

# Farm Labor

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## U.S. Hired Workers Total 778 Thousand, U.S. Wage at \$10.77

There were 778,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of January 6-12, 2008. Of these hired workers, 599,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 179,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$10.77 per hour during the January 2008 reference week. Field workers received an average of \$9.64 per hour, while livestock workers earned \$10.19 per hour. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate was \$9.87 per hour.

The number of hours worked averaged 38.4 hours for hired workers during the survey week.

Dry weather returned to southern California and the Southwest early in the week, followed by a shift of stormy conditions into the Pacific Northwest. Mostly dry weather prevailed across the mid-section, except for light snow on the central Plains and a few showers and thunderstorms on the southeastern Plains. Muddy or snowy fields and feedlots caused livestock stress across the central Plains. Significant flooding developed across the central Corn Belt from Illinois to Indiana and southern Michigan, and a few rare tornadoes swept through parts of the Corn Belt. Heavy rain soaked areas from Missouri to Lake Michigan and eastward. In contrast, the upper Midwest was mostly dry. Rain provided Southeastern drought relief, although lake levels remained low. Winter grains and pastures benefitted from the Southeastern showers, although Florida's peninsula stayed mostly dry. East of the Rockies, temperatures soared during the early to mid-week period. Weekly readings averaged at least 20 degrees above normal in parts of the Midwest, with several locations reporting record highs. Temperatures averaged at least 10 degrees above normal in the eastern half of the U.S., except for southern Florida. In contrast, colder than normal weather prevailed over much of the Intermountain West.

Due to Agency budget constraints, the January 2007 Farm Labor Survey was not conducted. Since the data in all Farm Labor Surveys are tied to a specific reference week, it was not possible to conduct this survey at a later time. Therefore, year-to-year comparisons are not available in this report.

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

Farm Employment	January 7-13, 2007 <sup>2</sup>	October 7-13, 2007	January 6-12, 2008
	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>
Hired Workers		*817	599
150 Days or More		*603	511
149 Days or Less		*214	88
Agricultural Services Workers Working on Farms		*329	179
Hired Farm & Service Workers		*1,146	778
	<i>Hours per Week</i>	<i>Hours per Week</i>	<i>Hours per Week</i>
Hours Worked Hired		*42.2	38.4
	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>
Wage Rate for All Hired Workers <sup>3 4</sup>		*10.38	10.77
Type of Worker			
Field & Livestock Combined		*9.73	9.87
Field		9.62	9.64
Livestock		*10.02	10.19

\* Revised.

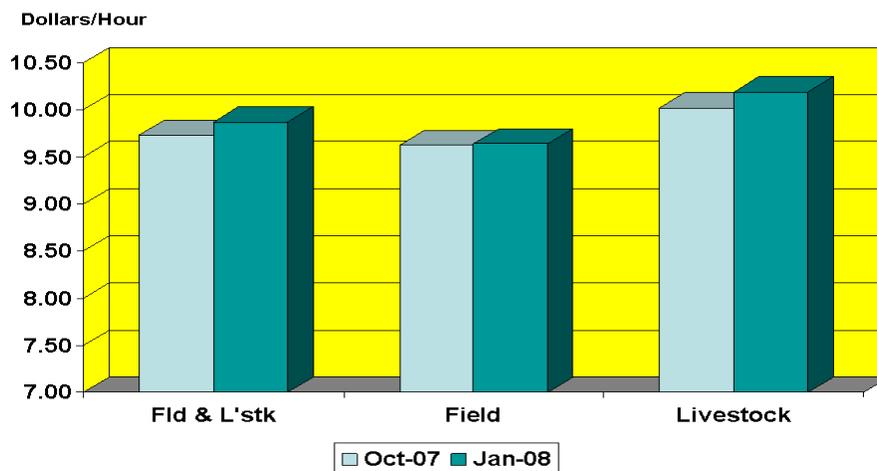
<sup>1</sup> Excludes AK.

