UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau of Agricultural Economics

FARM LABOR REPORT

Washington, D. C. — September 14, 1943

FARM EMPLOYMENT UP FROM LAST SEPTEMBER

With farm activity at an unusually high level the number of people working on farms was 11,502,000 on the first of September compared with 11,020,000 a month earlier and 11,390,000 on September 1 last year, the U. S. Department of Agriculture reported today. There is normally an increase in farm employment between August and September but the increase over September 1942 is contrary to the relationship that has existed so far this season between farm employment this year and last. This is accounted for by the early maturing of a number of crops, especially cotton, and by the relief of drought conditions in some sections of the country, enabling farmers to do some late summer sowing.

The increase over last year occurred primarily in greater employment of family workers; the number of people on farms paid wages declined in all geographic divisions except the West South Central and Mountain States. The estimated 8,402,000 family workers on farms September 1 was about 3 percent higher than the total of 8,191,000 on September 1 last year, and only slightly less than the 5-year (1938-42) average of 8,478,000.

The 3,100,000 hired workers on farms on September 1 represent a seasonal increase from the total of 2,962,000 on farms the first of August but is 3 percent less than on September 1 last year and about 3 percent below the 5-year (1938-42) average of 3,209,000.

The delay in completing late summer work, plus the necessity for starting fall harvesting earlier than usual, resulted in a general tightening of the farm labor situation over the country.

In New England, especially in areas where weather has been rather unfavorable, some hay may not be harvested. With harvest at hand for apple, potato, cranberry and other fall crops, requirements for farm labor will be sharply increased for the next several weeks. The late summer work is piling up in New York, with hay harvest late and silo filling coming on. Except in the Champlain Valley fruit district, New York's need for labor to harvest fruit will not be as great as last year. Dry weather during August over most of New Jersey reduced yield prospects and somewhat reduced the labor load. Harvest of many truck crops was near completion the first of the month and cranberry picking was underway.

On the first of September in most of the North Central States, the tempo of farm work had picked up from that of the early part of August, but had not reached the peak which will come later when corn cutting, silo filling, soybean combining and wheat seeding become general. August was an extremely busy month for farmers in every section of North Dakota. Grain harvesting was in full swing in North Dakota by the end of the first week, and contrary to usual, the grain

ripened at about the same date in all parts of the State, creating an even greater demand for hired help than if harvest had progressed from south to north in the usual manner. The need for additional workers was largely met by the help of soldiers, by bringing in a large number of southern farmers, by use of much volunteer labor from the urban communities, and by the use of out-of-State combines.

In the South, the cotton harvest was underway and more advanced than usual on September 1. The work was progressing rapidly. In most States, weather conditions were favorable for harvest of crops and farmers were busy picking cotton, digging peanuts, and getting in those types of tobacco not already in the barns.

Rapid progress was made throughout the month in Texas in harvesting cotton, peanuts, rice, corn, sorghum crops and hay, aided by extremely hot weather over most of the State. Extraordinary measures taken to provide farm workers in Texas consist of arranging school hours to have children available for a full half-day for farm work; use of Boy Scouts, college students, Sunday School pupils, civic groups and, in areas near camps, the use of war prisoners.

The Montana farm labor situation improved somewhat during August both as a result of favorable weather and the arrival of additional out-of-State workers. A somewhat unusual wage agreement was reached in northeastern and parts of east Central Montana where farmers offered a wage of $1.00 per hour plus board. This enabled them to use crews for long hours when weather was good and to cut back to simply board and room if it rained. Farm workers and farmers seem to have found the arrangement mutually satisfactory. Combining of grains made good progress in northern Idaho, and potato digging, and picking of sweet corn, peaches, prunes, and dry peas also was underway on the first of the month. Cotton picking had started in Arizona and harvesting of hay, grains and alfalfa seed was in progress. An increased demand for farm workers in Utah is in prospect to handle fruit crops, tomatoes, sugar beets, corn, and alfalfa hay and seed.

The farm labor situation on the West Coast remains difficult, but is not generally critical at this time. Large numbers of Mexican nationals have aided farmers, as have recruits from many other sources. In Washington, the supply of labor has been adequate in that no serious losses of crops have occurred. In that State, current farm activities include the picking of peaches, prunes, Bartlett pears and early fall apples, the harvesting of sweet corn, green beans, late summer lettuce; melons, and other truck crops, and the completion of spinach and cabbage seed harvests.

In California, in general the farm labor situation appears fairly well in hand, although wages are high and some of the labor is inefficient. Local shortages are reported here and there, but these do not appear too acute. Farm operations now in progress that require large numbers of laborers include the harvesting of peaches, pears, prunes, almonds, grapes, canning tomatoes, citrus, hops and vegetables. The peak of work in harvesting grapes and canning and late market tomatoes has not been reached, nor has sugar beet harvesting become general. The peak labor load will occur when harvesting of these crops and cotton gets fully underway, substantially during the same period.

