

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service

Washington, D. C.
October 13, 1939

FARM WAGE RATE INDEX
UNCHANGES SINCE JULY 1

Farm wage rates averaged about the same on October 1 as 3 months earlier, the Agricultural Marketing Service reported today. At 126 percent of its 1910-14 average the wage index was unchanged during the third quarter and the same as a year ago.

Hired hands received an average of \$1.57 per day without board on the first of this month, or a little less than the national average of \$1.59 a year earlier. Day wages varied widely throughout the country, however, with October rates ranging from 85 cents in South Carolina to \$3 per day in New Hampshire.

The supply of workers available for hire in rural areas was slightly larger this month than on July 1 despite the rather general increase in employment in manufacturing industries. Reports received from crop correspondents as to the labor supply averaged 90.4 percent of normal on October 1 as compared with 89.6 percent 3 months earlier. Less help was available than a year ago, however, when the labor supply averaged 91.6 percent of normal.

With sizable fall crops being harvested and farm income up, the demand for hired farm labor was somewhat higher than a year ago. Reports on demand averaged 83.4 percent of normal on the first of this month, or 2.3 points higher than on October 1, 1938. Demand still averaged somewhat lower than on July 1 in many sections of the country, and especially in the South where cotton picking was reported to be nearing completion somewhat earlier than usual.

The ratio of labor supply to the demand for workers as of October 1 was a little lower than a year ago, averaging 108.4 percent of normal on the first of this month or 4.5 points less than on October 1, 1938. Increases in industrial employment probably accounted for the most of this decrease. Factory employment averaged 96 percent of its 1923-25 level in August of this year (the latest month for which data are available) as compared with 92 in October of last year.

Shortages of farm labor were indicated, however, in only a few areas. The demand for labor was reported in excess of the supply in several of the New England States and along the Eastern Seaboard from Pennsylvania to Georgia. A considerable surplus of workers was reported, on the other hand, in Nebraska and Kansas, the areas most seriously affected by the late summer drought.

Farm Employment Down from Year Ago

Farm employment increased during September but the secondary peak reached on October 1 was still considerably below the number of persons working on July 1 of this year. The total number of persons employed on farms on the first of this month was estimated at 11,886,000 as compared with 12,215,000 on July 1, and 12,054,000 a year ago. This was the lowest October 1 total estimated during the 14-year period covered by the record.

Corn husking was just beginning in many Northern States on the first of this month, while cotton picking was nearing completion in the southern portion of the Cotton Belt. Dry soil hindered seeding of winter grains in many Winter Wheat States, while rains delayed the sugar-beet harvest in some beet areas. Potato-digging was rather general in most of the large States but was not yet in full swing in Idaho. The apple harvest was well along in the Northeast.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service

FARM WAGE RATES AND RELATED DATA, UNITED STATES, OCTOBER 1, 1939
WITH COMPARISONS

	Annual average 1910-14	July 1, 1938	Oct. 1, 1938	July 1, 1939	Oct. 1, 1939
FARM WAGE INDEX:					
Unadjusted	100	129	126	126	126
Adjusted for seasonality	100	125	122	122	122
FARM WAGE RATES ¹ :					
Per month, with board	\$22.09	\$28.95	\$28.25	\$28.18	\$28.28
Per month, without board	29.18	37.28	36.09	36.26	36.13
Per day, with board	1.16	1.38	1.36	1.36	1.35
Per day, without board	1.42	1.63	1.59	1.59	1.57
SUPPLY OF AND DEMAND FOR FARM LABOR:					
(Percentage of normal)					
Supply	--	92.3	91.6	89.6	90.4
Demand	--	83.8	81.1	84.6	83.4
Supply as a percentage of demand....	--	110.1	112.9	105.9	108.4
FARM EMPLOYMENT:					
(Thousands of persons)					
Family labor.....	--	9,321	8,896	9,124	8,864
Hired labor	--	3,152	3,158	3,091	3,022
Combined	--	12,473	12,054	12,215	11,886
RELATED INDEXES:					
Prices received by farmers ¹ /.....	100	95	95	89	² /98
Ratio of prices received to farm wage rates.....	100	74	75	71	78
Industrial wage rates ³ /.....	--	205	212	213	⁴ / 217
Industrial employment ⁵ /.....	--	85	92	94	⁴ / 96
Industrial pay rolls ⁵ /.....	--	71	84	84	⁴ / 90

¹/As of the 15th of the month.

