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Agricultural Marketing Service

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FARM EMPLOYMENT DOWN MORE THAN USUAL IN JULY

The number of farm workers declined sharply during July. More than 11 million persons were employed on farms in the United States on August 1, the Agricultural Marketing Service reported today. But this was over a million less than a month earlier and about 200,000 less than a year ago. The decrease from July 1 was slightly more than usual.

The completion of the harvest of winter grains and hay crops in most parts of the country accounted, in part, for the sharp decline in employment during July. Farm employment totals turned downward rather sharply in the Cotton Belt, where the usual mid-summer lull in farm activity prevailed prior to cotton picking time.

The number of persons employed increased only in New England, where the summer haying season is somewhat later than in more southerly portions of the country; in the Northern Great Plains, where the spring wheat harvest was nearing completion; and on the Pacific Coast, where the harvest of citrus fruits, grapes and peaches was progressing rapidly.

The number of family workers (including farm operators) employed on August 1 was estimated at 8,213,000, as compared with 9,124,000 a month earlier, and 8,335,000 a year ago. Increases in the number of farm family workers during July were indicated only for New England and the Pacific Coast States, but the August 1 estimates were higher than a year earlier in the Middle Atlantic and Rocky Mountain States also.

Hired farm hands numbered only 2,845,000 workers on August 1. This was about 245,000 less than on July 1 and 119,000 under a year ago. There were more hired workers in New England, the West North Central and Far Western States on

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Farm Employment: August 1, 1939, with Comparisons

Geographic division	June 1 1938	July 1 1938	Aug. 1 1938	June 1 1939	July 1 1939	Aug. 1 1939
	1,000 persons	1,000 persons	1,000 persons	1,000 persons	1,000 persons	1,000 persons
			TOTAL EMPLOYMENT			
United States	12,305	12,473	11,299	12,302	12,215	11,058
New England	266	284	289	269	277	294
Middle Atlantic	641	719	718	628	728	684
East No.Central	1,597	1,688	1,622	1,572	1,611	1,568
West No.Central	1,808	1,942	1,965	1,820	1,905	1,886
South Atlantic	2,553	2,574	2,240	2,633	2,458	2,199
East So.Central	2,236	2,010	1,617	2,201	2,027	1,558
West So.Central	2,186	2,143	1,722	2,200	2,118	1,703
Mountain	475	527	513	483	501	508
Pacific	543	586	613	566	590	656
			FAMILY WORKERS			
United States	9,484	9,321	8,335	9,443	9,124	8,213
New England	168	175	172	166	172	183
Middle Atlantic	419	458	446	418	469	451
East No.Central	1,227	1,261	1,200	1,208	1,209	1,181
West No.Central	1,426	1,459	1,422	1,431	1,437	1,397
South Atlantic	1,979	1,970	1,711	1,983	1,859	1,688
East So.Central	1,931	1,749	1,406	1,880	1,742	1,351
West So.Central	1,730	1,633	1,355	1,725	1,601	1,322
Mountain	298	309	298	303	305	299
Pacific	306	307	325	329	330	341
			HIRED WORKERS			
United States	2,821	3,152	2,964	2,929	3,091	2,845
New England	98	109	117	103	105	111
Middle Atlantic	222	261	272	210	259	233
East No.Central	370	427	422	364	402	387
West No.Central	382	483	543	389	468	489
South Atlantic	574	604	529	650	599	511
East So.Central	305	261	211	321	285	207
West So.Central	456	510	367	475	517	381
Mountain	177	218	215	180	196	209
Pacific	237	279	288	237	260	317

Based on reports from 21,243 persons.

Farm Employment: Numbers of persons employed on the first of each month, West South Central States, 1930-38 1/