<sup>2</sup> The January 2007 Farm Labor Survey was not conducted.

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

<sup>4</sup> Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

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



**Hired Workers: Number and Hours Worked by Region  
and United States, January 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	23	21	2	41.5
Northeast II	20	18	2	38.4
Appalachian I	23	21	2	35.6
Appalachian II	27	18	9	32.2
Southeast	29	22	7	37.3
FL	49	45	4	41.8
Lake	40	34	6	33.1
Cornbelt I	27	22	5	34.7
Cornbelt II	27	22	5	36.8
Delta	19	14	5	38.0
Northern Plains	21	20	1	38.8
Southern Plains	59	52	7	38.4
Mountain I	19	17	2	40.0
Mountain II	16	14	2	42.3
Mountain III	15	14	1	46.6
Pacific	42	33	9	35.7
CA	137	119	18	40.7
HI	6	5	1	38.4
US <sup>3</sup>	599	511	88	38.4

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

<sup>2</sup> Region map on page 11.

<sup>3</sup> Excludes AK.

**Hired Workers: Wage Rates for Type of Worker and All Hired Workers  
by Region and United States, January 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	11.59	10.02	10.60	11.60
Northeast II	10.06	8.90	9.50	11.31
Appalachian I	8.81	9.87	9.28	10.02
Appalachian II	8.53	9.56	9.15	10.22
Southeast	8.47	8.87	8.62	9.03
FL	9.00	9.20	9.03	9.98
Lake	10.93	10.67	10.75	11.72
Cornbelt I	10.79	10.92	10.85	11.60
Cornbelt II	11.38	10.82	10.90	11.42
Delta	8.70	8.85	8.75	9.27
Northern Plains	11.31	11.04	11.15	11.70
Southern Plains	8.49	10.03	9.30	9.81
Mountain I	9.62	9.98	9.90	10.40
Mountain II	9.08	9.47	9.30	9.96
Mountain III	8.68	10.47	9.41	9.95
Pacific	9.94	11.68	10.14	11.25
CA	10.10	10.70	10.25	11.37
HI <sup>3</sup>	10.80		10.92	13.04
US <sup>4</sup>	9.64	10.19	9.87	10.77

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

<sup>2</sup> Region map on page 11.

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

<sup>4</sup> Excludes AK.

**Hired Workers: Number and Hours Worked by Region  
and United States, October 7-13, 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	34	23	11	39.8
Northeast II	38	30	8	41.8
Appalachian I	43	30	13	37.7
Appalachian II	31	18	13	38.0
Southeast	28	21	7	37.1
FL	43	39	4	41.8
Lake	67	42	25	38.9
Cornbelt I	50	33	17	42.7
Cornbelt II	23	19	4	41.0
Delta	30	20	10	43.0
Northern Plains	35	23	12	46.3
Southern Plains	69	55	14	39.0
Mountain I	22	16	6	50.7
Mountain II	13	11	2	43.7
Mountain III	22	21	1	46.1
Pacific	75	45	30	40.7
CA	*188	*152	*36	*45.5
HI	6	5	1	40.0
US <sup>3</sup>	*817	*603	*214	*42.2

\*Revised.

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

<sup>2</sup> Region map on page 11.

<sup>3</sup> Excludes AK.

**Hired Workers: Wage Rates for Type of Worker and All Hired Workers  
by Region and United States, October 7-13, 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	9.96	9.22	9.70	10.35
Northeast II	9.81	9.86	9.82	10.63
Appalachian I	8.66	8.60	8.64	8.97
Appalachian II	9.24	9.53	9.35	9.75
Southeast	8.53	8.33	8.47	9.08
FL	8.70	8.95	8.74	9.76
Lake	10.75	10.64	10.70	11.30
Cornbelt I	10.24	9.75	10.10	10.60
Cornbelt II	10.69	10.90	10.80	11.25
Delta	8.26	8.24	8.25	8.53
Northern Plains	10.68	9.82	10.45	10.78
Southern Plains	8.59	10.46	9.45	10.05
Mountain I	8.31	9.10	8.56	9.00
Mountain II	9.80	10.69	10.05	10.66
Mountain III	8.26	9.91	8.85	9.21
Pacific	10.48	11.07	10.55	11.30
CA	9.70	*11.00	*9.89	*10.74
HI <sup>3</sup>	11.00		11.13	13.19
US <sup>4</sup>	9.62	*10.02	*9.73	*10.38

\* Revised.