²/Sept. 1939 - latest data available.

³/Average weekly earnings, New York State factories, June 1914 = 100.

⁴/Aug. 1939 - latest data available.

⁵/Bureau of Labor Statistics indexes for manufacturing industries, revised 1923-1925 = 100.

* Revised.

Based on reports from approximately 21,389 correspondents. The data for previous quarters, by States, appear in Crops and Markets for January, April, July and October.

Farm wage rates and related data, by geographic divisions,
October 1, 1939, with comparisons

Geographic division	Annual average 1910-14	July 1, 1938	Oct. 1, 1938	July 1, 1939	Oct. 1, 1939
	<u>Dollars</u>	<u>Dollars</u>	<u>Dollars</u>	<u>Dollars</u>	<u>Dollars</u>
FARM WAGE RATES					
Per month with board					
New England	24.18	33.40	31.83	32.96	33.52
Middle Atlantic	22.25	30.05	29.42	29.23	29.37
East North Central	23.75	29.91	29.74	29.57	29.75
West North Central	26.32	29.47	28.83	29.05	28.89
South Atlantic	14.62	17.06	16.41	16.89	16.86
East South Central	14.71	15.98	15.68	16.47	16.08
West South Central	17.35	19.39	19.19	19.19	18.98
Mountain	32.48	37.37	36.84	37.24	36.59
Pacific	33.45	44.19	41.83	43.18	44.79
Per month without board					
New England	37.70	57.23	55.13	57.24	58.52
Middle Atlantic	33.41	46.56	45.83	45.56	45.62
East North Central	32.80	41.91	41.68	41.71	42.07
West North Central	36.86	39.82	39.20	39.19	39.36
South Atlantic	20.97	25.11	24.40	25.17	24.80
East South Central	20.80	23.05	22.66	23.57	22.81
West South Central	24.93	28.37	27.86	27.68	27.46
Mountain	46.42	53.53	52.29	53.64	52.54
Pacific	48.16	65.96	62.05	64.04	67.04
Per day with board					
New England	1.27	1.84	1.84	1.79	1.84
Middle Atlantic	1.24	1.79	1.78	1.74	1.76
East North Central	1.71	1.66	1.65	1.66	1.67
West North Central	1.46	1.56	1.59	1.57	1.58
South Atlantic	.81	.89	.87	.90	.88
East South Central	.81	.80	.77	.81	.77
West South Central	.98	.99	.97	1.00	1.00
Mountain	1.50	1.74	1.81	1.75	1.72
Pacific	1.49	2.10	2.02	2.00	2.02
Per day without board					
New England	1.71	2.62	2.58	2.71	2.70
Middle Atlantic	1.63	2.37	2.39	2.33	2.35
East North Central	1.68	2.16	2.16	2.15	2.17
West North Central	1.88	2.09	2.12	2.06	2.11
South Atlantic	1.05	1.19	1.16	1.20	1.19
East South Central	1.05	1.03	1.03	1.04	1.03
West South Central	1.25	1.28	1.24	1.26	1.24
Mountain	2.05	2.31	2.33	2.34	2.27
Pacific	2.06	2.78	2.71	2.70	2.79

Farm wage rates and related data, by geographic divisions,
October 1, 1939, with comparisons

