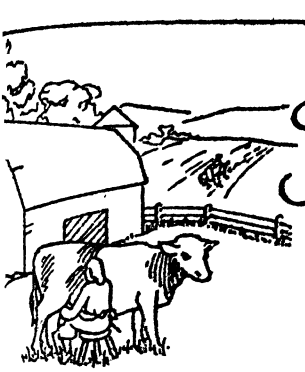

Farm Labor

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Washington, D. C. BAE May 13, 1947

FARM EMPLOYMENT ABOUT THE SAME AS YEAR AGO
WORK PROGRESSES SLOWLY

There were 10,280,000 people at work on farms throughout the country on May 1, about the same as a year ago, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics reported today. A late season and unfavorable weather were largely responsible for keeping farm employment at the 1946 level.

Spring work on farms has been delayed by continued cold, wet weather except on the Pacific Coast. Plowing and seeding operations were 2 to 3 weeks later than usual. By May 1 last year oats were practically all planted in the Northeast and North Central States and much spring plowing completed. This year many acres intended for oats were still unplanted on May 1 and very little plowing completed for corn and other crops. In the South, planting of cotton, corn and tobacco was behind schedule.

The number of persons at work on farms on May 1, was about the same as a year ago in most regions except for a decrease in the East and West South Central States, and an increase in the West North Central States. In the South Central States, rains the last week of April in the southern part of the region and low temperatures and wet soil in the northern part hindered field work. In the West North Central States delayed work was progressing except in a few areas where fields were still wet.

There were about 100,000 fewer operators and unpaid members of their families doing farm work this year on May 1 than a year ago. Fewer family workers were doing farm work in all regions except the East and West North Central and the Pacific States where there were more and in the New England States where there was no change. Changes ranged from 1 to 4 percent. A few more hired workers were employed on May 1 than a year ago for the country as a whole. There were decreases in only the South Central and the Pacific States.

Over a million more persons were at work on farms on May 1 than on April 1. The seasonal increase in the number of family workers was less than usual but about normal for hired workers. Seasonal increases were about the same as usual in all regions except the South Central States which had

less increase than usual. Last year when work was well advanced seasonal increases were larger than usual.

Field operations in the New England States were getting underway slowly by May 1. Very little plowing had been done and there had been no spring seeding except on the lighter soils. Some hardy vegetables were being set in favorable locations. About the same number of family and hired workers were employed as on this date last year.

In the Middle Atlantic States, the number of persons at work on farms on May 1 was about the same as last year, after a usual increase during April. There were fewer family workers than a year ago but an increase in the number of hired workers. Field work in New York and Pennsylvania was proceeding slowly after a late start. In New York in general only light soils were in shape for preparation for seeding. Muck soils were being prepared for potato planting. In northern New Jersey farmers were planting oats and preparing corn ground as rapidly as frequent rains permitted. In South Jersey asparagus cutting and tomato transplanting were starting about 2 weeks later than usual. Spraying of fruit trees was a job common to the whole region.

Spring work was making little progress in the East North Central States. Excessively wet, cold weather in April gave farmers little opportunity to work in the fields and hence by May 1 farm operations were two to three weeks later than usual in most of Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. Much oat seeding had been delayed and there was very little plowing for corn or soybeans. Fruit growers were busy spraying trees by the last week in April. The number of farm workers was slightly greater than last year. Hired workers increased about 28 percent since April 1, somewhat more than the usual seasonal increase.

In the West North Central States there were 3 percent more workers on farms than last year. All of this increase was in family labor. Seasonal increases from April were about as usual. Wet, cold weather, with some snow in North Dakota, greatly delayed field work. Only in western Kansas and Nebraska were farmers making any progress with spring work. Corn planting and seeding spring sown grains were the main activities around May 1. Alfalfa was being cut for dehydration in southern Kansas.

The number of persons employed on farms in the South Atlantic States on May 1 was up 17 percent from last month but practically the same as a year ago. The slight decline in the number of family workers was offset by an increase in hired labor. The unseasonably cold weather during April delayed plantings and the preparation of seedbeds. A very short crop of spring vegetables was being harvested in Florida and most field crops were delayed or getting a late start in Georgia. By the first of the month farm hands were setting tobacco, and starting cultivation of cotton and truck crops in the Carolinas. In Virginia cotton planting was well underway and many farmers were busy preparing ground for corn, peanuts and soybeans. Migrant labor began their northward movement somewhat early this year as a result of the light spring harvest in Florida.

Both family and hired workers showed 4 percent declines from last year in the East South Central States. In the northern part of the region frequent rains prevented field work resulting in many weedy fields following plowing. Farmers in most sections were nearly 3 weeks behind with their spring work. Farther south in Alabama and Mississippi April rainfall was considerably above average. But by the first of May such operations as chopping cotton, cultivating corn, transplanting sweetpotatoes and picking strawberries were in full swing. Harvest of the short commercial potato crop in Alabama was about to start by May 1.