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

<sup>2</sup> Region map on page 11.

<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>	January 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	( <sup>3</sup> )	10.85	9.62	10.12
Appalachian	8.14	8.93	9.72	9.21
Southeast	8.22	8.92	8.87	8.88
Lake	8.81	11.75	10.47	10.75
Cornbelt	11.15	11.32	10.59	10.88
Delta	9.60	8.24	8.67	8.75
Northern Plains	10.84	11.33	11.31	11.15
Southern Plains	7.61	8.16	10.13	9.30
Mountain	10.59	8.69	9.80	9.53
Pacific	10.52	10.03	10.78	10.23
48 States	9.79	9.68	10.09	9.87

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

Region <sup>2</sup>	January 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	10.50	9.71	10.54	10.53	10.82	11.89	11.47
Appal.	9.26	9.14	10.38	9.75	10.52	10.54	10.12
S. East	9.29	8.43	8.55	9.03	9.39	9.86	9.65
Lake	9.77	8.90	12.32	9.52	10.55	12.55	11.72
Cornbelt	11.70	11.27	9.45	( <sup>3</sup> )	11.23	11.41	11.51
Delta	( <sup>3</sup> )	( <sup>3</sup> )	8.41	9.15	9.52	8.91	9.27
N. Plains	10.90	( <sup>3</sup> )	9.93	13.41	10.70	11.77	11.70
S. Plains	7.53	11.34	9.84	12.15	8.51	9.88	9.81
Mountain	9.56	10.18	9.12	11.41	9.33	10.22	10.11
Pacific	11.16	11.73	12.44	11.13	11.42	11.23	11.34
48 States	9.70	11.06	10.43	11.30	10.68	10.92	10.74

<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.

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

Type of Farm	January 7-13, 2007 <sup>4</sup>	October 7-13, 2007	January 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		14	10
Other Crops		54	48
Livestock, Dairy, & Poultry		32	42

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

Gross Value of Sales	January 7-13, 2007 <sup>4</sup>	October 7-13, 2007	January 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		9	8
\$50,000-\$99,999		5	6
\$100,000-\$249,999		10	8
\$250,000-\$499,999		13	11
\$500,000-\$999,999		13	12
\$1,000,000 and over		50	55

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

Category	January 7-13, 2007 <sup>4</sup>	October 7-13, 2007	January 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		10	11
2 Workers		9	9
3-6 Workers		17	18
7-10 Workers		10	7
11-20 Workers		9	11
21-50 Workers		16	16
51 or more Workers		29	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.

<sup>4</sup> The January 2007 Farm Labor Survey was not conducted.

## Agricultural Services

Agricultural service operations provided 179,000 workers for the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of January 6-12, 2008. Agricultural service workers in California numbered 96,000 this January. Florida's number of agricultural service workers was 9,000.

The average wages received by agricultural service workers in California and Florida were \$10.00 and \$9.90 per hour, respectively.

**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>		
	Jan 2007 <sup>4</sup>	Oct 2007	Jan 2008	Jan 2007 <sup>4</sup>	Oct 2007	Jan 2008	Jan 2007 <sup>4</sup>	Oct 2007	Jan 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	96.0		*36.0	35.0		*10.40	10.00
FL		4.0	9.0		42.0	41.0		9.55	9.90
US		*329.0	179.0						

\*Revised.

