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Hired Workers Down 5 Percent, Wage Rates Up 1 Percent From a Year Ago

There were 847,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of January 11-17, 2004, down 5 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 667,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 180,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$9.41 per hour during the January 2004 reference week, up 7 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$8.39 per hour, up 9 cents from last January, while livestock workers earned \$8.84 per hour compared with \$8.90 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$8.55 per hour, was up 5 cents from last year.

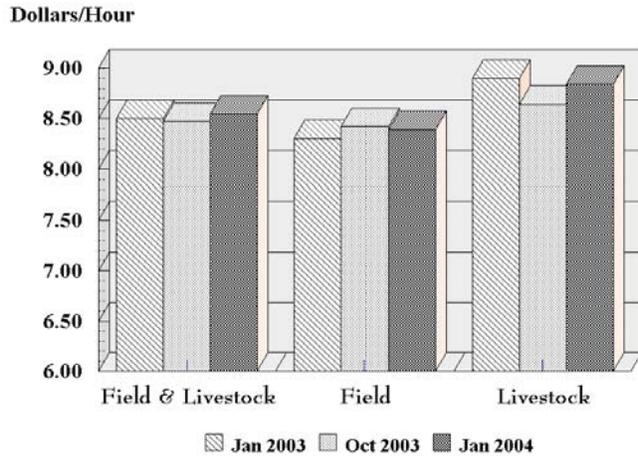
The number of hours worked averaged 38.1 hours for hired workers during the survey week, up 1 percent from a year ago.

The largest decreases in number of hired farm workers from last year occurred in the Northeast I (New England and New York), Pacific (Oregon and Washington) and Mountain III (Arizona and New Mexico) regions and in California and Florida. In the Northeast I region, an Arctic cold snap prevailed across the area, severely limiting outdoor activity and reducing the demand for hired workers. Cold, snowy weather in much of the Pacific region brought most farm and orchard work to a standstill. Therefore, fewer hired workers were needed. In the Mountain III region, Arizona's hay harvest was behind normal, which lessened the need for field workers. Also, the ongoing drought in New Mexico forced sheep and cattle operations to cull their herds, which lowered the demand for livestock workers. Cold, damp and foggy conditions in California's Central Valley severely curtailed many field activities. Therefore, fewer workers were needed in comparison to the January 2003 reference week when dry conditions and above normal temperatures prevailed the entire week. In Florida, a return to more normal weather patterns compared to the hard freeze during last January's reference week brought the demand for hired workers down. Many citrus and strawberry growers had hired extra workers to help minimize freeze damage last year.

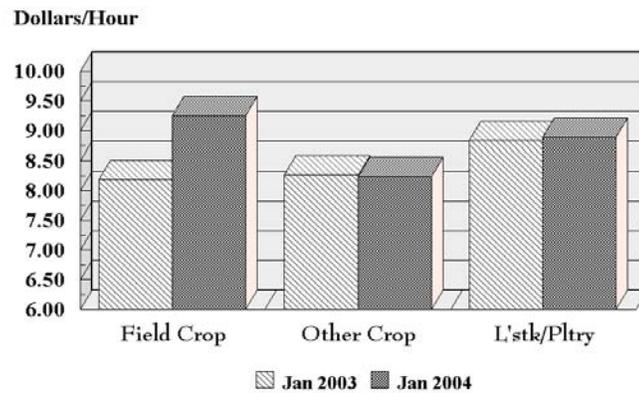
The largest increases in number of hired farm workers from a year ago were in the Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas), Lake (Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin), Southeast (Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina) and Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi) regions. In the Southern Plains region, supplemental feeding was increasing as pastures and ranges became depleted from winter grazing. This led to a greater demand for livestock workers. Continued expansion in the nursery and greenhouse industry and larger livestock inventories in the Lake region necessitated more hired workers. In the Southeast and Delta regions, activity in nurseries and greenhouses was accelerating, and some field crop and vegetable growers got an early start on field preparations for spring plantings. Therefore, more hired workers were needed.