Geographic division	July 1 1937	Oct. 1 1937	July 1, 1938	Oct. 1, 1938	July 1, 1939	Oct. 1 1939
SUPPLY OF FARM LABOR (Percentage of normal)						
New England	79.1	83.2	94.9	90.5	87.5	88.2
Middle Atlantic	71.8	71.1	87.1	87.9	87.3	88.5
East North Central	77.2	77.1	93.1	91.3	90.9	89.9
West North Central	84.7	87.2	92.0	92.2	91.8	92.5
South Atlantic	78.3	76.6	83.1	87.9	84.4	84.4
East South Central	81.4	77.9	87.5	86.5	83.0	88.1
West South Central	90.1	83.5	92.1	91.1	89.4	91.3
Mountain	90.2	88.0	98.6	97.7	97.2	95.8
Pacific	92.7	90.5	104.3	104.0	101.0	99.9
DEMAND FOR FARM LABOR (Percentage of normal)						
New England	95.0	94.4	87.4	87.4	89.9	88.1
Middle Atlantic	94.4	93.7	86.7	87.0	85.3	86.3
East North Central	95.0	94.3	86.6	86.0	87.3	87.6
West North Central	86.6	83.3	84.6	77.2	81.9	79.9
South Atlantic	93.4	94.6	85.8	81.3	87.8	86.6
East South Central	90.7	93.4	83.4	81.1	89.7	81.6
West South Central	85.7	90.4	73.2	76.9	78.2	76.3
Mountain	85.8	86.2	82.4	82.3	80.3	83.6
Pacific	93.2	95.8	81.2	79.2	85.4	87.7
SUPPLY AS A PERCENTAGE OF DEMAND (Percentage of normal)						
New England	83.3	89.1	103.6	103.5	97.3	100.1
Middle Atlantic	76.1	75.9	100.5	101.0	102.3	102.5
East North Central	81.3	81.3	107.5	106.2	104.1	102.6
West North Central	97.8	104.7	108.7	119.4	112.1	115.8
South Atlantic	87.3	81.0	102.7	102.1	96.0	97.5
East South Central	78.7	87.4	104.9	106.7	92.5	102.0
West South Central	105.1	92.4	117.8	118.5	114.3	119.7
Mountain	101.6	102.1	119.7	113.7	121.0	114.6
Pacific	99.5	94.5	122.4	131.3	113.3	113.9
FARM EMPLOYMENT (Thousands of persons)						
Total family and hired						
New England	231	264	284	268	277	265
Middle Atlantic	720	648	719	633	723	625
East North Central	1,366	1,558	1,688	1,551	1,611	1,516
West North Central	1,959	1,714	1,942	1,741	1,905	1,745
South Atlantic	2,439	2,459	2,571	2,330	2,453	2,353
East South Central	2,048	2,276	2,010	2,176	2,027	2,124
West South Central	2,170	2,279	2,143	2,177	2,112	2,191
Mountain	532	487	527	506	501	493
Pacific	543	655	586	622	590	574

Continued

Farm wage rates and related data, by geographic divisions,
October 1, 1939, with comparisons (continued)

Geographic Division	July 1, 1937	Oct. 1, 1937	July 1, 1938	Oct. 1, 1938	July 1 1939	Oct. 1939
FARM EMPLOYMENT						
<u>Family labor</u>						
New England	176	163	175	163	172	163
Middle Atlantic	461	404	458	401	469	403
East North Central	1,249	1,145	1,261	1,139	1,209	1,128
West North Central	1,486	1,302	1,459	1,329	1,437	1,303
South Atlantic	1,920	1,819	1,970	1,784	1,859	1,767
East South Central	1,762	1,954	1,749	1,857	1,742	1,833
West South Central	1,681	1,742	1,633	1,616	1,601	1,633
Mountain	328	287	309	286	305	283
Pacific	311	317	307	318	330	311
<u>Hired labor</u>						
New England	105	101	109	102	105	99
Middle Atlantic	259	245	261	232	259	228
East North Central	417	413	427	412	402	386
West North Central	473	412	483	412	468	444
South Atlantic	569	640	604	596	599	583
East South Central	286	322	261	319	285	283
West South Central	549	537	510	561	517	533
Mountain	210	200	218	220	196	203
Pacific	232	338	279	304	260	233

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The number of farm family workers (including farm operators) employed at these and other seasonal jobs on October 1 was estimated at 8,864,000 persons as compared with 9,124,000 on the first of July and 8,896,000 on October 1 of last year. Approximately 3,022,000 hired hands were working on farms October 1. This was only 69,000 less than on July 1, but about 136,000 fewer hands than a year earlier.

