

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service

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FARM EMPLOYMENT UP
SHARPLY IN AUGUST

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Survey Shows Long Workday for Farmers
in Most Regions of the Country

The number of persons employed on United States farms increased more than twice the usual seasonal amount during August, the Agricultural Marketing Service reported today. Total employment of both family and hired workers on September 1 was estimated at 11,650,000 persons or about the same as on September 1 last year. The September 1 total, however, was still about 6 percent smaller than the 1933 seasonal peak established June 1.

Increases in the number of persons employed on farms in Southern and Western States accounted entirely for the upturn in August, but declines in the North Central and Northeastern regions were somewhat less than usual. Cotton was being picked rather generally throughout the South and tobacco was being cut in Mideastern States. Sweet potatoes were being harvested in Gulf Coast States, and early varieties of rice were being threshed in the Rice Belt on the first of the month. In the Pacific Coast States, fruit and hop harvesting operations required a sharp increase in employment.

Of the total number of persons working on farms as of the first of this month approximately 8,640,000 were farm operators and unpaid family workers. During the lull in farm activity around August 1, only 8,213,000 of these workers were employed on farms. The September estimate of operators and other family workers was 78,000 higher than a year earlier.

The number of hired hands on farms, while sharply up from August 1, was slightly less than a year ago. More hired workers were employed than on September 1 last year in West North Central, South Central and Pacific Coast States, but these

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Farm Employment: September 1, 1939, with Comparisons

Geographic division	July 1 1938	Aug. 1 1938	Sept. 1 1938	July 1 1939	Aug. 1 1939	Sept. 1 1939
	1,000 persons	1,000 persons	1,000 persons	1,000 persons	1,000 persons	1,000 persons
<u>TOTAL EMPLOYMENT</u>						
United States	12,473	11,299	11,594	12,215	11,058	11,659
New England	284	289	273	277	294	287
Middle Atlantic	719	718	658	728	684	644
East No. Central	1,688	1,622	1,535	1,611	1,568	1,519
West No. Central	1,942	1,965	1,794	1,905	1,886	1,835
South Atlantic	2,574	2,240	2,271	2,458	2,199	2,268
East So. Central	2,010	1,617	1,928	2,027	1,558	1,944
West So. Central	2,143	1,722	1,895	2,118	1,703	1,903
Mountain	527	513	540	501	508	518
Pacific	586	613	700	590	658	741
<u>FAMILY WORKERS</u>						
United States	9,321	8,335	8,562	9,124	8,213	8,640
New England	175	172	166	172	183	182
Middle Atlantic	458	446	410	469	451	423
East No. Central	1,261	1,200	1,172	1,209	1,181	1,158
West No. Central	1,459	1,422	1,354	1,437	1,397	1,387
South Atlantic	1,970	1,711	1,695	1,859	1,688	1,710
East So. Central	1,749	1,406	1,651	1,742	1,351	1,659
West So. Central	1,633	1,355	1,458	1,601	1,322	1,463
Mountain	309	298	305	305	299	297
Pacific	307	325	351	330	341	361
<u>HIRED WORKERS</u>						
United States	3,152	2,964	3,032	3,091	2,845	3,019
New England	109	117	107	105	111	105
Middle Atlantic	261	272	248	259	233	221
East No. Central	427	422	363	402	387	361
West No. Central	483	543	440	468	489	448
South Atlantic	604	529	576	599	511	558
East So. Central	261	211	277	285	207	285
West So. Central	510	367	437	517	381	440
Mountain	218	215	235	196	209	221
Pacific	279	288	349	260	317	380

Based on reports from 20,771 crop correspondents.