Hired farm worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee and West Virginia), Corn Belt I (Illinois, Indiana and Ohio), Corn Belt II (Iowa and Missouri) and Delta regions. The higher wages in the Appalachian II region were mainly due to a higher percentage of equine workers and nursery and greenhouse workers in the work force. In the Corn Belt, wages were up due to a greater demand for skilled workers. Higher grain prices led to considerable movement of crop to market. This caused more truck drivers and machine operators to be needed for hauling. Wages in the Delta region were up because of a larger concentration of salaried workers putting in fewer hours.

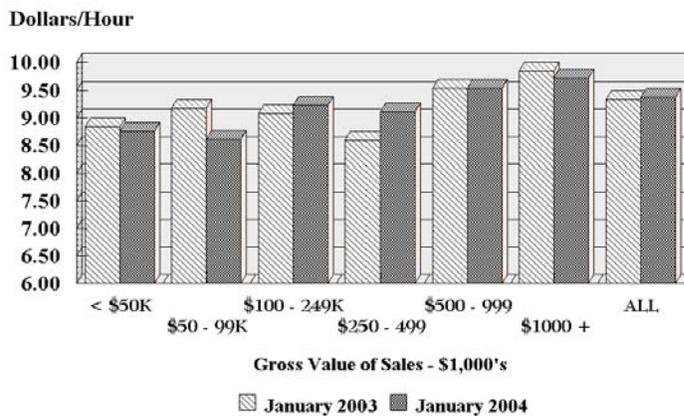
U.S. Wage Rates by Type of Worker



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,
January 11-17, 2004, with Comparisons ¹**

Farm Employment	January 12-18, 2003	October 12-18, 2003	January 11-17, 2004
	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>
Hired Workers	729	891	667
150 Days or More	614	626	554
149 Days or Less	115	265	113
Agricultural Services Workers Working on Farms	160	306	180
Hired Farm & Service Workers	889	1,197	847
	<i>Hours per Week</i>	<i>Hours per Week</i>	<i>Hours per Week</i>
Hours Worked Hired	37.7	40.2	38.1
	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>
Wage Rate for All Hired Workers ^{2 3}	9.34	9.05	9.41
Field & Livestock Combined	8.50	8.47	8.55
Field	8.30	8.42	8.39
Livestock	8.90	8.64	8.84

¹ Excludes AK.

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

³ Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

**Hired Workers: Number and Hours Worked by Region
and United States, January 11-17, 2004 ¹**

U.S. and Region ²	Hired				Number of Hours Worked
	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	20	18	2		38.8
Northeast II	19	16	3		37.2
Appalachian I	24	20	4		35.0
Appalachian II	32	20	12		33.6
Southeast	27	21	6		35.5
FL	61	54	7		41.7
Lake	50	43	7		34.2
Cornbelt I	23	19	4		35.9
Cornbelt II	19	18	1		33.0
Delta	21	18	3		32.4
Northern Plains	23	20	3		37.6
Southern Plains	60	45	15		34.0
Mountain I	12	11	1		35.4
Mountain II	17	16	1		39.7
Mountain III	16	15	1		44.9
Pacific	41	34	7		38.2
CA	195	160	35		41.6
HI	7	6	1		39.4
US ³	667	554	113		38.1

¹ Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

² Region map on page 17.

³ Excludes AK.

**Hired Workers: Wage Rates for Type of Workers and All Hired Workers
by Region and United States, January 11-17, 2004 ¹**

U.S. and Region ²	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	9.72	8.56	9.10	10.10
Northeast II	8.79	7.73	8.38	9.26
Appalachian I	8.36	8.76	8.53	9.16
Appalachian II	8.76	8.59	8.66	9.16
Southeast	7.67	7.61	7.65	8.10
FL	7.70	8.60	7.77	8.85
Lake	10.11	9.41	9.60	10.68
Cornbelt I	9.98	10.01	10.00	10.70
Cornbelt II	9.12	9.79	9.50	10.15
Delta	8.57	8.71	8.63	9.03
Northern Plains	9.89	8.78	9.11	9.75
Southern Plains	7.46	7.97	7.73	8.43
Mountain I	8.29	8.72	8.64	8.92
Mountain II	8.75	8.81	8.80	9.80
Mountain III	7.44	7.98	7.69	8.37
Pacific	8.58	9.31	8.78	9.82
CA	8.40	9.30	8.54	9.46
HI ⁴	9.26		9.39	11.11
US ³	8.39	8.84	8.55	9.41

¹ Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

² Region map on page 17.

