

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
CROP REPORTING BOARD

Washington, D. C.
November 13, 1934

FARM EMPLOYMENT, NOVEMBER 1, 1934

Employment of both family and hired labor on farms of crop reporters was lower on November 1 of this year than any other November 1 during the 12-year period covered by the record. This record low level of employment resulted from the unusually low production of all important fall harvested crops except potatoes and pears. Total employment on farms of crop reporters declined slightly less than the usual seasonal amount, nevertheless, from the extremely low level of 311 persons employed per 100 farms on October 1. On November 1, only 284 persons were employed, a decrease of 27 persons from the previous month. The 1928-1932 five-year average seasonal decline amounted to 31 persons, of whom 10 were family workers and 21 were hired workers per 100 farms.

Family labor declined more than seasonally this year, by 13 persons, while hired labor declined by 14, per 100 farms, or only two-thirds of the seasonal average amount. The number of family workers employed on November 1 was reported as 204 persons per 100 farms, while 80 persons were employed as hired labor. No data are available for November 1, 1933, but in November 1932 family labor amounted to 218 persons and hired labor 89 persons, a total of 307 persons employed per 100 farms.

With the harvesting of potatoes, deciduous fruits and cotton nearing completion, total employment of farm labor declined sharply in some areas. In New England the decline averaged 52 persons per 100 farms. The declines were 60 persons per 100 farms in the South Atlantic, 37 in the East South Central and 32 in the West South Central States. In the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Coast areas the declines were 51 and 47 persons per 100 farms, respectively. Total employment of family and hired labor in the Middle Atlantic and Corn and Wheat Belt States declined moderately and about seasonally. The declines averaged 10 persons per 100 farms in the Middle Atlantic, 10 persons in the East North Central and 9 persons in the West North Central States, where corn harvesting, fall plowing and the sowing of winter wheat still engaged the attention of farmers on November 1.

Wage Rates for Cotton Pickers, 1924-1934

An annual series of piece-work wage rates for cotton pickers by States from 1924 to date is published in this report for the first time. Wage rates for the United States as a whole declined steadily from \$1.25 and \$1.27 per 100 pounds of seed cotton picked in 1924 and 1925, with a slight increase in 1927, to 41 cents in 1931. Wage rates increased 19 cents to 60 cents per 100 pounds from 1931 to date. A fairly close correspondence of wage rates with prices received for cotton and cottonseed is shown by comparing the price index with wage rates. The index declined from 212 per cent of the 1910-1914 average in 1924 to 47 per cent in 1932. Prices received for cotton and cottonseed have increased since 1932, and the index stood at 107 per cent of pre-war on October 15, 1934. Wage rates tend to follow the trend of prices, but minor fluctuations in average annual prices are not always reflected in wage rates, since the size of the cotton crop to be picked is also a factor affecting wage rates. In 1934 the comparatively high wage rate of 90 cents per 100 pounds of seed cotton picked was reported in Arizona and California, while in South Carolina and Georgia the low wage rate of 50 cents per 100 pounds was reported. The same relative positions were held by these States in 1924 and 1925.

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EMPLOYMENT ON FARMS OF CROP REPORTERS, NOVEMBER 1,
1934, WITH COMPARISONS 1/

Estimated number of persons employed per 100 farms on farms of crop reporters as based on reports from 19,040 farmers. Data for previous months appear in current issues of Crops and Markets.

Month & Year	United States	New England	Middle Atlantic	East North Central	West North Central	South Atlantic	East South Central	West South Central	Mountain	Pacific
<u>Family Labor</u>										
Sept. 1, 1933	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Oct. 1, 1933	225	160	170	172	175	300	362	266	199	182
Nov. 1, 1933	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sept. 1, 1934	224	159	176	173	175	298	366	249	214	173
Oct. 1, 1934	217	154	172	167	171	292	358	243	186	161
Nov. 1, 1934	204	153	172	162	167	263	321	226	165	162
<u>Hired Labor</u>										
Sept. 1, 1933	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Oct. 1, 1933	105	135	98	58	51	166	105	119	102	346
Nov. 1, 1933	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sept. 1, 1934	88	120	83	52	47	153	102	68	98	226
Oct. 1, 1934	94	140	94	60	48	169	120	73	87	209
Nov. 1, 1934	80	89	84	55	43	138	120	58	57	161
<u>Family and Hired Labor Combined</u>										
Sept. 1, 1933	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Oct. 1, 1933	330	295	268	230	226	466	467	385	301	528
Nov. 1, 1933	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sept. 1, 1934	312	279	259	235	222	451	468	317	312	399
Oct. 1, 1934	311	294	266	227	219	461	478	316	273	370
Nov. 1, 1934	284	242	256	217	210	401	441	284	222	323