**Farm Employment: Number of persons employed on the first of each month,
Mountain States, 1930-1938 1/**

Date	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
	persons	persons	persons	persons	persons	persons	persons	persons	persons
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE									
Jan. 1	360	358	353	374	373	367	370	375	367
Feb. 1	343	350	354	374	382	381	389	391	380
Mar. 1	372	382	386	384	404	396	397	397	391
Apr. 1	421	419	420	420	442	427	431	442	404
May 1	473	448	449	447	457	459	461	468	436
June 1	529	504	472	468	483	494	488	509	475
July 1	565	547	519	519	508	532	514	538	527
Aug. 1	562	527	530	544	523	531	525	509	513
Sept. 1	514	509	509	535	520	519	527	517	540
Oct. 1	495	472	471	532	478	495	482	487	506
Nov. 1	440	446	426	452	394	453	455	453	475
Dec. 1	391	363	367	382	359	403	404	385	398
Average	456	444	438	452	444	455	454	456	451
FAMILY WORKERS									
Jan. 1	251	254	261	272	274	280	277	278	278
Feb. 1	254	262	264	282	282	280	286	282	279
Mar. 1	253	261	272	281	291	287	289	281	286
Apr. 1	274	276	290	298	305	303	303	296	286
May 1	292	290	305	311	308	319	309	303	289
June 1	310	315	312	312	317	328	318	306	298
July 1	330	329	337	329	325	335	331	328	309
Aug. 1	333	333	332	337	329	331	328	301	298
Sept. 1	310	317	318	331	327	321	326	304	305
Oct. 1	288	295	304	317	291	301	295	287	286
Nov. 1	265	293	280	292	275	298	292	281	279
Dec. 1	260	258	265	273	269	284	281	278	278
Average	285	290	295	303	299	306	303	294	289
HIRED WORKERS									
Jan. 1	109	99	92	82	99	87	93	97	89
Feb. 1	92	98	90	102	107	101	103	109	101
Mar. 1	119	121	114	103	113	109	108	116	105
Apr. 1	147	143	130	122	137	124	128	146	118
May 1	181	158	144	136	149	140	152	165	147
June 1	219	189	160	156	166	166	170	203	177
July 1	235	218	182	190	183	197	183	210	218
Aug. 1	229	194	198	207	194	200	197	208	215
Sept. 1	204	192	191	204	193	198	201	213	235
Oct. 1	207	177	167	215	187	194	187	200	220
Nov. 1	175	153	146	160	112	155	163	172	196
Dec. 1	131	105	102	109	90	119	123	107	120
Average	171	154	143	140	145	149	151	162	162

1/ Data from 1930 to 1936 based on estimates of Shaw, F. E. and Hopkins, J. A., Trends in Employment in Agriculture, 1909-36, Works Progress Administration, National Research Project Report No. A-8, Philadelphia, Pa., 1938.

Length of Farm Workday, September 1, 1939

Division	Length of Workday	
	Operator	Hired help
	Hours	Hours
New England	12.0	9.9
Middle Atlantic	12.3	10.2
East North Central	12.1	10.5
West North Central	12.3	10.9
South Atlantic	11.3	9.8
East South Central	11.0	10.0
West South Central	11.4	10.0
Mountain	11.9	9.9
Pacific	11.2	9.4
United States	11.7	10.1

State	Length of workday		State	Length of workday		State	Length of workday	
	Operator	Hired		Operator	Hired		Operator	Hired
	Hours	Hours		Hours	Hours		Hours	Hours
Maine	12.2	9.5	Mo.	12.0	10.2	Miss.	10.7	9.9
N. H.	11.9	9.3	N. D.	12.9	11.5	Ark.	11.2	9.9
Vt.	12.3	10.7	S. D.	12.4	11.3	La.	10.7	9.7
Mass.	11.8	9.9	Nebr.	12.0	10.8	Okla.	11.7	10.5
R. I.	11.6	10.2	Kans.	12.3	10.8	Texas	11.6	10.0
Conn.	11.8	10.0	Del.	12.0	10.0	Mont.	12.4	10.5
N. Y.	12.4	10.6	Md.	12.0	10.0	Idaho	12.0	10.0
N. J.	11.8	9.8	Va.	11.6	9.9	Wyo.	12.2	9.8
Pa.	12.2	10.0	W. Va.	11.2	9.1	Colo.	11.8	10.3
Ohio	12.1	9.9	N. C.	11.4	9.8	N. Mex.	11.5	10.0
Ind.	11.7	10.0	S. C.	11.2	9.7	Ariz.	10.8	9.5
Ill.	11.9	10.7	Ga.	11.3	10.0	Utah	12.0	8.7
Mich.	12.3	10.4	Fla.	10.3	9.3	Nev.	12.4	8.6
Wisc.	12.7	11.4	Ky.	11.0	10.0	Wash.	11.8	9.8
Minn.	12.8	11.2	Tenn.	11.4	10.0	Oreg.	11.8	9.5
Iowa	12.2	11.0	Ala.	11.0	10.0	Calif.	10.6	9.2

