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Farm Labor

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FARM EMPLOYMENT SEASONALLY LOW

There were 5,403,000 persons at work on farms during the week of January 20-26, the Crop Reporting Board announced today. This was 408,000 less than a month earlier. Family workers accounted for 4,503,000 of the total and hired workers the remaining 900,000. Both groups of workers decreased in numbers by more than the usual percentage. The number of family workers decreased 6 percent while the number of hired workers dropped 11 percent.

Compared with a year earlier, the number of persons working on farms in late January 1957 was 138,000 less, a drop of 2 percent. The number of family workers decreased 3 percent and the number of hired workers decreased 1 percent.

As usual at this time of year, farm work was generally slack. The weather during the survey week was unfavorable for outdoor activities over most of the Nation. Extremely cold weather in the northwestern and north-central parts of the country necessitated extra care and feeding of livestock. Heavy rainfall in Arkansas, Tennessee, and parts of surrounding States caused delay in spring land preparation. Livestock chores and indoor repairs on machinery and equipment were general activities in all areas. Other seasonal jobs such as wood cutting, fencing, manure hauling, and building repair were carried on to a limited extent, mostly in the eastern part of the country. Some farmers in the southern Great Plains area were hauling water for livestock and listing and chiseling land to control soil blowing.

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Agricultural Marketing Service

Crop Reporting Board
Washington, D. C.

Citrus harvest was at the midwinter peak in Florida and land preparation for spring crops was in progress. Spring plowing was underway in southern Alabama. Farmers were starting to plant hardy vegetable crops in the Charleston-Beaufort area of South Carolina. Planting of spring vegetables was underway in the Laredo, Winter Garden, and Eagle Pass districts of Texas. Growers in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Tennessee were stripping tobacco in preparation for marketing. Potato sorting and marketing continued in Idaho, New York, and Maine. In California, citrus harvest, vegetable work, and pruning of orchards and vineyards were the principal activities.

Decreases from the previous month in the number of persons at work on farms during late January ranged from 1 percent to 19 percent by regions. The largest declines were in the East South Central and the South Atlantic States. In the West South Central States where there is usually a small increase, there were fewer workers than a month earlier. The number of family workers was also smaller than a month ago in all regions except the Pacific Coast States, where the seasonal increase was smaller than usual.

The number of hired workers in late January was lower than a month earlier in all regions except the Mountain States. These decreases ranged from 7 to 21 percent. In the Mountain States, the number of hired workers was the same as a month earlier and a year earlier. Declines in the number of hired workers were greater than usual in the New England, West North Central, South Atlantic, East South Central, and West South Central States.

There were fewer persons working on farms during the survey week than a year ago in all regions except the New England and East North Central, where small increases occurred. There was also a decrease in the number of family workers in all regions except the East North Central States. There were more hired workers than a year earlier in the New England, East North Central, and Pacific States, but these increases were more than offset by declines in the West North Central, South Atlantic, East South Central and West South Central States.

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Farm employment: Persons employed during week of January 20-26, 1957,
United States, with comparisons

	: January : average : 1952-56 ^{1/}	: January: December: : 22-28, : 23-29, : : 1956 : 1956 : 1957
FARM EMPLOYMENT (Thousands of persons) :		
Total	5,922	5,541 5,811 5,403
Family labor	4,989	4,629 4,800 4,503
Hired labor	933	912 1,011 900
FARM EMPLOYMENT INDEXES (Adjusted for seasonal variation, 1910-14=100) :		
Total	63	59 57 58
Family labor	65	60 58 58
Hired labor	56	55 55 54

^{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, January 1, 1957
United States, with comparisons ^{1/}

	: Oct. 1, : Jan. 1, : Oct. 1, : Jan. 1,
	: 1955 : 1956 : 1956 : 1957
FARM WAGE RATES	:
Per month with house	: \$154.00 \$156.00 \$161.00 \$165.00
Per month with board and room	: 125.00 126.00 129.00 133.00
Per week with board and room	: 30.50 30.00 32.50 31.75
Per week without board or room	: 37.50 38.00 39.75 39.75
Per day with house	: 4.35 4.45 4.60 4.75
Per day with board and room	: 5.20 5.30 5.50 5.60
Per day without board or room	: 5.70 5.40 6.00 5.80
Per hour with house	: .87 .67 .90 .72
Per hour without board or room	: .77 .91 .82 .95
Composite rate per hour 2/	: .701 .740 .736 .785
FARM WAGE RATE INDEXES (1910-14=100)	:
Adjusted for seasonal variation....	: 518 522 550 554
RELATED INDEXES (1910-14=100)	:
Prices received by farmers 3/.....	: 232 224 235 238
Ratio of prices received to farm wage rates	: 45 43 43 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 January 20-26, 1957,
United States and geographic divisions, with comparisons

