

Farm Labor

HD
1525
A3

AUG 11 1958

Release:
August 11, 1958
3:00 P.M. (E.D.T.)

FARM EMPLOYMENT SHOWS SMALL CHANGES

Total persons working on farms during the week of July 20-26, numbered about 8,618,000, the Crop Reporting Board announced today. This was about 1 percent below the level a year earlier and was only slightly under the number of persons employed on the Nation's farms the last week in June 1958.

Both family and hired workers showed small declines from a year earlier. Changes from the previous month were sharper. The number of farm operators and members of their families working during the survey week (July 20-26) totaled 5,961,000. This was 4 percent or 261,000 persons below June 1958. An 8-percent increase in hired workers partially offset this decline, resulting in less than 1 percent drop from a month earlier in total workers. The usual June to July decline is 3 percent. Adequate to surplus supplies of seasonal labor in most of the important agricultural areas has allowed farmers to keep fairly well abreast of their farm work despite persistent rainy weather.

Agricultural Activities

Weather during the survey week was characterized by frequent showers and thunderstorms, high humidity and low average temperatures throughout most interior areas east of the Rockies. Precipitation was light in the Far West, with temperatures above normal. Total rainfall was heaviest in sections of the central Great Plains, and in the Ohio and Mississippi River Valleys. Serious flooding occurred along many streams from Kansas to West Virginia.

The frequent rains caused continued delays in many farm activities. Haying and harvesting small grains were especially hard hit. Many late-planted row crops were in need of cultivation. Weed control and other field work was retarded by moderate to heavy showers over a large area of the country.

Winter wheat harvest was finished by late July as far north as southeastern Colorado, with only occasional fields standing in Kansas. From the Central Plains eastward to the Atlantic Coast, ripened grains continued to deteriorate as rains further delayed harvest. In the northern Great Plains and Pacific Northwest, however, harvest progressed under favorable conditions.

Where not damaged by floods, the corn crop was in generally good condition. Cultivation was practically finished everywhere. Detasseling corn for

hybrid seed was an important job during the survey week throughout much of the main Corn Belt. Much of the job was done with walking crews this year due to wet ground. This necessitated larger crews than usual.

Continued showers over the central and eastern portions of the Cotton Belt kept soils too wet for best growth and hampered insect and weed control. Considerable hoe work remained to be done because of wet weather and rapid growth of weeds and grass. In the Lower Valley of Texas, hot weather favored harvest and picking was in full swing. Stub cotton was being picked in Arizona and bolls are opening on the planted acreage. A little early picking was also reported to be underway in south Georgia.

Tobacco priming, curing and grading made up much of the farm activity in southern Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia. Topping of the burley crop was getting underway in Kentucky and Tennessee, and harvest of shade tobacco was active in the Connecticut Valley.

Peach harvest was active throughout the South and picking of early varieties had advanced as far north as Virginia and Pennsylvania. Cherry picking was using considerable labor in Michigan, New York, Colorado and Montana. Other fruits and many miscellaneous vegetables were being harvested from commercial growing sections throughout the country.

Land preparation and early seedbed planting for fall vegetables was underway in Florida, south Texas and Arizona. Irrigating was a common job throughout the Mountain and Pacific regions. Working summer fallow land was another principal activity in the Plains States. Livestock ranchers were busy harvesting wild hay as weather permitted.

Employment by Geographic Regions

The total number of persons working on farms during the survey week in late July was higher than a year earlier in 5 of the 9 geographic regions. However, 2 to 4 percent declines in the important North Central, South Atlantic and East South Central States more than offset the small increases elsewhere. The largest change from a year earlier in any region was 4 percent.

The number of family workers was less than in late July last year in all except the Middle Atlantic, Mountain and Pacific States and increases in these regions were quite small.

The only regions with less hired workers than a year earlier were the two North Central groups of States. Hired employment was steady in the Southeast. Increases ranged from 2 to 6 percent elsewhere. Idleness due to heavy precipitation this year coupled with later than usual small grain harvest and considerable activity in crop cultivation a year earlier resulted in the rather sizable 10 percent decline shown in the North Central States.