The farmer's ability to pay hired workers improved somewhat from July 1 to October 1 in view of the sharp rise in farm product prices. The ratio of prices received by farmers to farm wage rates on the first of this month, however, was still only about 78 percent of the 1910-14 average, although 7 points up since July 1 and 4 points higher than in October of last year.

Farm wage rates and related data, by States, October 1, 1939

State	Per month		Per day		Supply of and demand for farm labor		
	With	Without	With	Without	Supply as	Demand as	Supply as
	board	board	board	board	percentage	percentage	percentage
	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	of normal	of normal	of demand
					Percent	Percent	Percent
Maine	33.00	50.25	1.75	2.75	90	89	101
N.H.	33.75	56.00	2.15	3.00	87	89	98
Vt.	30.00	47.50	1.75	2.45	83	91	91
Mass.	33.75	63.75	1.95	2.85	89	82	109
R.I.	35.75	65.50	2.05	2.95	99	86	115
Conn.	35.25	65.00	1.90	2.90	87	93	94
N.Y.	70.25	46.00	1.75	2.35	89	85	105
N.J.	33.50	54.50	1.85	2.50	94	88	107
Pa.	27.00	42.00	1.75	2.30	86	87	99
Ohio	27.00	40.00	1.70	2.15	85	86	99
Ind.	28.25	38.00	1.55	2.00	90	88	102
Ill.	33.00	43.50	1.80	2.30	89	88	101
Mich.	29.25	43.50	1.70	2.25	89	88	101
Wis.	30.25	43.00	1.55	2.05	96	88	109
Minn.	32.25	44.00	1.85	2.55	93	85	109
Iowa	33.50	42.75	1.85	2.35	95	90	106
Mo.	23.50	31.50	1.15	1.45	87	82	106
N.Dak.	29.75	45.00	1.60	2.30	93	74	126
S.Dak.	29.25	41.50	1.60	2.10	89	70	127
Nebr.	25.00	35.50	1.35	1.80	96	62	155
Kans.	24.25	35.50	1.40	1.90	94	66	138
Del.	25.00	38.00	1.60	2.10	91	95	96
Md.	27.50	39.50	1.50	1.95	91	94	97
Va.	21.50	30.75	1.10	1.50	81	87	93
N.Va.	22.25	32.25	1.05	1.50	89	84	106
N.C.	17.75	25.50	.95	1.20	87	91	96
S.C.	13.75	18.75	.60	.85	73	84	93
Ga.	12.25	16.00	.70	.90	85	87	98
Fla.	17.25	27.50	.85	1.25	87	76	114
Ala.	21.00	29.25	1.00	1.30	87	84	104
Tenn.	17.00	24.50	.80	1.05	91	84	108
La.	13.75	19.50	.65	.90	87	79	110
Miss.	14.00	20.00	.70	.95	87	80	109
Ark.	16.00	23.25	.80	1.05	86	77	112
Okla.	15.25	22.75	.80	1.10	87	85	102
Kla.	20.75	30.00	1.15	1.45	94	74	127
Tex.	21.00	30.00	1.10	1.70	94	73	129
Mont.	39.50	55.75	2.05	2.70	96	80	120
Idaho	40.50	55.50	2.00	2.55	103	87	118
Wy.	37.00	54.00	1.70	2.30	97	82	118
Colo.	50.75	46.25	1.50	2.10	97	75	129
N.Mex.	28.75	50.50	1.35	1.70	90	89	101
Ariz.	39.00	52.25	1.45	2.05	94	91	103
Utah	44.50	59.00	2.20	2.60	96	84	114
Nev.	38.00	53.25	1.90	2.20	90	82	110
Nash.	40.75	57.00	1.95	2.75	102	83	123
Reg.	37.50	54.75	1.95	2.50	97	87	111
Calif.	47.25	72.00	2.05	2.85	100	89	112
U.S.	28.28	36.13	1.35	1.57	90.4	83.4	108.4

