

Farm Labor

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FARM EMPLOYMENT SHOWS SHARP SEASONAL

DROP IN NOVEMBER

The number of persons at work on farms during the week of November 18-24 was about 2 million less than a month earlier, the Crop Reporting Board announced today. The decrease of 22 percent was slightly larger than usual. There were 7,392,000 persons at work as the end of the 1956 harvest season was approached. The number of family workers dropped about 1,300,000 to 5,806,000 while the number of hired workers at 1,586,000 was nearly 800,000 less than a month earlier. Compared with a year earlier, there were 6 percent fewer family workers and 4 percent fewer hired workers at work on farms.

The length of farm workday averaged 8.6 for farm operators and 8.2 for hired workers in late November. In both cases, farmers and their hired hands were putting in less time per day than a year earlier. Hours worked per day were considerably less than in the busy season in June of this year when operators averaged 10.9 hours per day and hired workers 9.3 hours.

During the survey week, cold weather prevailed over much of the country, except in the southern coastal sections of California, and in East Texas. This cold spell which brought the lowest temperatures of the season to many sections, the first subzero readings, and snow to northern areas limited outside work. Freezing temperatures extended southward to the Mississippi coast and to the South Atlantic coastal regions. Precipitation totals for the week were moderate to heavy in one extensive area covering Arkansas, the middle

Mississippi and Ohio valleys, the Great Lakes region, and the North Atlantic States. West of the Continental Divide, the week was dry, and sunny skies prevailed. Also without precipitation were southwestern Texas, southeastern New Mexico, and central Oklahoma.

Farm work in many parts of the country had reached the winter stage by late November. In the northern part of the country, most field work had been completed. Where weather permitted, there was some activity in completing corn and soybean harvest and some fall plowing but most farmers were preparing for winter and doing the usual chores.

Although farming activities were slowed somewhat by the unseasonably cold weather in some middle and south Atlantic areas and portions of the east Gulf Coast, some progress was made during the week in completing this year's harvest. Corn, sweetpotatoes, peanuts and pecans were the most important of the crops being harvested. Other activities in the South included the preparation of land for tobacco beds and truck crops. In Florida, citrus harvest made normal progress, while land preparation and additional plantings of vegetable crops continued in the vegetable areas of the State. Cucumbers, peppers, and other vegetable crops were being harvested in southern Florida.

Cotton harvest was virtually completed in the main Cotton Belt, although about 5 percent still remained to be picked in the delta district of Mississippi and approximately 15 percent in Virginia where showers had delayed this work. Open weather favored the rapid completion of the cotton harvest in the High Plains of Texas and in southwestern Oklahoma. Picking cotton had about reached the cleanup stage in New Mexico, but was in full swing in Arizona and California.

Other activities in late November included the harvest of sugarcane in Louisiana and stripping, grading, and marketing of tobacco in the northern

Tobacco Belt. Citrus and vegetable harvest was in progress in the Lower Valley of Texas and in Arizona and California. Pruning of fruit trees was starting in Oregon and California.

The number of persons at work on farms during the week of November 18-24, was 22 percent less than a month earlier, a slightly larger decrease than the average of recent years. All regions reported decreases except the New England States where the number of persons at work on farms was the same as a year earlier. In the remaining regions, decreases ranged from a low of 11 percent in the East North Central States to a high of 33 percent in the East South Central States. The declines in the Middle Atlantic, East North Central, and East South Central States were larger than usual but decreases in other regions were smaller than usual except in the West South Central States where the usual change occurred.

The total number of workers on farms in late November was less than a year earlier for the entire country and for all regions except the New England and Pacific States where slight increases were reported. Decreases in the other regions ranged from 3 percent in the Mountain States to 12 percent in the West South Central States.

The number of family workers dropped slightly more than usual from late October to late November. Most of the difference from the usual seasonal change was in the East North Central and East South Central States. The sharpest drops from a month ago were in the South Atlantic and the East South Central States.

There were 6 percent fewer family workers employed on farms in late November for the country as a whole than a year earlier and fewer in all regions except the New England, Mountain, and Pacific States. Decreases were largest in the South Atlantic and West South Central States.

