage Rates for Type of Worker and All Hired Workers  
by Region and United States, July 6-12, 2008 <sup>1</sup>**

U.S. and Region <sup>2</sup>	Type of Worker			Wage Rates for All Hired Workers
	Field	Livestock	Field & Lvstk Combined	
	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>
Northeast I	9.68	9.89	9.75	10.50
Northeast II	9.66	8.68	9.50	10.10
Appalachian I	9.04	9.29	9.10	9.60
Appalachian II	9.80	9.38	9.65	10.72
Southeast	8.56	8.27	8.50	9.00
FL	8.84	9.25	8.90	9.90
Lake	10.10	10.09	10.10	10.75
Cornbelt I	10.27	10.87	10.43	10.90
Cornbelt II	10.29	9.23	9.90	10.25
Delta	9.18	9.74	9.42	9.88
Northern Plains	9.89	10.17	10.00	10.27
Southern Plains	8.60	10.12	9.20	9.80
Mountain I	10.49	8.98	9.78	10.00
Mountain II	10.39	11.14	10.65	11.00
Mountain III	9.21	11.44	9.85	10.55
Pacific	9.85	10.22	9.87	10.35
CA	9.85	11.00	10.00	10.74
HI <sup>3</sup>	11.10		11.21	13.33
US <sup>4</sup>	9.66	9.98	9.74	10.34

<sup>1</sup> Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

<sup>2</sup> Region map on page 14.

<sup>3</sup> Insufficient data for livestock.

<sup>4</sup> Excludes AK.

**Hired Workers: Number and Hours Worked by Region  
and United States, April 6-12, 2008 <sup>1</sup>**

U.S. and Region <sup>2</sup>	Hired			
	Number of Workers	Expected to be Employed		Number of Hours Worked
		150 Days or More	149 Days or Less	
	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>Hours per Week</i>
Northeast I	36	27	9	43.2
Northeast II	31	24	7	35.8
Appalachian I	27	21	6	38.5
Appalachian II	29	19	10	33.5
Southeast	25	19	6	37.2
FL	51	45	6	41.5
Lake	52	39	13	39.0
Cornbelt I	44	34	10	37.5
Cornbelt II	21	18	3	38.2
Delta	21	18	3	36.9
Northern Plains	30	27	3	41.4
Southern Plains	45	35	10	42.1
Mountain I	21	17	4	43.2
Mountain II	20	16	4	41.0
Mountain III	17	16	1	43.6
Pacific	68	48	20	44.0
CA	156	135	21	*43.7
HI	6	5	1	38.5
US <sup>3</sup>	700	563	137	*40.8

\* Revised.

<sup>1</sup> Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

<sup>2</sup> Region map on page 14.

<sup>3</sup> Excludes AK.

**Hired Workers: Wage Rates for Type of Worker and All Hired Workers  
by Region and United States, April 6-12, 2008<sup>1</sup>**

U.S. and Region <sup>2</sup>	Type of Worker			Wage Rates for All Hired Workers
	Field	Livestock	Field & Lvstk Combined	
	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>
Northeast I	10.19	9.97	10.10	11.00
Northeast II	9.71	8.77	9.42	10.00
Appalachian I	9.34	9.54	9.40	9.98
Appalachian II	8.87	10.07	9.44	10.05
Southeast	8.93	8.81	8.90	9.66
FL	9.32	9.59	9.35	10.25
Lake	10.57	10.78	10.70	11.25
Cornbelt I	10.32	10.73	10.45	11.43
Cornbelt II	10.65	12.20	11.50	11.88
Delta	8.77	8.84	8.80	9.45
Northern Plains	10.73	10.20	10.40	11.00
Southern Plains	8.51	9.74	9.05	9.72
Mountain I	9.46	9.09	9.25	9.50
Mountain II	9.33	9.81	9.55	10.05
Mountain III	9.38	10.69	9.97	10.55
Pacific	9.14	11.34	9.41	10.00
CA	10.00	*11.00	*10.16	*11.05
HI <sup>3</sup>	10.80		10.91	13.28
US <sup>4</sup>	9.65	*10.24	*9.84	*10.57

\* Revised.