³ Excludes AK.

⁴ Insufficient data for livestock.

**Hired Workers: Number and Hours Worked by Region
and United States, October 12-18, 2003 ¹**

U.S. and Region ²	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	40	28	12	39.7
Northeast II	34	26	8	38.5
Appalachian I	45	29	16	32.5
Appalachian II	38	18	20	36.2
Southeast	38	26	12	38.9
FL	49	43	6	39.1
Lake	72	45	27	37.7
Cornbelt I	45	26	19	40.6
Cornbelt II	26	16	10	42.6
Delta	31	20	11	37.0
Northern Plains	35	25	10	43.8
Southern Plains	54	43	11	41.7
Mountain I	33	22	11	45.0
Mountain II	20	15	5	41.5
Mountain III	18	15	3	47.9
Pacific	76	44	32	37.6
CA	230	179	51	42.7
HI	7	6	1	38.9
US ³	891	626	265	40.2

¹ Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

² Region map on page 17.

³ Excludes AK.

**Hired Workers: Wage Rates for Type of Worker and All Hired Workers
by Region and United States, October 12-18, 2003 ¹**

U.S. and Region ²	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	9.62	8.64	9.33	10.12
Northeast II	8.79	8.27	8.66	9.59
Appalachian I	8.19	7.92	8.10	8.66
Appalachian II	7.56	8.12	7.70	8.04
Southeast	7.90	7.84	7.88	8.26
FL	8.55	7.95	8.48	9.53
Lake	9.25	9.11	9.20	9.70
Cornbelt I	8.76	9.67	8.91	9.34
Cornbelt II	8.62	9.83	8.87	9.30
Delta	7.01	7.15	7.05	7.48
Northern Plains	9.29	8.59	9.07	9.31
Southern Plains	7.12	7.70	7.39	8.01
Mountain I	7.80	8.05	7.93	8.24
Mountain II	8.11	8.12	8.11	8.97
Mountain III	7.16	8.73	7.63	8.18
Pacific	8.90	10.10	9.11	9.62
CA	8.37	9.80	8.54	9.13
HI ⁴	9.82		9.88	11.56
US ³	8.42	8.64	8.47	9.05

¹ Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

² Region map on page 17.

³ Excludes AK.

⁴ Insufficient data for livestock.

**Hired Workers: Number and Hours Worked by Region
and United States, January 12-18, 2003 ¹**

U.S. and Region ²	Hired			
	Number of Workers	Expected to be Employed		Number of Hours Worked
		150 Days or More ³	149 Days or Less ³	
	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>Hours per Week</i>
Northeast I	32	29	3	37.3
Northeast II	23	19	4	37.2
Appalachian I	27	24	3	35.3
Appalachian II	32	20	12	29.3
Southeast	24	22	2	35.6
FL	70	56	14	37.2
Lake	45	40	5	31.7
Cornbelt I	23	21	2	33.5
Cornbelt II	20	17	3	27.2
Delta	18	16	2	38.3
Northern Plains	23	22	1	37.8
Southern Plains	50	40	10	37.9
Mountain I	10	9	1	35.7
Mountain II	20	18	2	39.7
Mountain III	22	20	2	47.2
Pacific	48	40	8	37.7
CA	235	195	40	40.8
HI	7	6	1	37.9
US ³	729	614	115	37.7

¹ Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

² Region map on page 17.

³ Excludes AK.