The greatest decrease in total workers from a month earlier was in the East South Central States, where 238,000 fewer workers were employed than during the last week of June 1958. This decline was seasonal but was enhanced by the heavy rains along the Mississippi Valley. Only other regions showing a drop were the New England and Pacific States. Showery weather held down employment in New England. Farm employment activity had slowed somewhat in California as many areas were in between major operations.

The number of family workers employed in late July was less than a month earlier in all except the two North Central Regions and these areas registered only minor increases. On the other hand, numbers of hired workers made sharp gains everywhere except New England, the East South Central States and along the Pacific Coast. Increases were greater than usual in all regions showing a gain and were sharpest in the West South Central States. Favorable weather in Texas with cotton, sorghum grain and many vegetable crop harvests in full swing led to the hiring of nearly a third more workers than a month earlier. The Mountain States reflected a similar gain. Increases elsewhere ranged from 6 to 15 percent.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service

Farm employment: Persons employed during week of July 20-26, 1958,
United States, with comparisons

	: July : average : 1953-57 1/	: July : 21-27, : 1957	: June : 22-28, : 1958	: July : 20-26, : 1958
FARM EMPLOYMENT (Thousands of persons) :				
Total	9,052	8,733	8,677	8,618
Family labor	6,425	6,055	6,222	5,961
Hired labor	2,627	2,678	2,455	2,657
FARM EMPLOYMENT INDEXES (Adjusted for seasonal variation, 1910-14=100) :				
Total	60	57	57	56
Family labor	61	58	56	57
Hired labor	55	56	58	56

1/ Employment during the last full calendar week ending at least one day before the end of the month.

-----ooOoo-----

Farm wage rates: Wage rates, indexes, and related data, July 1, 1958,
United States, with comparisons 1/

	: April 1, : 1957	: July 1, : 1957	: April 1, : 1958	: July 1, : 1958
FARM WAGE RATES :				
Per month with house	\$159.00	\$177.00	\$165.00	\$181.00
Per month with board and room	128.00	133.00	132.00	135.00
Per week with board and room	32.25	34.25	33.00	34.00
Per week without board or room ...	40.75	42.50	41.25	42.75
Per day with house	4.50	4.50	4.65	4.60
Per day with board and room	5.20	6.20	5.40	6.40
Per day without board or room	5.60	5.70	5.80	5.80
Per hour with house	.67	.86	.68	.87
Per hour without board or room ...	.92	.93	.94	.94
Composite rate per hour 2/	.643	.717	.657	.728
FARM WAGE RATE INDEXES (1910-14=100) :				
Adjusted for seasonal variation...	562	552	567	566
RELATED INDEXES (1910-14=100) :				
Prices received by farmers 3/	239	246	264	254
Ratio of prices received to farm wage rates	43	45	47	45

1/ Wage rates on the average refer to a date 2 or 3 days before the first of the month.

2/ Weighted average of all rates on a per hour basis.

3/ Average of the 15th of the given and the 15th of the previous month.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service

Farm employment: Persons employed during week of July 20-26, 1958,
United States and geographic divisions, with comparisons