<sup>1</sup> Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

<sup>2</sup> Region map on page 14.

<sup>3</sup> Insufficient data for livestock.

<sup>4</sup> Excludes AK.

**Hired Workers: Number and Hours Worked by Region  
and United States, July 8-14, 2007<sup>1</sup>**

U.S. and Region <sup>2</sup>	Hired			
	Number of Workers	Expected to be Employed		Number of Hours Worked
		150 Days or More	149 Days or Less	
	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>Hours per Week</i>
Northeast I	39	25	14	41.6
Northeast II	36	26	10	42.0
Appalachian I	40	26	14	37.1
Appalachian II	30	18	12	34.2
Southeast	31	22	9	36.3
FL	41	39	2	41.0
Lake	78	47	31	40.2
Cornbelt I	53	34	19	36.0
Cornbelt II	24	20	4	38.0
Delta	25	18	7	38.1
Northern Plains	40	23	17	44.4
Southern Plains	58	43	15	41.0
Mountain I	22	15	7	43.4
Mountain II	18	14	4	40.5
Mountain III	22	19	3	45.0
Pacific	92	51	41	39.7
CA	188	151	37	46.9
HI	6	5	1	39.0
US <sup>3</sup>	843	596	247	41.4

<sup>1</sup> Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

<sup>2</sup> Region map on page 14.

<sup>3</sup> Excludes AK.

**Hired Workers: Wage Rates for Type of Worker and All Hired Workers  
by Region and United States, July 8-14, 2007 <sup>1</sup>**

U.S. and Region <sup>2</sup>	Type of Worker			Wage Rates for All Hired Workers
	Field	Livestock	Field & Lvstk Combined	
	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>
Northeast I	9.58	9.37	9.51	10.00
Northeast II	9.62	10.04	9.74	10.78
Appalachian I	8.80	8.80	8.80	9.25
Appalachian II	8.55	9.85	9.05	9.53
Southeast	8.57	8.52	8.55	9.12
FL	8.50	8.60	8.51	9.49
Lake	9.52	9.33	9.44	10.26
Cornbelt I	9.22	10.32	9.57	10.20
Cornbelt II	9.44	11.37	10.40	10.90
Delta	8.14	9.78	8.80	9.07
Northern Plains	9.13	9.18	9.15	9.54
Southern Plains	8.14	9.67	8.85	9.18
Mountain I	8.36	9.22	8.70	9.20
Mountain II	9.25	9.85	9.45	9.85
Mountain III	8.34	9.65	8.80	9.47
Pacific	9.64	10.65	9.71	10.41
CA	9.60	10.60	9.72	10.32
HI <sup>3</sup>	10.70		10.89	12.87
US <sup>4</sup>	9.24	9.73	9.37	9.99

<sup>1</sup> Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

<sup>2</sup> Region map on page 14.

<sup>3</sup> Insufficient data for livestock.

<sup>4</sup> Excludes AK.

**Field and Livestock Workers Combined: Wage Rates, by Type  
of Farm, by Region and 48 States <sup>1</sup>**

Region <sup>2</sup>	July 8-14, 2007			
	Field Crops	Other Crops	Livestock & Poultry	All Farms
	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>
Northeast	9.16	9.54	9.77	9.62
Appalachian	8.89	8.52	9.27	8.90
Southeast	8.47	8.42	8.83	8.53
Lake	( <sup>3</sup> )	9.50	9.25	9.44
Cornbelt	9.56	8.66	10.88	9.84
Delta	8.52	8.29	9.28	8.80
Northern Plains	9.12	9.38	9.12	9.15
Southern Plains	8.06	8.20	9.56	8.85
Mountain	9.47	8.38	9.78	8.97
Pacific	9.76	9.76	10.70	9.88
48 States	9.17	9.33	9.75	9.44