Farm labor: Supply and demand statistics, by geographic divisions,
October 1, 1923-39 1/

SUPPLY OF FARM LABOR (PERCENTAGE OF NORMAL)

Year	New Eng- land	Middle Atlan- tic	East North Central	West North Central	South Atlan- tic	East South Central	West South Central	Moun- tain	Pacific	United States
1923	69.1	66.0	69.2	87.3	75.6	75.5	84.8	87.9	89.8	78.3
1924	91.1	84.3	89.4	94.6	79.3	84.0	86.4	99.1	105.5	88.3
1925	90.7	83.0	83.7	95.5	84.2	80.6	85.3	94.3	98.6	88.2
1926	88.5	80.2	84.8	94.9	73.6	80.5	83.5	96.1	98.4	86.3
1927	89.6	87.7	90.9	94.7	86.1	89.4	92.2	93.2	98.9	91.3
1928	91.5	92.5	91.6	94.9	89.6	90.1	90.7	94.7	99.5	92.3
1929	91.6	90.2	91.2	95.3	90.0	89.8	92.7	95.5	95.7	92.3
1930	103.8	101.1	112.3	107.3	101.1	101.9	108.0	114.1	107.1	106.3
1931	115.3	111.2	119.7	120.8	106.2	110.2	105.0	130.1	122.2	113.3
1932	132.7	126.2	134.6	128.4	115.3	115.7	118.3	134.8	130.7	124.3
1933	114.2	110.8	120.2	120.2	102.2	104.8	108.2	120.3	116.3	111.3
1934	103.4	100.4	106.2	112.9	96.9	95.9	109.7	116.3	110.2	105.3
1935	96.3	92.3	92.8	96.5	90.9	92.8	100.1	98.8	93.8	94.3
1936	86.6	79.9	82.2	90.2	84.4	84.3	87.3	88.6	90.1	85.3
1937	83.2	71.1	77.2	87.2	76.6	77.9	83.5	88.0	90.5	81.3
1938	90.5	87.9	91.3	92.2	87.9	86.5	91.1	97.7	104.0	91.3
1939	88.2	88.5	89.9	92.5	84.4	88.1	91.3	95.8	99.9	90.3

DEMAND FOR FARM LABOR (PERCENTAGE OF NORMAL)

1923	91.3	90.3	92.6	90.4	90.4	90.4	93.0	94.3	98.0	92.3
1924	90.8	88.2	88.8	92.3	87.2	87.3	92.1	92.8	83.3	89.3
1925	89.7	88.3	90.8	92.5	87.5	93.7	91.3	94.5	94.8	91.3
1926	90.2	89.5	92.0	90.0	89.6	95.4	99.3	93.6	95.6	93.3
1927	90.0	87.7	86.8	92.3	87.2	87.7	86.1	97.2	94.9	89.3
1928	91.5	86.9	89.8	92.3	87.4	86.3	89.3	95.3	91.8	89.3
1929	91.4	89.1	89.2	89.4	87.1	89.8	86.1	94.6	90.3	89.3
1930	85.0	80.5	74.2	76.7	75.8	73.1	63.8	82.3	81.6	75.3
1931	80.6	77.6	67.8	60.4	72.0	67.9	71.4	60.5	70.6	69.3
1932	71.7	68.9	60.4	54.5	63.0	52.6	60.1	58.1	67.1	61.3
1933	77.9	73.2	66.9	58.9	73.0	67.3	65.4	68.3	77.7	68.3
1934	80.9	78.0	74.4	58.2	76.4	72.3	54.6	59.5	76.3	68.3
1935	84.3	84.0	88.6	76.9	83.0	76.4	70.9	77.6	89.1	80.3
1936	83.9	90.5	89.8	69.0	87.4	89.2	82.0	83.4	92.6	85.3
1937	94.4	93.7	94.9	83.3	94.6	93.4	90.4	86.2	95.8	91.3
1938	87.4	87.0	86.0	77.2	81.3	81.1	76.9	82.3	79.2	81.3
1939	82.1	86.3	87.6	79.9	86.6	81.6	76.3	83.6	87.7	83.3