The decrease from late October in the number of hired workers amounted to about a third which was slightly less than both last year and the 1951-55 average. In all regions except the New England and Mountain, the decrease amounted to more than a fourth. The largest declines were 49 percent in the West North Central States and 46 percent in the West South Central States. Decreases were less than usual in the New England, South Atlantic, West South Central and Pacific States. The number of hired workers in the Mountain States showed a 1 percent increase from a month earlier compared to a usual drop of 9 percent. In the New England States, the number of hired workers was about the same as a month earlier in comparison with a usual drop of about 6 percent.

The number of hired workers on farms was down 4 percent from a year earlier for the entire country and there were also fewer hired workers in the Middle Atlantic, East and West North Central, East and West South Central and the Mountain States. There was an increase in the number of hired workers in the remaining regions.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service

Farm employment: Persons employed during week of November 18-24, 1956
United States, with comparisons

	: November : average : 1951-55 1/:	: November : 20-26, : 1955 :	: October : 21-27, : 1956 :	: November : 18-24, : 1956 :
FARM EMPLOYMENT (Thousands of persons):				
Total	8,135	7,826	9,482	7,392
Family labor	6,442	6,176	7,110	5,806
Hired labor	1,693	1,650	2,372	1,586
FARM EMPLOYMENT INDEXES (Adjusted for : seasonal variation, 1910-14=100) :				
Total	63	60	56	57
Family labor	65	62	58	58
Hired labor	56	54	50	52

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

Farm wage rates: Wage rates, indexes, and related data, October 1, 1956
United States, with comparisons 1/

	: July 1, : 1955 :	: October 1, : 1955 :	: July 1, : 1956 :	: October 1, : 1956 :
FARM WAGE RATES :				
Per month with house	\$163.00	\$154.00	\$170.00	\$161.00
Per month with board and room ... :	125.00	125.00	129.00	129.00
Per week with board and room :	30.75	30.50	32.75	32.50
Per week without board or room... :	39.50	37.50	40.50	39.75
Per day with house	4.15	4.35	4.40	4.60
Per day with board and room	5.90	5.20	6.10	5.50
Per day without board or room ... :	5.30	5.70	5.50	6.00
Per hour with house	.81	.87	.83	.90
Per hour without board or room... :	.88	.77	.91	.82
Composite rate per hour 2/	.669	.701	.696	.736
FARM WAGE RATE INDEXES (1910-14=100):				
Adjusted for seasonal variation.. :	510	518	535	550
RELATED INDEXES (1910-14=100) :				
Prices received by farmers 3/..... :	240	232	246	235
Ratio of prices received to farm :				
wage rates	47	45	46	43

1/ Wage rates on the average refer to a date two or three 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.

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Farm employment: Persons employed during week of November 18-24, 1956.
United States and geographic divisions, with comparisons

Geographic division	: November : average : 1951-55 1/	: October : 23-29, : 1955	: November : 20-26, : 1955	: October : 21-27, : 1956	: November : 18-24, : 1956
	: <u>Thousands</u>	<u>Thousands</u>	<u>Thousands</u>	<u>Thousands</u>	<u>Thousands</u>
	TOTAL FARM EMPLOYMENT				
United States	: 8,135	10,145	7,826	9,482	7,392
New England	: 173	170	164	173	173
Middle Atlantic	: 508	561	482	542	456
East North Central	: 1,239	1,289	1,185	1,280	1,133
West North Central	: 1,419	1,591	1,356	1,521	1,279
South Atlantic	: 1,390	1,888	1,335	1,693	1,250
East South Central	: 1,501	2,197	1,429	2,012	1,345
West South Central	: 968	1,355	952	1,180	835
Mountain	: 356	410	350	397	341
Pacific	: 581	684	573	684	580
	FAMILY WORKERS 2/				
United States	: 6,442	7,598	6,176	7,110	5,806
New England	: 113	110	106	110	110
Middle Atlantic	: 370	398	361	377	342
East North Central	: 1,072	1,056	1,030	1,056	990
West North Central	: 1,281	1,367	1,234	1,308	1,171
South Atlantic	: 1,129	1,477	1,081	1,322	993
East South Central	: 1,227	1,734	1,141	1,586	1,080
West South Central	: 739	887	726	781	620
Mountain	: 193	242	185	243	186
Pacific	: 318	327	312	327	314
	HIRED WORKERS 3/				
United States	: 1,693	2,547	1,650	2,372	1,586
New England	: 60	60	58	63	63
Middle Atlantic	: 138	163	121	165	114
East North Central	: 167	233	155	224	143
West North Central	: 138	224	122	213	108
South Atlantic	: 261	411	254	371	257
East South Central	: 274	463	288	426	265
West South Central	: 229	468	226	399	215
Mountain	: 163	168	165	154	155
Pacific	: 263	357	261	357	266