**Hired Workers: Wage Rates for Type of Worker and All Hired Workers
by Region and United States, January 12-18, 2003 ¹**

U.S. and Region ²	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	10.02	8.36	9.12	10.03
Northeast II	9.16	8.34	8.83	9.83
Appalachian I	8.22	8.58	8.40	9.34
Appalachian II	7.34	7.87	7.60	7.98
Southeast	7.50	8.96	8.12	8.87
FL	7.80	8.30	7.87	8.81
Lake	10.51	9.44	9.65	10.54
Cornbelt I	9.68	8.64	9.01	9.72
Cornbelt II	9.24	9.01	9.08	9.50
Delta	8.56	7.89	8.30	8.63
Northern Plains	9.18	9.43	9.37	10.00
Southern Plains	8.13	8.51	8.29	8.85
Mountain I	8.51	8.17	8.25	8.53
Mountain II	9.15	8.73	8.85	9.66
Mountain III	6.92	8.22	7.48	8.12
Pacific	8.63	9.93	8.87	9.71
CA	8.22	10.10	8.46	9.44
HI ⁴	9.31		9.36	11.04
US ³	8.30	8.90	8.50	9.34

¹ Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

² Region map on page 17.

³ Excludes AK.

⁴ Insufficient data for livestock.

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

Region ²	January 12-18, 2003			
	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	(³)	9.63	8.30	9.00
Appalachian	8.36	7.98	7.68	7.99
Southeast	7.20	7.77	8.59	7.93
Lake	11.85	9.52	9.57	9.65
Cornbelt	9.38	8.53	8.95	9.04
Delta	6.64	(³)	7.40	8.30
Northern Plains	9.04	8.25	7.73	9.37
Southern Plains	7.19	6.83	9.29	8.29
Mountain	6.85	8.07	8.81	8.14
Pacific	(³)	8.27	9.81	8.53
48 States	8.19	8.27	8.85	8.50

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

Region ²	January 11-17, 2004			
	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	8.71	9.04	8.55	8.77
Appalachian	8.58	8.42	8.73	8.61
Southeast	7.79	7.62	8.24	7.73
Lake	10.04	10.41	9.33	9.60
Cornbelt	10.41	8.55	9.87	9.79
Delta	8.28	9.09	8.81	8.63
Northern Plains	(³)	8.50	8.40	9.11
Southern Plains	7.75	7.27	7.97	7.73
Mountain	7.24	8.21	8.45	8.34
Pacific	10.12	8.40	9.41	8.58
48 States	9.26	8.23	8.89	8.55

¹ Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

² 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.

³ Insufficient data.

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

Region ²	January 12-18, 2003						
	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	(³)	7.60	9.74	9.22	10.61	10.81	9.95
Appal.	8.46	7.42	8.31	8.53	9.52	10.35	8.67
S. East	8.21	7.93	8.74	8.57	8.37	9.01	8.82
Lake	(³)	7.60	9.33	8.32	10.88	11.94	10.54
Cornbelt	9.27	9.09	8.76	9.32	9.73	10.43	9.63
Delta	7.00	7.22	7.50	7.36	10.12	9.05	8.63
N. Plains	7.47	6.70	9.63	8.89	9.97	10.81	10.00
S. Plains	(³)	7.93	8.88	7.50	7.25	8.93	8.85
Mountain	7.42	7.66	8.12	7.83	9.64	9.16	8.75
Pacific	9.09	9.42	10.10	9.61	10.09	9.80	9.48
48 States	8.83	9.17	9.08	8.59	9.54	9.84	9.33

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

Region ²	January 11-17, 2004						
	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	9.51	7.66	8.59	10.13	9.65	10.29	9.70
Appal.	6.97	6.82	8.96	8.17	9.69	9.78	9.16
S. East	7.72	8.18	9.91	8.70	8.00	8.69	8.64
Lake	8.32	8.86	9.61	11.53	9.22	12.56	10.68
Cornbelt	9.66	7.64	9.21	10.18	11.52	10.72	10.46
Delta	9.05	8.88	8.53	9.50	9.02	9.00	9.03
N. Plains	8.97	9.03	8.56	9.65	10.84	9.92	9.75
S. Plains	6.82	8.51	8.29	7.99	7.73	9.33	8.43
Mountain	(³)	8.39	9.26	7.84	8.24	9.26	9.03
Pacific	(³)	8.93	9.41	8.64	9.46	9.79	9.52
48 States	8.76	8.61	9.22	9.11	9.53	9.73	9.38

¹ Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

² 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.