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increases were slightly more than offset by declines in other areas. The estimate number of workers hired on the first of this month was 3,019,000 persons as compared with 2,845,000 on August 1, and 3,032,000 on September 1 of last year.

Farmers Report Long Workday

Results of the first comprehensive survey of the length of the farm workday also were made available today by the Agricultural Marketing Service. Reports from crop correspondents regarding the number of hours worked per day on or about September 1 of this year indicated a national average of 11.7 hours for the operator and 10.1 hours for hired help. This included time spent doing chores.

As in most businesses, the farm operator worked substantially longer per day than the hired help. In addition to manual labor in the fields, a greater proportion of the daily chores usually are done by the operator than the hired man. Furthermore, all the details of management are handled by the operator.

Considerable geographic variation in the average length of the workday also was reported. The average number of hours worked by the farm operator on or about September 1 ranged from a low of 10.3 in Florida to 12.9 in North Dakota. In the former State rains were delaying fall plantings of truck crops and the picking of the cotton crop. In the latter State, small-grain threshing was just about completed and the busiest season of the year just past. Farmers rather generally worked an average of 12 or more hours per day in the North Eastern and North Central States where dairying is an important farm enterprise. In the cash crop areas of the South and West, however, a somewhat shorter day appears customary.

Averages of reports on the number of hours worked per day by hired hands ranged from 8.6 in Nevada to 11.5 in North Dakota. The 10-hour day for hired workers was rather commonly reported throughout the country. This was the average length of the workday in South Central States. A longer day was worked on the average in North Central and Middle Atlantic States, but the hired man averaged less than 10 hours of actual employment per day in New England, the South Atlantic and Far Western States.

Uptrend in Farm Employment in Rocky Mountain States since 1931

The Agricultural Marketing Service also released monthly series of farm employment estimates today covering the period 1930 - 1938 for the Rocky Mountain States. (Data for all regions except this and the Pacific States have appeared in previous issues of this report.) Total farm employment in this area has been fairly stable during the present decade. After dropping from an average of 456,000 persons in 1930 to 438,000 in 1932, employment totals fluctuated irregularly and bobbed back to the 1930 level in 1937. Last year, the average again declined slightly but the trend has edged upward gradually since 1931.

The general trend in annual changes in the numbers of family workers (including farm operators), however, has been rather dissimilar. Peak employment of family workers occurred in 1935 when an average of 306,000 workers was estimated. This represented an increase of 21,000 over the estimate of average employment for 1930. The increase from 1930 to 1935 was rather gradual and interrupted by a decline only in the drought year, 1934. Since 1935, the number of family workers employed on Rocky Mountain farms has declined each year, dropping back to an average of 289,000 persons in 1938.

The number of hired hands on farms in the Mountain States dropped sharply from an average of 171,000 workers in 1930 to 143,000 in 1932. This was a period of drastic reductions in farm income. The average number of hired workers employed in this region increased somewhat in 1933 but lost part of this gain in the following year when drought reduced crop labor requirements. Increases in the average number of hands hired on farms occurred in each of the following years, reaching the highest level since 1930 in 1937. The number of hired workers held up to an average of 162,000 workers last year or the same as in 1937.