1/ Questions on the number of family and hired workers were omitted from the questionnaire in September and November 1933. Consequently, no information is available for these dates.

AVERAGE WAGE RATE FOR PICKING 100 POUNDS OF SEED COTTON

State	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934
	Dol.										
Virginia	1.30	1.13	1.00	1.12	1.23	1.15	.75	.45	.34	.45	.65
North Carolina	1.24	1.17	1.03	1.07	1.07	1.01	.58	.36	.38	.48	.65
South Carolina	.95	.86	.82	.78	.83	.81	.52	.36	.36	.45	.50
Georgia	.85	.94	.90	.88	.85	.90	.57	.35	.33	.45	.50
Florida	.94	1.13	1.12	.95	1.02	1.07	.76	.41	.39	.48	.55
Illinois	1.19	-	-	1.20	1.20	1.15	.71	.50	.40	.65	.75
Missouri	1.32	1.38	1.12	1.14	1.14	1.12	.71	.49	.52	.67	.80
Kansas	-	1.54	-	1.50	1.40	1.30	.75	.45	.48	.65	.75
Kentucky	-	1.48	1.10	1.20	1.20	1.18	.70	.49	.50	.60	.80
Tennessee	1.11	1.41	1.05	1.08	1.04	1.34	.63	.43	.47	.54	.65
Alabama	.95	1.08	1.03	.96	.95	.92	.55	.34	.36	.45	.55
Mississippi	1.00	1.35	1.16	1.08	1.02	1.08	.56	.39	.40	.49	.55
Louisiana	1.02	1.25	1.12	1.03	1.03	1.01	.61	.41	.39	.48	.55
Texas	1.48	1.33	1.20	1.24	1.21	1.11	.71	.44	.45	.55	.60
Oklahoma	1.48	1.60	1.28	1.40	1.28	1.22	.73	.45	.48	.65	.75
Arkansas	1.06	1.27	1.06	1.05	1.03	1.06	.56	.40	.44	.52	.60
New Mexico	1.40	1.40	1.15	1.30	1.22	1.25	.68	.43	.44	.55	.65
Arizona	1.60	1.75	1.45	1.53	1.50	1.50	.89	.58	.50	.67	.90
California	1.55	1.65	1.55	1.47	1.46	1.45	.89	.50	.45	.65	.90
U. S.	1.25	1.27	1.11	1.12	1.10	1.06	.63	.41	.42	.53	.60

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FARM EMPLOYMENT, DECEMBER 22, 1934

Employment of farm labor on farms of crop reporters declined less than seasonally from November 1 to December 1 but dropped, nevertheless, to the lowest level for December 1 during the 12-year period covered by the record. The number of persons employed per 100 farms was reported as 267 on December 1 compared with 284 on November 1. The number of family workers declined from 204 persons per 100 farms on November 1 to 201 persons a month later. The employment of hired labor made about the usual seasonal decline, dropping from 80 persons per 100 farms on November 1 to 66 persons on the first of December. No data are available for December 1, 1933, but in 1932 the total number of persons employed per 100 farms was reported as 286, or 19 more than on December 1 this year.

The record low level of farm employment which has prevailed throughout the fall of this year is a result of the sharp reductions in the production of fall harvested crops following the severe and widespread drought. The sharpest decline during November was recorded in the South Atlantic States, where family and hired labor combined fell from 401 persons employed per 100 farms on November 1 to 376 persons on December 1. Cotton picking reached its peak in late September, but the number of persons engaged at this task fell off somewhat in the latter half of October and sharply in November. Tobacco harvesting was well under way in September but practically completed in November. The most moderate decline occurred in the West North Central States, where employment on farms of crop reporters has been at comparatively low levels during each of the last six months of the year.