³ Insufficient data.

**Field and Livestock Workers: Distribution
by Type of Farm, 48 States^{1 2 3}**

Type of Farm	January 12-18, 2003	October 12-18, 2003	January 11-17, 2004
	<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	8	15	9
Other Crops	55	58	52
Livestock, Dairy, & Poultry	37	27	39

**Hired Workers: Distribution by Economic
Class of Farm, 48 States^{1 3}**

Gross Value of Sales	January 12-18, 2003	October 12-18, 2003	January 11-17, 2004
	<i>Percent of Hired Workers</i>	<i>Percent of Hired Workers</i>	<i>Percent of Hired Workers</i>
Less than \$50,000	16	11	12
\$50,000-\$99,999	29	7	7
\$100,000-\$249,999	9	25	19
\$250,000-\$499,999	8	11	8
\$500,000-\$999-999	9	12	14
\$1,000,000 and over	29	34	40

Hired Workers: Distribution by Category, United States,^{1 3}

Category	January 12-18, 2003	October 12-18, 2003	January 11-17, 2004
	<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	11
2 Workers	10	9	9
3-6 Workers	19	18	19
7-10 Workers	10	7	9
11-20 Workers	9	11	9
21-50 Workers	10	14	12
51 or more Workers	33	32	31

¹ 48 States, excluding AK and HI.

² Field and Livestock Workers combined.

³ Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

Agricultural Services

Crew leaders and custom crews provided 180,000 workers for the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of January 11-17, 2004. Service workers in California numbered 86,000 this January, up 15 percent from last year. Florida's number of service workers was 14,000, down 18 percent from last year.

The average wages received by agricultural service workers in California and Florida were \$9.20 and \$9.25 per hour, respectively. Comparable wages in January 2003 were \$8.70 in California and \$9.35 in Florida.