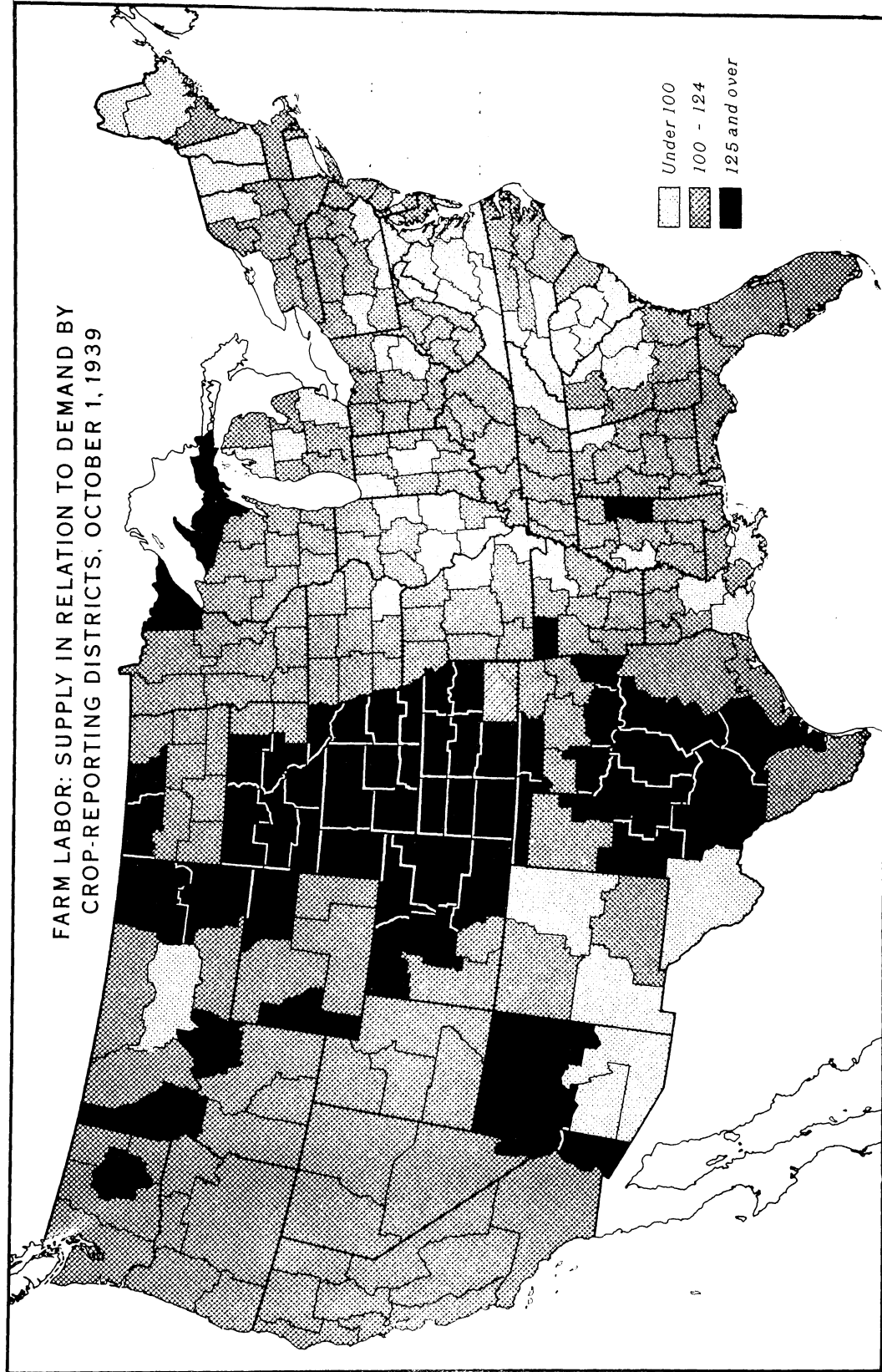
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Farm labor: Supply and demand statistics, by geographic divisions,
October 1, 1923-79 1/ (Continued)