**Field and Livestock Workers Combined: Wage Rates, by Type  
of Farm, by Region and 48 States <sup>1</sup>**

Region <sup>2</sup>	July 6-12, 2008			
	Field Crops	Other Crops	Livestock & Poultry	All Farms
	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>
Northeast	10.46	9.68	9.33	9.62
Appalachian	8.98	9.30	9.46	9.28
Southeast	7.90	8.78	8.65	8.70
Lake	11.05	9.78	10.13	10.10
Cornbelt	10.74	9.42	10.24	10.21
Delta	9.07	9.10	9.73	9.42
Northern Plains	9.61	10.72	10.18	10.00
Southern Plains	7.70	8.81	10.04	9.20
Mountain	9.71	( <sup>3</sup> )	10.26	10.09
Pacific	9.66	9.87	10.64	9.95
48 States	9.48	9.71	9.89	9.74

<sup>1</sup> Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

<sup>2</sup> Regions consist of the following States:

Northeast: CT, DE, MD, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT.

Appalachian: KY, NC, TN, VA, WV.

Southeast: AL, FL, GA, SC.

Lake: MI, MN, WI.

Cornbelt: IA, IL, IN, MO, OH.

Delta: AR, LA, MS.

Northern Plains: KS, NE, ND, SD.

Southern Plains: OK, TX.

Mountain: AZ, CO, ID, MT, NM, NV, UT, WY.

Pacific: CA, OR, WA.

48 States: All States, excluding AK and HI.

<sup>3</sup> Insufficient data.

**All Hired Workers: Wage Rates, by Economic Class of Farm  
by Region and 48 States <sup>1</sup>**

Region <sup>2</sup>	July 8-14, 2007						
	Gross Value Sales-\$1,000's						All Farms
	<50	50-99	100-249	250-499	500-999	1,000+	
	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>
N. East	9.77	( <sup>3</sup> )	9.66	10.67	9.26	10.90	10.38
Appal.	9.31	8.15	8.56	8.92	9.53	10.06	9.36
S. East	9.16	8.92	8.30	8.22	8.61	9.74	9.34
Lake	8.46	( <sup>3</sup> )	11.99	8.46	9.80	11.02	10.26
Cornbelt	8.70	8.03	10.51	10.80	11.16	11.17	10.43
Delta	10.81	9.31	8.60	8.83	8.06	9.21	9.07
N. Plains	10.09	10.52	8.84	9.03	9.06	10.42	9.54
S. Plains	9.34	8.89	8.78	9.80	10.43	9.15	9.18
Mountain	8.36	10.27	8.76	9.26	10.39	9.53	9.48
Pacific	9.79	10.12	10.07	10.39	11.06	10.46	10.46
48 States	9.32	9.38	9.37	9.68	10.07	10.40	10.02

**All Hired Workers: Wage Rates, by Economic Class of Farm  
by Region and 48 States <sup>1</sup>**

Region <sup>2</sup>	July 6-12, 2008						
	Gross Value Sales-\$1,000's						All Farms
	<50	50-99	100-249	250-499	500-999	1,000+	
	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>
N. East	10.00	9.72	9.43	9.89	9.68	10.67	10.30
Appal.	9.10	8.52	10.07	9.32	9.52	10.82	9.97
S. East	8.76	7.88	9.09	9.52	9.44	9.82	9.48
Lake	7.22	8.61	8.28	11.03	10.71	11.48	10.75
Cornbelt	9.43	10.76	10.54	9.99	10.86	10.88	10.64
Delta	9.61	8.56	10.01	9.54	9.61	10.34	9.88
N. Plains	6.70	7.95	9.47	10.06	10.35	11.64	10.27
S. Plains	10.52	9.64	8.66	8.19	9.48	10.15	9.80
Mountain	( <sup>3</sup> )	10.48	9.83	10.03	8.78	10.97	10.46
Pacific	9.88	11.30	9.84	10.66	10.63	10.62	10.59
48 States	9.68	9.92	9.47	10.09	10.06	10.71	10.32

<sup>1</sup> Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

<sup>2</sup> Regions consist of the following States:

Northeast: CT, DE, MD, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT.