Farm employment and related data, United States, September 1, 1943, with comparisons

	Annual average 1910-14	Aug.1, 1942	Sept.1, 1942	Aug.1, 1943	Sept.1 1943
FARM EMPLOYMENT INDEXES:					
Total -					
Unadjusted	100	93	95	91	95
Adjusted for seasonal variation	100	88	85	85	86
Family labor -					
Unadjusted	100	89	89	88	92
Adjusted for seasonal variation	100	87	83	86	86
Hired labor -					
Unadjusted	100	108	111	102	107
Adjusted for seasonal variation	100	89	90	84	86
EMPLOYMENT (thousands of persons)					
Farm	12,052	11,249	11,390	11,020	11,502
Family labor	9,160	8,122	8,191	8,058	8,402
Hired labor	2,892	3,127	3,199	2,962	3,100
Nonagricultural 1/	---	42,800	42,200	41,900	---
RELATED INDEXES:					
Prices received by farmers 2/	100	163	163	193	---
Ratio of prices received to farm wage rates	100	6/ 76	---	4/ 69	---
Factory employment 3/	100	183	185	4/ 200	---
Average weekly factory earnings 5/	100	7/ 342	7/ 348		---

1/ Estimates of the Bureau of the Census relating to the week preceding the middle of the month. Excludes institutional population and estimated number of persons in the armed forces.
2/ Average of the 15th of the given and the 15th of the preceding month.
3/ Adjusted for seasonal variation.
4/ July 1943 - latest data available.
5/ Factory pay roll per employed worker adjusted for seasonal variation.
6/ July 1942 - latest data available.
7/ Revised.

Farm employment based on reports from 20,474 farmers.

Farm employment, United States and geographic divisions, September 1, 1943, with comparisons

TOTAL FARM EMPLOYMENT

Geographic division	July 1, 1942	Aug.1, 1942	Sept.1, 1942	July 1, 1943	Aug.1, 1943	Sept.1, 1943
	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's
United States	12,009	11,249	11,390	11,749	11,020	11,502
New England	290	313	285	281	306	290
Middle Atlantic	772	757	732	743	755	723
East North Central	1,569	1,575	1,527	1,528	1,555	1,541
West North Central	1,878	1,883	1,828	1,846	1,842	1,793
South Atlantic	2,309	2,146	2,183	2,302	2,083	2,167
East South Central	1,862	1,524	1,804	1,831	1,482	1,862
West South Central	2,146	1,833	1,687	2,064	1,759	1,757
Mountain	474	520	518	484	518	539
Pacific	709	698	826	670	720	830

FAMILY WORKERS 1/

United States	8,827	8,122	8,191	8,763	8,058	8,402
New England	178	176	175	170	183	185
Middle Atlantic	468	457	447	468	467	446
East North Central	1,223	1,225	1,189	1,196	1,217	1,223
West North Central	1,481	1,414	1,364	1,488	1,429	1,380
South Atlantic	1,763	1,590	1,599	1,761	1,540	1,629
East South Central	1,553	1,284	1,478	1,552	1,264	1,549
West South Central	1,543	1,354	1,276	1,515	1,324	1,308
Mountain	283	318	313	299	318	326
Pacific	335	304	350	314	316	356

HIRED WORKERS

United States	3,182	3,127	3,199	2,986	2,962	3,100
New England	112	137	110	111	123	105
Middle Atlantic	304	300	285	275	288	277
East North Central	346	350	338	332	338	318
West North Central	397	469	464	358	413	413
South Atlantic	546	556	584	541	543	538
East South Central	309	240	326	279	218	313
West South Central	603	479	411	549	435	449
Mountain	191	202	205	185	200	213
Pacific	374	394	476	356	404	474

1/ Including farm operators and members of their families working without wages.

Based on reports from 20,474 farmers.

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Length of farm workday for operators and hired workers, September 1, 1943, with comparisons