The number of workers on farms in the West South Central States was also lower than last year. Weather around the first of the month further delayed planting operations in the northern part of the region and hindered cultivation of crops in the South. Most of the corn and cotton had been planted in Louisiana. Spring vegetable harvest was active in south Texas but field work made rather slow progress over the rest of the state during the latter part of April. Most crops are later than usual. Corn, cotton, sorghum and peanut planting was underway in Oklahoma. First cuttings of hay were ready but farmers were waiting for favorable curing weather. In Arkansas most spring planting had been delayed somewhat by excessive soil moisture. Strawberry harvest will soon be underway in the White County area of Arkansas.

Farm employment increased about as usual in the Mountain States. A 9 percent increase in hired workers (compared to last year) more than made up for a slight decrease in the number of family workers on farms. In Arizona and parts of Nevada and New Mexico a continuation of above-normal temperature with negligible amounts of rain-fall did not aid the already critically low irrigation water supply. Dry-land farming areas in these States needed moisture badly. In Utah and Idaho the main farm activities were thinning beets and onions, thinning and blocking lettuce, potato cutting and planting and spraying fruit orchards. Spring grain seeding was progressing favorably over most of the region. Importation of Spanish-Americans and Mexican Nationals into the sugar beet areas had already started.

Above normal temperatures have prevailed in the Pacific Coast States and, except for dry land areas in California, soil moisture has been adequate. So farm operations were well ahead of their usual schedule. Practically the same number of workers were employed on May 1 as a year ago. Shearing sheep, irrigating and spraying fruit trees, harvesting asparagus, weeding peppermint, planting potatoes, peas and corn were the main farm jobs in Washington and Oregon around May 1. In California, current operations requiring large numbers of seasonal workers included the cultivating, irrigation and harvesting of commercial vegetables, citrus harvest in the southern part of the state, and thinning apricots, plums, and early peaches. Hay harvest and baling had begun in some areas, as had the harvesting of grain and flax.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau Of Agricultural Economics

Farm labor: Persons employed, wage rates, indexes and related data, United States, May 1, 1947 with comparisons

	Annual average 1910-14	May average 1935-39	May 1, 1946	April 1, 1947	May 1, 1947
FARM EMPLOYMENT (thousands of persons)					
Total	12,052	11,465	10,366	9,242	10,268
Family labor	9,160	8,870	8,391	7,571	8,281
Hired labor	2,892	2,595	1,975	1,671	1,989
FARM EMPLOYMENT INDEXES (Adjusted for seasonal variation)					
Total	100	91	84	84	83
Family labor	100	92	87	86	85
Hired labor	100	88	73	74	74

	Annual average 1910-14	April average 1935-39	April 1, 1946	January 1, 1947	April 1, 1947
FARM WAGE RATES					
Per month, with board	$22.09	25.36	83.30	88.40	91.50
Per month, without board	29.18	33.44	97.40	106.00	107.00
Per day, with board	1.16	1.14	3.81	4.15	4.17
Per day, without board	1.42	1.44	4.36	4.83	4.77
Composite rate per month 1/	24.76	28.22	87.80	94.80	96.20
FARM WAGE RATE INDEXES					
Unadjusted	100	114	355	383	389
Adjusted for seasonal variation	100	116	362	399	397
FARM WAGE RATE INDEXES BY REGION					
New England	100	141	354	379	383
Middle Atlantic	100	127	352	371	389
East North Central	100	114	330	350	362
West North Central	100	96	327	322	349
South Atlantic	100	108	327	370	363
East South Central	100	98	274	309	303
West South Central	100	98	322	357	355
Mountain	100	102	313	322	342
Pacific	100	125	400	426	418
RELATED INDEXES					
Prices received by farmers 2/	100	109	210	262	278
Ratio of prices received to farm wage rates	100	96	59	68	71
Average weekly factory earnings 3/	100	195.8	382	417.6	---

1/ Weighted average of monthly rates with and without board, and daily rates with and without board converted to a monthly basis.
2/ Average of the 15th of the given and the 15th of the previous month.
3/ Factory payroll per employed worker; average of all weeks during the designated month. Revised April 1946.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau of Agricultural Economics

Farm employment: Persons employed, United States and geographic divisions, May 1, 1947 with comparisons