Appalachian: KY, NC, TN, VA, WV.

Southeast: AL, FL, GA, SC.

Lake: MI, MN, WI.

Cornbelt: IA, IL, IN, MO, OH.

Delta: AR, LA, MS.

Northern Plains: KS, NE, ND, SD.

Southern Plains: OK, TX.

Mountain: AZ, CO, ID, MT, NM, NV, UT, WY.

Pacific: CA, OR, WA.

48 States: All States, excluding AK and HI.

<sup>3</sup> Insufficient data.

**Field and Livestock Workers: Distribution  
by Type of Farm, 48 States<sup>1 2 3</sup>**

Type of Farm	July 8-14, 2007	April 6-12, 2008	July 6-12, 2008
	<i>Percent of Field and Livestock Workers</i>	<i>Percent of Field and Livestock Workers</i>	<i>Percent of Field and Livestock Workers</i>
Field Crops	13	10	13
Other Crops	56	55	56
Livestock, Dairy, & Poultry	31	35	31

**Hired Workers: Distribution by Economic  
Class of Farm, 48 States<sup>1 3</sup>**

Gross Value of Sales	July 8-14, 2007	April 6-12, 2008	July 6-12, 2008
	<i>Percent of Hired Workers</i>	<i>Percent of Hired Workers</i>	<i>Percent of Hired Workers</i>
Less than \$50,000	10	8	11
\$50,000-\$99,999	6	5	5
\$100,000-\$249,999	11	9	10
\$250,000-\$499,999	13	10	11
\$500,000-\$999,999	11	14	13
\$1,000,000 and over	49	54	50

**Hired Workers: Distribution by Category, United States,<sup>1 3</sup>**

Category	July 8-14, 2007	April 6-12, 2008	July 6-12, 2008
	<i>Percent of Hired Workers</i>	<i>Percent of Hired Workers</i>	<i>Percent of Hired Workers</i>
Employed on Farms Hiring			
1 Worker	9	9	10
2 Workers	8	8	9
3-6 Workers	18	18	19
7-10 Workers	10	7	9
11-20 Workers	9	11	11
21-50 Workers	16	16	14
51 or more Workers	30	31	28

<sup>1</sup> 48 States, excluding AK and HI.

<sup>2</sup> Field and Livestock Workers combined.

<sup>3</sup> Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

## Agricultural Services

Agricultural service operations provided 345,000 workers for the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of July 6-12, 2008. Agricultural service workers in California numbered 113,000 this July, down 16 percent from last year. Florida's number of agricultural service workers was 2,000, unchanged from last year.

The average wages received by agricultural service workers in California and Florida were \$10.00 and \$9.85 per hour, respectively. Comparable wages in July 2007 were \$10.00 in California and \$9.60 in Florida.

**Agricultural Service Workers: Number, Hours Worked, and Wage Rates,  
for California, Florida, and United States <sup>1</sup>**

State	Number of Workers Working on Farms			Hours Worked <sup>2</sup>			Wage Rates <sup>2 3</sup>		
	Jul 2007	Apr 2008	Jul 2008	Jul 2007	Apr 2008	Jul 2008	Jul 2007	Apr 2008	Jul 2008
	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>
CA	135.0	110.0	113.0	36.0	38.0	38.0	10.00	*10.00	10.00
FL	2.0	8.0	2.0	43.0	40.0	43.0	9.60	10.05	9.85
US	363.0	219.0	345.0						

\* Revised.

<sup>1</sup> Data are for Agricultural Services performed on the farm by custom service units such as crew leaders or custom crews. These statistics are not included in the State-Regional tables.

<sup>2</sup> United States data not available.

<sup>3</sup> Benefits, such as housing and meals, are provided to some workers but the values are not included in the wage rates.