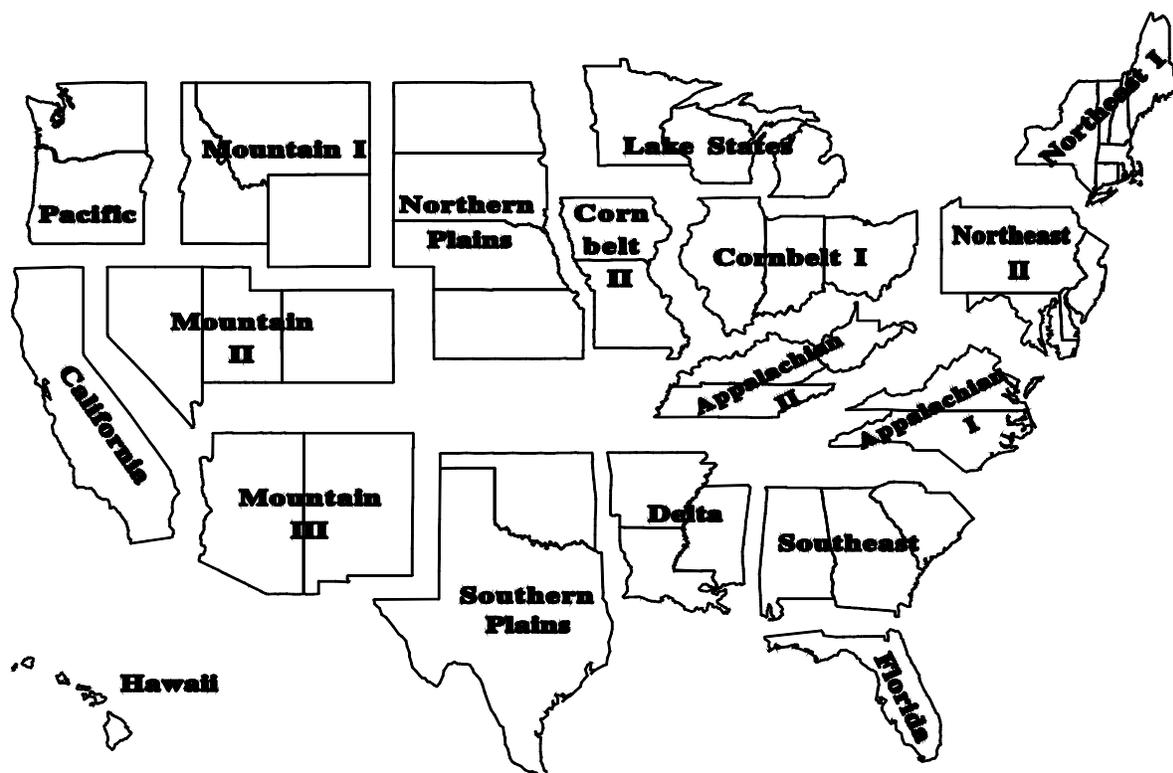
<sup>1</sup> Data are for Agricultural Services performed on the farm by custom service units such as crew leaders or custom crews. These statistics are not included in the State-Regional tables.

<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.

<sup>4</sup> The January 2007 Farm Labor Survey was not conducted.

## Farm Labor Regions



Region	States
Northeast I	CT, ME, MA, NH, NY, RI, VT.
Northeast II	DE, MD, NJ, PA.
Appalachian I	NC, VA.
Appalachian II	KY, TN, WV.
Southeast	AL, GA, SC.
Lake	MI, MN, WI.
Cornbelt I	IL, IN, OH.
Cornbelt II	IA, MO.
Delta	AR, LA, MS.
Northern Plains	KS, NE, ND, SD.
Southern Plains	OK, TX.
Mountain I	ID, MT, WY.
Mountain II	CO, NV, UT.
Mountain III	AZ, NM.
Pacific	OR, WA.

## 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 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 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 9 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 0.9 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 18 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 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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