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.

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Farm employment: Average number of persons employed per month, January through November 1956, United States and geographic divisions, with comparisons 1/

Geographic division	1951-55	1953	1954	1955	1956
	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands
TOTAL FARM EMPLOYMENT					
United States	8,786	8,779	8,649	8,432	8,056
New England	175	176	179	171	172
Middle Atlantic	548	550	549	522	500
East North Central	1,339	1,339	1,331	1,282	1,246
West North Central	1,596	1,605	1,566	1,522	1,447
South Atlantic	1,594	1,570	1,566	1,519	1,432
East South Central	1,403	1,405	1,374	1,343	1,270
West South Central	1,124	1,123	1,087	1,084	999
Mountain	382	385	374	368	372
Pacific	625	626	623	621	618
FAMILY WORKERS <u>2/</u>					
United States	6,771	6,761	6,638	6,461	6,128
New England	115	116	117	111	111
Middle Atlantic	393	394	397	385	366
East North Central	1,138	1,141	1,128	1,091	1,059
West North Central	1,368	1,377	1,344	1,314	1,250
South Atlantic	1,223	1,206	1,192	1,151	1,069
East South Central	1,161	1,151	1,123	1,096	1,026
West South Central	813	815	784	766	698
Mountain	235	238	231	224	227
Pacific	325	323	322	323	322
HIRED WORKERS <u>3/</u>					
United States	2,015	2,018	2,011	1,971	1,928
New England	60	60	62	60	61
Middle Atlantic	155	156	152	137	134
East North Central	201	198	203	191	187
West North Central	228	228	222	208	197
South Atlantic	371	364	374	368	363
East South Central	242	254	251	247	244
West South Central	311	308	303	318	301
Mountain	147	147	143	144	145
Pacific	300	303	301	298	296

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.

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Farm employment: Length of farm workday for operators and hired workers,
December 1, 1953, 1954, 1955, and 1956