Geographic division	: July : average : 1953-57 1/:	: June : 23-29, : 1957	: July : 21-27, : 1957	: June : 22-28, : 1958	: July : 20-26, : 1958
	: Thousands	: Thousands	: Thousands	: Thousands	: Thousands
	T O T A L F A R M E M P L O Y M E N T				
United States	: 9,052	8,798	8,733	8,677	8,618
New England	: 188	199	185	196	187
Middle Atlantic	: 581	537	551	542	557
East North Central	: 1,492	1,405	1,438	1,368	1,403
West North Central	: 1,792	1,584	1,758	1,613	1,688
South Atlantic	: 1,699	1,599	1,633	1,571	1,590
East South Central	: 1,098	1,289	1,017	1,238	1,000
West South Central	: 1,035	1,049	1,010	1,009	1,020
Mountain	: 453	405	444	406	462
Pacific	: 714	731	697	734	711
	F A M I L Y W O R K E R S 2/				
United States	: 6,425	6,294	6,055	6,222	5,961
New England	: 120	121	116	122	114
Middle Atlantic	: 405	388	383	386	386
East North Central	: 1,209	1,155	1,155	1,133	1,148
West North Central	: 1,424	1,289	1,377	1,313	1,344
South Atlantic	: 1,156	1,047	1,071	1,043	1,028
East South Central	: 884	1,027	811	979	794
West South Central	: 651	698	591	679	584
Mountain	: 232	219	215	224	222
Pacific	: 344	350	336	343	341
	H I R E D W O R K E R S 3/				
United States	: 2,627	2,504	2,678	2,455	2,657
New England	: 68	78	69	74	73
Middle Atlantic	: 176	149	168	156	171
East North Central	: 283	250	283	235	255
West North Central	: 368	295	381	300	344
South Atlantic	: 543	552	562	528	562
East South Central	: 214	262	206	259	206
West South Central	: 384	351	419	330	436
Mountain	: 221	186	229	182	240
Pacific	: 370	381	361	391	370

1/ Persons employed during the last full calendar week ending at least one day before the end of the month.

2/ Includes farm operators doing one or more hours of farm work and members of their families working 15 hours or more during the survey week without cash wages.

3/ Includes all persons doing one or more hours of farm work during the survey week for pay.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service

Farm employment: Average number of persons employed per month, January through July 1958, United States and geographic divisions, with comparisons 1/

Geographic division	1953-57	1955	1956	1957	1958
	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands
	T O T A L	F A R M	E M P L O Y M E N T		
United States	7,723	7,762	7,439	7,237	7,132
New England	165	164	163	163	162
Middle Atlantic	492	493	468	467	463
East North Central	1,267	1,273	1,221	1,206	1,194
West North Central	1,457	1,475	1,387	1,365	1,364
South Atlantic	1,356	1,356	1,295	1,263	1,203
East South Central	1,090	1,094	1,044	994	944
West South Central	981	1,000	946	887	899
Mountain	343	333	345	334	338
Pacific	572	574	570	558	565

	F A M I L Y W O R K E R S <u>2/</u>				
United States	6,022	6,066	5,780	5,566	5,444
New England	111	110	109	106	107
Middle Atlantic	371	374	357	355	349
East North Central	1,091	1,094	1,056	1,036	1,028
West North Central	1,267	1,283	1,213	1,188	1,181
South Atlantic	1,011	1,015	957	914	863
East South Central	906	912	861	819	772
West South Central	726	740	686	633	625
Mountain	222	218	223	206	208
Pacific	317	320	318	309	311

	H I R E D W O R K E R S <u>3/</u>				
United States	1,701	1,696	1,659	1,671	1,688
New England	54	54	54	57	55
Middle Atlantic	121	119	111	112	114
East North Central	176	179	165	170	166
West North Central	190	192	174	177	183
South Atlantic	345	341	338	349	340
East South Central	184	182	183	175	172
West South Central	255	260	260	254	274
Mountain	121	115	122	128	130
Pacific	255	254	252	249	254

1/ Persons employed during the last full calendar week ending at least one day before the end of the month.

2/ Includes farm operators doing one or more hours of farm work and members of their families working 15 hours or more during the survey week without cash wages.

3/ Includes all persons doing one or more hours of farm work during the survey week for pay.