Date	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
	1,000 persons	1,000 persons	1,000 persons	1,000 persons	1,000 persons	1,000 persons	1,000 persons	1,000 persons	1,000 persons
				TOTAL EMPLOYMENT					
Jan. 1	1,487	1,491	1,453	1,476	1,520	1,576	1,586	1,440	1,435
Feb. 1	1,602	1,647	1,610	1,596	1,560	1,599	1,604	1,461	1,468
Mar. 1	1,728	1,815	1,654	1,648	1,678	1,648	1,648	1,536	1,513
Apr. 1	1,823	1,955	1,872	1,866	1,915	1,838	1,776	1,632	1,630
May 1	2,196	2,194	2,179	2,181	2,034	2,036	2,020	1,983	1,929
June 1	2,540	2,505	2,376	2,396	2,351	2,398	2,405	2,298	2,186
July 1	2,304	2,238	2,189	2,072	2,158	2,180	2,118	2,170	2,143
Aug. 1	1,825	1,771	1,780	1,750	1,662	1,875	1,766	1,773	1,722
Sept. 1	2,109	2,122	2,003	1,968	1,916	1,958	2,084	1,927	1,895
Oct. 1	2,543	2,545	2,436	2,391	2,238	2,296	2,288	2,279	2,177
Nov. 1	2,221	2,268	2,156	2,131	1,954	2,164	1,986	2,153	2,078
Dec. 1	1,752	1,796	1,760	1,690	1,611	1,812	1,715	1,749	1,609
Average	2,011	2,029	1,956	1,930	1,283	1,948	1,916	1,867	1,815
				FAMILY WORKERS					
Jan. 1	1,168	1,203	1,189	1,199	1,244	1,311	1,309	1,189	1,164
Feb. 1	1,268	1,353	1,349	1,280	1,261	1,318	1,314	1,194	1,178
Mar. 1	1,373	1,441	1,369	1,329	1,387	1,339	1,352	1,236	1,223
Apr. 1	1,440	1,532	1,511	1,510	1,534	1,477	1,394	1,322	1,298
May 1	1,724	1,744	1,764	1,757	1,635	1,628	1,620	1,580	1,550
June 1	1,981	1,974	1,918	1,890	1,814	1,926	1,853	1,783	1,730
July 1	1,794	1,755	1,757	1,711	1,740	1,725	1,694	1,621	1,633
Aug. 1	1,435	1,443	1,439	1,455	1,360	1,513	1,413	1,378	1,355
Sept. 1	1,648	1,694	1,610	1,575	1,520	1,571	1,596	1,514	1,458
Oct. 1	1,949	1,966	1,913	1,864	1,742	1,797	1,832	1,742	1,616
Nov. 1	1,769	1,750	1,683	1,725	1,573	1,739	1,576	1,653	1,620
Dec. 1	1,395	1,492	1,428	1,395	1,331	1,460	1,380	1,342	1,260
Average	1,579	1,612	1,578	1,558	1,512	1,567	1,528	1,463	1,424
				HIRED WORKERS					
Jan. 1	319	288	264	277	276	265	277	251	271
Feb. 1	334	294	261	316	299	281	290	267	290
Mar. 1	355	374	285	319	291	309	296	300	290
Apr. 1	383	423	361	356	381	361	382	310	332
May 1	472	450	415	424	399	408	400	403	379
June 1	559	531	458	506	537	472	552	515	456
July 1	510	483	432	361	418	455	424	549	510
Aug. 1	390	328	341	295	302	362	353	395	367
Sept. 1	461	428	393	393	396	387	488	413	437
Oct. 1	594	579	523	527	496	499	456	537	561
Nov. 1	452	518	473	406	381	425	410	500	458
Dec. 1	357	304	332	295	280	352	335	407	349
Average	432	417	378	373	371	381	389	404	392

1/ Data from 1930 to 1936 based on estimates of Shaw, E.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

the first of this month than on July 1, but declines in other areas resulted in a net decline for the country as a whole. Only in the West South Central and Pacific Coast States were farmers using more hired help than at the same time last year.

Employment in West South Central States Shows Downward Trend Since 1931

The Agricultural Marketing Service also reported that the annual averages of the total number of workers employed on farms has declined steadily in the West South Central States since 1931, except for a slight rise in 1935. A tendency toward increased mechanization of the farming business and a downward trend in farm labor requirements apparently have been contributory factors.

Shifts in total farm employment in this area are determined primarily by changes in the number of family workers. Farm operators and unpaid family workers ordinarily outnumber hired hands in the ratio of 3 or 4 to 1 in this group of States.

Annual changes in the average number of hired hands trace an entirely different pattern since 1930, however, than do the yearly shifts in numbers of family workers. Declines were recorded each year from 1930 to 1934 in the estimated number of workers hired by farmers in West South Central States, but from 1935 to 1937 increases occurred. As would be expected, the changes in the number of hired workers tended to follow shifts in farm income more closely than did changes in the number of family workers.

In 1937 the number of hired hands working on West South Central farms on the first of each month averaged 404,000 or the highest since 1931. Last year, the average dropped to 392,000. The estimated number of family workers employed on farms in this region averaged 1,424,000 in 1938. This was not only lower than in 1937 but the lowest estimate recorded during the 9-year period covered by the record.