State and division	June 1, 1940		June 1, 1943		Sept. 1, 1939		Sept. 1, 1943	
	Farm operator	Hired help	Farm operator	Hired help	Farm operator	Hired help	Farm operator	Hired help
	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours
Maine	12.5	9.7	13.1	9.7	12.2	9.5	13.2	9.5
N.H.	11.5	9.4	12.1	9.4	11.9	9.3	12.2	9.6
Vt.	12.5	10.6	13.0	11.6	12.3	10.7	12.9	10.7
Mass.	11.5	10.0	11.9	10.0	11.8	9.9	12.2	9.9
R.I.	12.0	10.0	13.2	10.0	11.6	10.2	11.9	10.5
Conn.	11.5	10.1	12.1	10.1	11.8	10.0	11.9	10.0
N.Eng.	12.0	10.0	12.5	10.0	12.0	9.9	12.5	10.0
N.Y.	12.5	10.7	12.8	11.0	12.4	10.6	12.7	10.7
N.J.	12.0	10.6	12.5	10.6	11.8	9.8	12.5	10.0
Pa.	12.5	10.4	13.3	11.0	12.2	10.0	13.1	10.5
M.Atl.	12.5	10.6	13.0	10.9	12.3	10.2	12.9	10.5
Ohio	12.4	10.1	13.3	10.6	12.1	9.9	12.8	10.2
Ind.	12.6	10.4	13.3	11.1	11.7	10.0	12.5	10.3
Ill.	12.3	11.0	13.5	11.6	11.9	10.7	12.5	10.9
Mich.	12.4	10.4	13.2	10.8	12.3	10.4	13.1	10.8
Wis.	12.9	11.7	13.5	12.1	12.7	11.4	13.3	11.8
E.N.Cent.	12.5	10.8	13.4	11.3	12.1	10.5	12.8	10.9
Minn.	12.6	11.2	13.4	11.7	12.8	11.2	13.2	11.2
Iowa	12.6	11.2	13.7	11.9	12.2	11.0	13.0	11.5
Mo.	12.4	10.5	13.2	11.0	12.0	10.2	12.7	10.2
N.Dak.	12.5	11.5	14.0	12.4	12.9	11.5	13.6	11.5
S.Dak.	12.7	11.3	13.8	12.2	12.4	11.3	13.5	11.4
Nebr.	12.8	11.1	13.5	11.6	12.0	10.8	13.0	11.2
Kans.	12.5	10.7	13.2	10.9	12.3	10.6	13.0	10.8
W.N.Cent.	12.6	11.0	13.5	11.6	12.3	10.9	13.0	11.1
Del.	12.3	10.4	13.5	10.5	12.0	10.0	11.1	10.8
Md.	12.4	10.4	13.0	10.5	12.0	10.0	13.1	10.0
Va.	11.9	10.0	12.6	10.3	11.6	9.9	12.4	9.9
W.Va.	11.5	9.4	12.2	9.5	11.2	9.1	12.4	9.5
N.C.	11.7	10.2	12.0	10.2	11.4	9.8	11.8	9.7
S.C.	12.0	10.7	12.4	10.7	11.2	9.7	11.7	10.0
Ga.	11.9	10.8	12.3	10.8	11.3	10.0	11.7	10.2
Fla.	11.0	9.5	11.5	9.7	10.3	9.3	11.0	9.3
S.Atl.	11.8	10.3	12.3	10.4	11.3	9.8	11.9	9.9
Ky.	11.7	10.4	12.7	10.6	11.0	10.0	12.4	10.2
Tenn.	11.9	10.6	12.6	10.7	11.4	10.0	12.1	10.2
Ala.	11.8	10.7	12.4	10.7	11.0	10.0	11.5	10.0
Miss.	11.5	10.6	12.1	10.6	10.7	9.9	11.5	9.9
E.S.Cent.	11.7	10.6	12.4	10.6	11.0	10.0	11.9	10.1
Ark.	11.9	10.3	12.4	10.3	11.2	9.9	11.6	9.9
La.	11.2	10.0	12.0	10.0	10.7	9.7	11.6	9.9
Okla.	11.9	10.2	13.0	10.4	11.7	10.5	11.7	10.5
Tex.	11.9	10.4	12.8	10.4	11.6	10.0	12.2	10.0
W.S.Cent.	11.8	10.3	12.6	10.3	11.4	10.0	11.9	10.0
Mont.	12.6	10.7	13.3	11.2	12.4	10.5	13.3	10.9
Idaho	12.8	10.0	13.5	10.0	12.0	10.0	13.3	10.0
Wyo.	12.1	10.4	13.2	10.7	12.2	9.8	12.9	10.6
Colo.	12.5	10.5	13.2	11.0	11.9	10.3	13.0	10.5
N.Mex.	12.0	10.4	12.9	10.4	11.5	10.0	12.7	10.6
Ariz.	11.5	9.4	11.7	9.6	10.8	9.5	11.3	9.7
Utah	12.0	9.0	13.2	9.0	12.0	8.7	12.7	8.7
Nev.	11.6	9.0	12.9	9.0	12.4	8.6	12.8	9.0
Mount.	12.3	10.1	13.1	10.3	11.9	9.9	12.9	10.3
Wash.	11.5	10.0	12.7	10.0	11.8	9.8	12.5	10.0
Oreg.	11.8	9.6	12.5	9.6	11.8	9.5	12.4	9.5
Calif.	11.0	9.3	11.6	9.4	10.6	9.2	11.4	9.2
Pacific	11.3	9.5	12.1	9.6	11.2	9.4	11.9	9.4
U.S.	12.1	10.4	12.8	10.7	11.7	10.1	12.4	10.2

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Location on August 28 of farm workers brought in from foreign countries between September 1, 1942 and August 31, 1943

MEXICANS		JAMAICANS		BAHAMIANS	
State	Number of workers	State	Number of workers	State	Number of workers
Minnesota	381	Connecticut	1,275	New York	903
South Dakota	60	New York	1,529	Indiana	27
Nebraska	154	New Jersey	1,121	Illinois	50
Montana	878	Pennsylvania	306	Minnesota	32
Idaho	985	Ohio	208	Delaware	278
Wyoming	339	Indiana	315	Maryland	1,373
Colorado	1,086	Illinois	587	Virginia	707
Arizona	849	Michigan	1,267	North Carolina	227
Nevada	549	Wisconsin	878	Florida	276
Washington	1,220	Minnesota	624	Tennessee	412
Oregon	3,138	Maryland	100		
California	26,386	Idaho	558		
Total	36,025	Total	8,768	Total	4,285