WORKING FARM OPERATORS, 1950-57 AVERAGE
FOR SURVEY WEEK 1/

Month	:	Percentage of	:	Percentage of
	:	all farm operators	:	total family workers 2/
	:	Percent	:	Percent
January	:	91.3	:	91.5
February	:	91.9	:	86.1
March	:	92.7	:	78.5
April	:	93.8	:	70.5
May	:	94.6	:	66.9
June	:	94.3	:	68.8
July	:	93.3	:	70.8
August	:	93.2	:	68.2
September	:	93.8	:	61.1
October	:	93.8	:	66.2
November	:	93.3	:	79.6
December	:	90.8	:	91.6
	:		:	
Average	:	93.0	:	73.6
	L			

- 1/ Operators doing any farm work during the last full calendar week ending at least one day before the end of the month.
- 2/ Family workers include operators doing one or more hours of farm work and members of their families working 15 hours or more during the survey week without cash wages.

The percentage of working farm operators is fairly stable, varying little throughout the year. Except for vacations, periods of illness and cases of part-time farmers there are very few weeks during a year when a farm operator does no work on his farm. Reported data indicated May was the busiest month for farm operators with June a close second, whereas they have more free time in December. Little or no annual changes have occurred during the 1950-57 period.

When the number of operators is expressed as a percentage of total family workers there is considerably more seasonal change. Unpaid family members do relatively little work during the winter months but when Spring comes the wife and children lend a helping hand. The above percentages indicate that more family help is used in September than any other month, with May and October coming in close together for the second most important month. Cotton picking and other harvest activities are important in September and October. May is usually the peak month for planting, cultivating, chopping and other heavy labor requirement jobs in getting the new season underway.

During 1950-57, there has been a slow but steady increase in the proportion of total family labor accounted for by the farm operator. In 1950, working operators represented 69 percent of family workers, as compared with 80 percent in 1957. This means that unpaid members of operators' families are doing less farm work than formerly. With the advance in mechanization and farm technology, operators have less need for family help on farms.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service

EXPLANATIONS 1/

Farm employment estimates of the Agricultural Marketing Service cover persons doing farm work on all farms. Mailed questionnaires are received every month from 20,000 to 25,000 farmers who report the number of persons working on their farms during the last complete calendar week ending at least one day before the end of the month. The Census of Agriculture and interview surveys of farmers are used to provide bench mark data on employment.

All farm operators spending any time during the survey week at farm work, chores, or in the transaction of farm business are counted as employed. Members of the operator's family or household doing unpaid farm work or chores are counted if they put in 15 hour or more during the week. Working operators plus unpaid members of their families or households who meet these criteria are called family workers. All persons doing one or more hours of farm work or chores for pay during the week are counted as hired workers.

The data on farm employment published by the Agricultural Marketing Service differ from those on agricultural employment of the Census in the Monthly Report on the Labor Force because of the differences in the method of approach, in concepts of employment, and in time of the month for which data are collected. The A.M.S. collects information from the farmer on all persons working on his farm during the week regardless of age, or other jobs held by these workers. The Census data are obtained from about 35,000 farm and nonfarm households on the labor force status of the household members 14 years of age and over for the week including the 12th of the month. In addition, both series are subject to sampling variation and may differ from the results of a complete census.

Wage rates are reported quarterly by the same sample of farm operators that reports employment. The farmer is asked to report average wage rates being paid "at this time" in his locality.

1/ Additional information available in January 1958 issue of Farm Labor.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE
AGRICULTURAL ESTIMATES DIVISION
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

Penalty for private use to avoid
payment of postage \$300

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

N.Y. STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
ALBERT R. MANN LIBRARY
ACQUISITIONS DIV.
1-16-58
ML-FL ITHACA, N.Y.

IN THIS ISSUE

	<u>Page</u>
Text	1 - 2
Farm employment: Persons employed during week of July 20-26, 1958, United States, with comparisons	3
Farm wage rates: Wage rates, indexes, and related data July 1, 1958, United States, with comparisons	3
Farm employment: Persons employed during week of July 20-26, 1958, United States and geographic divisions, with comparisons	4
Farm employment: Average number of persons employed per month, January through July 1958, United States and geographic divisions, with com- parisons	5
Farm operators: Working farm operators, expressed as percentage of all farm operators and percentage of total family workers, United States 1950-57 average	6
Explanations	7