SUPPLY AS A PERCENTAGE OF DEMAND (PERCENTAGE OF NORMAL)

Year	New Eng- land	Middle Atlan- tic	East North Central	West North Central	South Atlan- tic	East South Central	West South Central	Moun- tain	Pacific	United States
1923	75.7	73.1	74.7	96.6	83.6	83.5	91.2	93.2	91.6	85.3
1924	100.3	95.6	100.7	102.5	90.9	95.7	93.8	106.8	126.7	99.7
1925	101.1	92.3	97.7	103.2	96.2	96.0	93.4	99.8	104.0	96.6
1926	98.1	89.6	92.2	105.4	87.7	84.4	84.1	102.7	102.9	92.5
1927	99.6	100.0	104.7	102.6	98.7	101.9	107.1	95.9	104.2	102.1
1928	100.0	104.0	102.0	102.2	102.5	104.4	101.6	99.4	103.4	102.8
1929	100.2	101.2	102.2	106.6	103.3	100.0	107.7	101.0	106.0	104.1
1930	122.1	125.6	151.3	139.9	133.4	139.4	157.0	132.6	131.2	140.2
1931	143.1	143.3	176.5	200.0	147.5	162.3	147.1	215.0	173.1	163.9
1932	185.1	193.2	232.5	235.6	183.0	197.4	196.3	232.0	194.3	201.8
1933	146.6	150.1	179.7	204.1	140.0	155.7	155.4	176.1	149.7	162.6
1934	127.2	122.7	142.7	194.0	125.8	132.6	200.9	195.5	144.4	152.9
1935	114.2	102.9	104.7	125.5	109.5	121.5	141.2	127.3	105.3	117.8
1936	97.4	92.3	91.5	130.7	96.6	94.5	106.5	106.2	97.3	100.5
1937	88.1	75.9	81.3	104.7	81.0	83.4	92.4	102.1	94.5	82.5
1938	103.5	101.0	103.2	119.4	105.1	106.7	113.5	113.7	131.3	112.9
1939	100.1	102.5	102.6	115.2	97.5	102.0	119.7	114.6	113.9	103.4

1/Revised for dates prior to Oct. 1, 1939.



FARM LABOR: SUPPLY IN RELATION TO DEMAND BY
CROP-REPORTING DISTRICTS, OCTOBER 1, 1939

Under 100
100 - 124
125 and over

THE FARM LABOR SUPPLY WAS REPORTED IN EXCESS OF THE DEMAND FOR WORKERS IN NEARLY ALL DISTRICTS WEST OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER. IN THE TIER OF STATES EXTENDING FROM NORTH DAKOTA SOUTH TO TEXAS, WHERE DROUGHT CAUSED CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE TO CROPS, SUPPLY WAS REPORTED AS BEING GREATLY IN EXCESS OF DEMAND. FOR THE EASTERN PORTION OF THE COUNTRY SUPPLY AND DEMAND WERE MORE EVENLY BALANCED, WITH DEMAND IN NEW ENGLAND AND A FEW OTHER EASTERN STATES SOMEWHAT LARGER THAN SUPPLY.