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

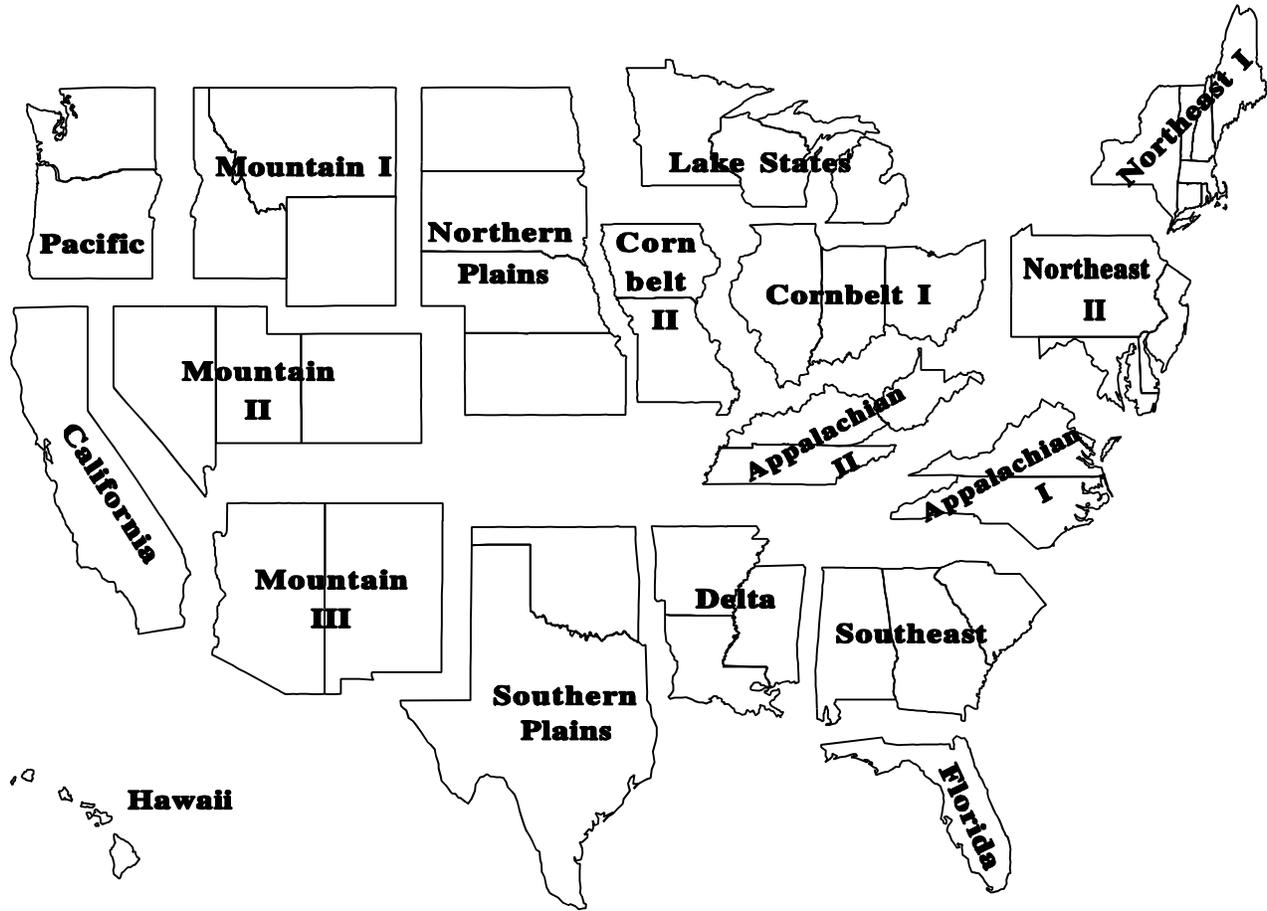
State	Number of Workers Working on Farms			Hours Worked ²			Wage Rates ^{2 3}		
	Jan 2003	Oct 2003	Jan 2004	Jan 2003	Oct 2003	Jan 2004	Jan 2003	Oct 2003	Jan 2004
	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>	<i>Dollars per Hour</i>
CA	75.0	118.0	86.0	35.5	32.3	38.5	8.70	9.16	9.20
FL	17.0	4.0	14.0	32.0	38.0	38.5	9.35	9.65	9.25
US	160.0	306.0	180.0						

¹ 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.

² United States data not available.

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

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: Places that sell, or would normally sell, at least \$1000 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: Wage rates are calculated based on total wages and hours worked during the survey week.

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: Service on a contract or fee basis such as veterinarian work, artificial insemination, sheep shearing, milk testing, etc., performed on the farm or ranch.

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, 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 value of sales for its agricultural production.

The three types of farms are:

Field Crops: A farm producing wheat, rice, corn, soybeans, barley, dry beans, rye, sorghum, cotton, popcorn, tobacco, potatoes, sugar crops, hay, peanuts, hops, mint, 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.

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: Gross value 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 11-17, 2004.

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 10 and 23 percent at the regional level. The U.S. all hired farm worker wage rate had a relative sampling error of 4.7 percent. The relative sampling error was 1.2 percent for the combined field and livestock worker wage rate. Relative sampling errors for the all hired farm worker wage rate generally ranged between 3 and 18 percent at the regional levels. Relative sampling errors for wage rates published by type of farm and economic class of farm ranged between 1 and 55 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 January 2003 and October 2003 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.

Next Farm Labor Publication Date: The May 21st report will have information for the survey week of April 11-17, 2004. The report will include the number of All Hired Workers, Average Hours Worked by Hired Workers and the All Hired Worker Wage Rates at the Regional and U.S. levels. The wage rates for field, livestock, and combined field and livestock workers will also be available at the Regional and U.S. level. The number of Agricultural Service Workers and the corresponding wage rates will be published for California and Florida.

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The next "*Farm Labor*" report will be released at 3 p.m. ET on May 21, 2004.

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