## Farm Labor Definitions

The following definitions are provided to assist in interpreting statistics published in quarterly Farm Labor reports. To ensure consistency in data collection, the questionnaires and instruction manual used by the interviewers provide more in-depth explanations of these terms.

**Farm or Ranch:** A place that sells, or would normally sell, at least \$1,000 worth of agricultural products during the year.

**Agricultural Work:** Work done on a farm or ranch in connection with the production of agricultural products, including nursery and greenhouse products and animal specialties such as fur farms or apiaries. Also included is work done off the farm to handle farm related business, such as trips to buy feed or deliver products to local market.

**Hired Worker:** Anyone, other than an agricultural service worker, who was paid for at least one hour of agricultural work on a farm or ranch. Worker type is determined by what the employee was primarily hired to do, not necessarily what work was done during the survey week. Type of workers include:

**Field Workers:** Employees engaged in planting, tending and harvesting crops including operation of farm machinery on crop farms.

**Livestock Workers:** Employees tending livestock, milking cows or caring for poultry, including operation of farm machinery on livestock or poultry operations.

**Supervisors:** Hired managers, range foremen, crew leaders, etc.

**Other Workers:** Employees engaged in agricultural work not included in the other three categories. Bookkeepers and pilots are examples.

**Methods of Pay:** All wage rates are calculated based on total wages paid and total hours worked during the survey reference week. Wages paid other than hourly (bi-weekly, monthly, etc.) are converted to an hourly basis prior to summarization. Wages paid by piece rate (per quantity of produce picked, etc.) are also converted to an hourly basis.

**Perquisites:** Benefits, such as cash bonuses, housing, or meals, provided to an employee in addition to pay are included in perquisites. Wage rates published in this release do not include the value of these benefits.

**Term of Employment:** The length of time during the year the farm operator expects to employ those workers who were on the payroll during the survey week.

## Definitions - continued

**Agricultural Service:** Any farm-related service performed on a farm or ranch on a contract or fee basis. This primarily includes activities performed by contract workers on fruit, vegetable, or berry operations. It also includes custom work (see below), veterinarian work, artificial insemination, sheep shearing, milk testing, or any other farm-related activity performed on a farm or ranch on a “fee per service” basis rather than hourly.

**Contract Labor:** Contract workers are paid by a crew leader, contractor, buyer, processor, cooperative, or other person who has an oral or written agreement with a farmer/rancher. Pruning, thinning, weeding or harvesting of fruit, vegetable or berry crops are examples. A machine is not a part of the service activity provided by the contractor.

**Custom Work:** Work performed by machines and labor hired as a unit. Hay baling, combining, corn or cotton picking, spraying, fertilizing, and laser leveling are examples of custom work when the equipment is included in the service activity.

**Type of Farm (or Ranch):** An operation is classified in the farm type which accounts for the largest portion of the total gross value of sales for its agricultural production.

### The three types of farms broken out in this publication are:

**Field Crops:** A farm producing wheat, rice, corn, soybeans, barley, dry beans, rye, sorghum, cotton, popcorn, tobacco, or other such crops.

**Other Crops:** A farm producing vegetables, melons, berry crops, grapes, tree nuts, citrus fruits, deciduous tree fruits, avocados, dates, figs, olives, nursery, or greenhouse crops. This category also includes farms producing potatoes, sugar crops, hay, peanuts, hops, mint, and maple syrup.

**Livestock or Poultry:** A farm producing cattle, hogs, sheep, goats, milk, chickens, eggs, turkeys, or animal specialties such as furs, fish, honey, etc.

**Gross Value of Sales:** This includes all income during a year from the sale of crops, livestock, dairy, poultry, or other related agricultural products, including the landlord's share. When commodities are placed under CCC loan, they are considered as sold.

## 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 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 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 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 April 2008 and July 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.

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The next *Farm Labor* report will be released at 3 p.m. ET on November 21, 2008.

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