Geographic division	: January : average : 1952-56 ^{1/}	: December : 18-24, : 1955	: January : 22-28, : 1956	: December : 23-29, : 1956	: January : 20-26, : 1957
	: <u>Thousands</u>	: <u>Thousands</u>	: <u>Thousands</u>	: <u>Thousands</u>	: <u>Thousands</u>
	TOTAL FARM EMPLOYMENT				
United States	: 5,922	6,088	5,541	5,811	5,403
New England	: 134	132	128	140	130
Middle Atlantic	: 423	429	402	427	398
East North Central	: 1,002	1,018	949	992	957
West North Central	: 1,189	1,156	1,094	1,117	1,080
South Atlantic	: 921	951	848	894	814
East South Central	: 790	920	718	852	694
West South Central	: 747	721	695	674	635
Mountain	: 262	292	259	254	252
Pacific	: 454	469	448	461	443
	FAMILY WORKERS ^{2/}				
United States	: 4,989	5,013	4,629	4,800	4,503
New England	: 99	96	92	97	91
Middle Atlantic	: 334	328	320	332	316
East North Central	: 910	917	860	893	865
West North Central	: 1,088	1,054	1,005	1,026	998
South Atlantic	: 746	751	674	707	649
East South Central	: 696	802	628	744	609
West South Central	: 640	597	589	558	532
Mountain	: 182	183	173	168	166
Pacific	: 294	285	288	275	277
	HIRED WORKERS ^{3/}				
United States	: 933	1,075	912	1,011	900
New England	: 35	36	36	43	39
Middle Atlantic	: 89	101	82	95	82
East North Central	: 92	101	89	99	92
West North Central	: 101	102	89	91	82
South Atlantic	: 175	200	174	187	165
East South Central	: 94	118	90	108	85
West South Central	: 107	124	106	116	103
Mountain	: 80	109	86	86	86
Pacific	: 160	184	160	186	166

^{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 wage rates: Index numbers of farm wage rates, rural living costs, and real farm wage rates, United States, 1910-56, (1910-14=100).

Year	:	Farm wage	:	Rural living	:	Real farm wage
	:	rates	:	costs <u>1/</u>	:	rates <u>2/</u>
1910	:	96	:	99	:	97
1911	:	98	:	99	:	99
1912	:	102	:	100	:	102
1913	:	104	:	100	:	104
1914	:	102	:	102	:	100
1915	:	102	:	104	:	98
1916	:	112	:	115	:	97
1917	:	141	:	143	:	99
1918	:	177	:	170	:	104
1919	:	206	:	202	:	102
1920	:	241	:	228	:	106
1921	:	156	:	164	:	95
1922	:	154	:	153	:	101
1923	:	177	:	156	:	113
1924	:	181	:	156	:	116
1925	:	183	:	161	:	114
1926	:	185	:	158	:	117
1927	:	185	:	155	:	119
1928	:	185	:	156	:	119
1929	:	187	:	154	:	121
1930	:	175	:	144	:	122
1931	:	133	:	124	:	107
1932	:	100	:	106	:	94
1933	:	89	:	108	:	82
1934	:	100	:	122	:	82
1935	:	110	:	124	:	89
1936	:	118	:	124	:	95
1937	:	133	:	128	:	104
1938	:	129	:	122	:	106
1939	:	129	:	120	:	108
1940	:	131	:	121	:	108
1941	:	160	:	130	:	123
1942	:	208	:	149	:	140
1943	:	274	:	166	:	165
1944	:	328	:	175	:	187
1945	:	366	:	182	:	201
1946	:	399	:	202	:	198
1947	:	424	:	237	:	179
1948	:	445	:	251	:	177
1949	:	430	:	243	:	177
1950	:	432	:	246	:	176
1951	:	481	:	268	:	179
1952	:	508	:	271	:	187
1953	:	517	:	270	:	191
1954	:	508	:	274	:	185
1955	:	519	:	273	:	190
1956	:	542	:	278	:	195

1/ Prices paid by farmers for commodities used in living.

2/ Wage rates divided by rural living costs.

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 1957 issue of Farm Labor.

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