UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service

Washington, D. C.
November 15, 1939

FARM EMPLOYMENT AT LOW LEVEL ON NOVEMBER 1

The decline in the number of persons employed on United States farms during October was only slightly more than the usual seasonal decline during that month, the Agricultural Marketing Service reported today. Based on reports from 22,216 crop correspondents, the total employment of both family and hired workers is estimated at 10,762,000 persons on November 1. This is the smallest November 1 total during the 14-year period covered by the record, and compares with total employment on November 1 last year, of 11,166,000 persons, and 11,413,000 the 10-year (1929-38) average for that date.

It is estimated that 8,123,000 of the total number of persons working on farms as of the first of the month were farm operators and unpaid family workers. This group accounts for the more than usual decline in the total number of persons employed on farms, for the decrease in hired help during October was somewhat less than usual. The number of hired workers on farms November 1 is estimated at 2,639,000, compared with 2,733,000 a year earlier. Decreases in farm employment during October were larger in the South Central and South Atlantic regions than elsewhere.

Over half of the corn acreage in the Corn Belt was husked by November 1. Potato digging and harvesting of sugar beets was nearing completion in most areas toward mid-November as the 1939 season drew to a close. Unfavorable moisture conditions over much of the winter wheat area hampered fall seeding operations and contributed to the decline in farm employment. Unusually favorable weather conditions for picking cotton hastened the harvest of that crop and was a contributing factor to the low level of farm employment in the Cotton States.

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Farm Employment, November 1, 1939, with Comparisons

Geographic division	Sept.1, 1938	Oct.1, 1938	Nov.1, 1938	Sept.1, 1939	Oct.1, 1939	Nov.1, 1939
	1,000 persons	1,000 persons	1,000 persons	1,000 persons	1,000 persons	1,000 persons
			TOTAL EMPLOYMENT			
United States	11,594	12,054	11,166	11,659	11,886	10,763
New England	273	268	255	287	265	245
Middle Atlantic	658	633	597	644	625	611
East No.Central	1,535	1,551	1,518	1,519	1,516	1,499
West No.Central	1,794	1,741	1,721	1,835	1,745	1,722
South Atlantic	2,271	2,380	2,144	2,268	2,353	2,090
East So.Central	1,928	2,176	1,842	1,944	2,124	1,730
West So.Central	1,895	2,177	2,078	1,903	2,191	1,875
Mountain	540	506	475	518	493	497
Pacific	700	622	536	741	574	519
			FAMILY WORKERS			
United States	8,562	8,896	8,433	8,640	8,864	8,123
New England	166	166	160	182	166	163
Middle Atlantic	410	401	401	423	403	41
East No.Central	1,172	1,139	1,139	1,158	1,128	1,123
West No.Central	1,354	1,329	1,316	1,387	1,305	1,288
South Atlantic	1,695	1,784	1,626	1,710	1,767	1,593
East So.Central	1,651	1,857	1,579	1,659	1,839	1,495
West So.Central	1,458	1,616	1,620	1,463	1,653	1,470
Mountain	305	286	279	297	284	284
Pacific	351	318	313	361	319	303
			HIRED WORKERS			
United States	3,032	3,158	2,733	3,019	3,022	2,639
New England	107	102	95	105	99	83
Middle Atlantic	248	232	196	221	222	201
East No.Central	363	412	379	361	388	376
West No.Central	440	412	405	448	440	437
South Atlantic	576	596	518	558	586	505
East So.Central	277	319	263	285	285	236
West So.Central	437	561	458	440	538	408
Mountain	235	220	196	221	209	189
Pacific	349	304	223	380	255	210

Based on reports from 22,216 crop correspondents.

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Average wage rate for picking 100 pounds of seed cotton, by States, 1926-39

State	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.
a.	1.00	1.12	1.23	1.15	.75	.45	.34	.45	.65	.65	.70	.75	.65	.60
.C.	1.03	1.07	1.07	1.01	.58	.36	.38	.48	.65	.65	.65	.70	.60	.60
.C.	.82	.78	.83	.81	.52	.36	.36	.45	.50	.50	.55	.60	.50	.50
a.	.90	.88	.85	.90	.57	.35	.33	.45	.50	.50	.55	.60	.50	.50
la.	1.12	.95	1.02	1.07	.76	.41	.39	.48	.55	.55	.60	.65	.60	.60
ll.	-	1.20	1.20	1.15	.71	.50	.40	.65	.75	.75	.90	.70	.70	.70
c.	1.12	1.14	1.14	1.12	.71	.49	.52	.67	.80	.75	.95	.80	.75	.75
ns.	-	1.50	1.40	1.30	.75	.45	.48	.65	.75	.70	.75	.65	.65	.65
y.	1.10	1.20	1.20	1.18	.70	.49	.50	.60	.80	.75	.95	.80	.80	.80
enn.	1.05	1.08	1.04	1.34	.63	.43	.47	.54	.65	.60	.80	.70	.60	.60
la.	1.03	.96	.95	.92	.55	.34	.36	.45	.55	.50	.60	.60	.50	.50
iss.	1.16	1.08	1.02	1.08	.56	.39	.40	.49	.55	.55	.75	.80	.55	.60
a.	1.12	1.03	1.03	1.01	.61	.41	.39	.48	.55	.55	.65	.70	.55	.55
ex.	1.20	1.24	1.21	1.11	.71	.44	.45	.55	.60	.60	.65	.65	.55	.55
kla.	1.28	1.40	1.28	1.22	.73	.45	.48	.65	.75	.70	.75	.75	.70	.65
rk.	1.06	1.05	1.03	1.08	.56	.40	.44	.52	.60	.55	.75	.70	.60	.60
.Mex.	1.15	1.30	1.22	1.25	.68	.43	.44	.55	.65	.65	.70	.70	.60	.65
riz.	1.45	1.53	1.50	1.50	.89	.58	.50	.67	.90	.90	1.10	.85	.80	.90
alif.	1.55	1.47	1.46	1.45	.89	.50	.45	.65	.90	.90	1.00	.95	.75	.85
.S.	1.11	1.12	1.10	1.06	.63	.41	.42	.53	.60	.58	.69	.69	.57	.58

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Cotton Picking Rates Show Little Change

The Agricultural Marketing Service also reported that wage rates paid cotton pickers during the 1939 harvesting season were only slightly above the relatively low rate paid in 1938. An average of 58 cents for picking 100 pounds of seed cotton was reported by crop correspondents, as compared with 57 cents per 100 pounds in 1938. Reported average rates ranged from a low of 50 cents in the South Atlantic region to a high of 90 cents per 100 pounds in Arizona. In addition to the foregoing rates, cotton pickers are often furnished housing and transportation, with a higher rate per 100 pounds for those pickers who do not occupy farm cabins. Only Mississippi and the States in the extreme Southwest showed an increase in rates over last year.