State and Geographic Division	Operators - December 1				Hired Workers - December 1			
	1953	1954	1955	1956	1953	1954	1955	1956
	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours
Maine	10.8	10.2	10.5	10.2	8.5	8.7	8.5	8.6
New Hampshire	10.1	10.3	10.4	10.7	9.4	8.6	9.2	8.7
Vermont	11.1	10.8	11.3	11.0	10.2	9.5	10.3	9.6
Massachusetts	10.2	9.9	10.1	10.0	9.3	9.0	8.8	8.6
Rhode Island	9.8	9.7	9.7	9.7	9.0	9.0	8.5	8.5
Connecticut	10.2	10.2	10.1	10.0	9.0	9.5	8.8	8.5
New England	10.5	10.2	10.4	10.3	9.4	8.9	9.2	8.9
New York	10.5	10.4	10.4	9.9	9.3	9.3	9.2	9.1
New Jersey	10.0	10.0	9.8	9.7	8.9	9.0	9.2	8.8
Pennsylvania	10.5	10.4	10.3	9.8	9.0	8.8	8.7	8.4
Middle Atlantic	10.5	10.4	10.3	9.8	9.1	9.0	9.0	8.7
Ohio	9.6	9.7	9.3	8.6	8.1	8.0	8.3	8.3
Indiana	8.8	9.1	8.9	7.8	8.2	8.2	8.2	7.7
Illinois	8.8	8.7	8.3	7.9	8.6	8.2	8.2	8.2
Michigan	10.0	9.9	9.4	8.9	8.5	8.8	8.0	8.0
Wisconsin	11.3	11.1	11.1	11.0	9.9	9.9	9.9	9.6
East North Central	9.7	9.7	9.4	8.8	8.7	8.6	8.5	8.4
Minnesota	9.7	9.7	9.3	9.1	8.6	8.7	8.4	8.4
Iowa	9.4	9.7	8.8	8.3	8.6	8.8	8.1	8.1
Missouri	9.4	9.4	9.3	8.5	8.2	8.4	8.1	7.9
North Dakota	8.9	8.6	8.1	8.1	8.4	8.5	7.9	8.2
South Dakota	9.0	9.2	8.4	8.1	8.7	8.6	8.2	8.2
Nebraska	9.2	9.2	8.8	8.2	8.6	8.5	8.2	8.1
Kansas	9.1	9.2	8.8	8.2	8.1	8.1	8.1	7.7
West North Central	9.3	9.4	8.9	8.4	8.4	8.5	8.1	8.1
Delaware	9.8	9.8	9.0	8.5	9.0	8.7	8.5	7.9
Maryland	9.8	9.5	9.2	9.1	9.0	8.7	8.8	8.7
Virginia	9.7	9.5	9.6	8.8	8.4	8.3	8.3	8.0
West Virginia	9.3	9.3	9.2	8.0	7.7	7.9	7.7	7.6
North Carolina	9.0	8.8	8.8	8.1	7.9	7.9	7.9	7.7
South Carolina	9.3	9.0	9.0	8.5	8.2	8.2	7.9	8.0
Georgia	9.2	9.2	9.2	8.6	8.5	8.2	8.3	8.1
Florida	9.4	9.0	9.1	8.2	8.1	8.2	8.3	7.9
South Atlantic	9.3	9.1	9.1	8.4	8.3	8.2	8.2	8.0
Kentucky	9.8	9.7	9.4	8.6	8.5	8.5	8.4	8.3
Tennessee	9.7	9.7	9.6	8.9	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.2
Alabama	9.1	9.0	8.5	8.0	8.2	8.2	8.1	7.7
Mississippi	8.7	8.7	8.2	8.2	8.0	7.7	8.1	7.6
East South Central	9.3	9.3	8.9	8.4	8.2	8.1	8.2	7.8
Arkansas	9.1	8.9	9.2	8.3	8.4	8.3	8.3	8.1
Louisiana	9.2	9.2	9.2	7.9	8.4	8.4	8.3	7.6
Oklahoma	8.7	8.6	8.8	7.8	8.1	8.1	8.0	7.9
Texas	9.3	8.9	9.1	8.3	8.6	8.6	8.7	8.4
West South Central	9.1	8.9	9.1	8.1	8.5	8.5	8.4	8.2
Montana	8.8	8.8	8.2	8.2	8.3	8.2	7.8	8.2
Idaho	8.8	9.0	8.6	8.3	7.7	7.9	8.2	7.7
Wyoming	8.9	8.7	8.8	8.7	8.4	8.6	7.9	8.3
Colorado	9.0	8.9	8.7	8.8	8.6	8.4	8.2	7.6
New Mexico	9.5	9.2	9.2	9.7	8.6	8.4	8.0	9.0
Arizona	9.3	9.5	9.4	9.6	9.0	9.0	8.9	8.9
Utah	8.4	8.9	8.4	8.0	7.4	7.0	7.0	6.2
Nevada	8.7	9.0	9.0	8.8	7.4	7.0	8.0	8.0
Mountain	8.9	9.0	8.7	8.7	8.6	8.4	8.3	8.4
Washington	8.6	8.4	8.1	8.5	8.0	8.0	8.1	7.8
Oregon	8.7	8.7	8.1	8.5	8.0	8.1	7.8	7.9
California	9.0	9.0	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.6	8.6
Pacific	8.8	8.8	8.4	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.5	8.5
UNITED STATES	9.4	9.3	9.1	8.6	8.5	8.4	8.4	8.2

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 who spend one hour or more 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 hours or more during the week. 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 AMS 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 by interview 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 1956 issue of Farm Labor.

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