	May 1 average 1935-39	April 1, 1946	May 1, 1946	April 1, 1947	May 1, 1947
	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's
TOTAL FARM EMPLOYMENT					
United States	11,465	9,121	10,366	9,242	10,280
New England	250	227	247	222	247
Middle Atlantic	631	558	607	559	606
East North Central	1,557	1,345	1,423	1,368	1,438
West North Central	1,694	1,451	1,574	1,499	1,623
South Atlantic	2,338	1,748	2,008	1,708	2,002
East South Central	2,026	1,445	1,771	1,480	1,695
West South Central	1,974	1,466	1,759	1,490	1,685
Mountain	448	388	426	399	430
Pacific	547	493	551	517	554
FAMILY WORKERS 1/					
United States	8,870	7,469	8,391	7,571	8,281
New England	162	163	170	160	170
Middle Atlantic	418	401	414	397	402
East North Central	1,204	1,157	1,193	1,182	1,200
West North Central	1,367	1,279	1,335	1,321	1,383
South Atlantic	1,759	1,307	1,619	1,359	1,593
East South Central	1,747	1,284	1,590	1,330	1,521
West South Central	1,585	1,196	1,449	1,214	1,390
Mountain	299	287	310	291	304
Pacific	329	305	311	317	318
HIRED WORKERS					
United States	2,595	1,652	1,975	1,671	1,999
New England	88	64	77	62	77
Middle Atlantic	213	157	193	162	204
East North Central	353	188	230	186	238
West North Central	327	172	239	178	240
South Atlantic	579	351	389	349	409
East South Central	279	161	181	150	174
West South Central	389	270	310	276	295
Mountain	149	101	116	108	126
Pacific	218	188	240	200	236

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

Based on reports from 19,647 farmers who reported for their own farms the number of family and hired workers doing 2 or more days of work during the week of inquiry.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau of Agricultural Economics

Farm employment: Total, family and hired workers, United States, specified annual averages and by months, Jan. 1, 1945 - May 1, 1947 1/

Year and Month	Total farm employment	Family workers 2/	Hired Workers
	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's
1910-14 av.	12,052	9,160	2,892
1935-39 av.	10,920	8,352	2,568
1939 av.	10,740	8,145	2,595
1940 av.	10,585	8,019	2,566
1941 av.	10,361	7,829	2,532
1942 av.	10,397	7,855	2,542
1943 av.	10,263	7,857	2,406
1944 av.	10,037	7,810	2,227
1945 av.	9,844	7,726	2,118
January 1	8,005	6,571	1,434
February 1	8,051	6,557	1,494
March 1	8,414	6,894	1,520
April 1	8,982	7,322	1,660
May 1	10,017	8,153	1,864
June 1	10,994	8,637	2,357
July 1	11,100	8,556	2,544
August 1	10,612	7,970	2,642
September 1	10,907	8,094	2,813
October 1	11,052	8,558	2,494
November 1	10,747	8,178	2,569
December 1	9,245	7,217	2,028
1946 av.	10,012	7,864	2,148
January 1	7,732	6,412	1,320
February 1	7,799	6,375	1,424
March 1	8,263	6,774	1,489
April 1	9,121	7,469	1,652
May 1	10,366	8,391	1,975
June 1	11,422	8,969	2,453
July 1	11,586	8,875	2,711
August 1	11,044	8,258	2,786
September 1	11,111	8,334	2,777
October 1	11,486	8,862	2,624
November 1	10,809	8,306	2,503
December 1	9,405	7,345	2,060
1947 av.	------	-----	-----
January 1	8,272	6,747	1,525
February 1	8,280	6,693	1,587
March 1	8,591	7,046	1,545
April 1	9,242	7,571	1,671
May 1	10,280	8,281	1,999

1/ Annual averages are straight averages of first of month employment estimates.

2/ Includes farm operators and members of their families working without wages.

Farm labor program: Foreign workers employed in agriculture, May 2, 1947 1/

State	Mexicans	Jamaicans	Bahamians	Hondurans	British Barbadians	Newfoundlanders	Total
Maine		3				25	28
N. H.	2/ 7	9				25	41
Vt.	2/ 16					55	71
Mass.		14	45			2	61
R. I.						4	4
Conn.		1,764				42	1,806
N. Y.		244	182		2	65	493
N. J.		239	284			1	524
Pa.		347				8	355
Ohio		132	13				145
Ind.	55		24				79
Ill.	463	40	132				635
Mich.	26	133					159
Wis.	14	23	2	2			41
Minn.							---
Iowa							---
Mo.		20					20
N. Dak.	1						1
S. Dak.	54						54
Nebr.	147						147
Kans.							---
Del.		58	78			3	139
Md.		149	101			4	254
Va.							---
W. Va.							---
N. C.			3				3
S. C.							---
Ga.							---
Fla.		1,530	1,860		499		3,889
Ky.							---
Tenn.							---
Ala.							---
Miss.							---
Ark.							---
La.		154					154
Okla.							---
Tex.							---
Mont.	31						31
Idaho	2,434						2,434
Wyo.	4						4
Colo.							---
N. Mex.							---
Ariz.	1,027						1,027
Utah	346						346
Nev.	139						139
Wash.	548						548
Oreg.	611						611
Calif.	13,253						13,253
U. S. 3/	19,176	4,359	2,724	2	451	254	27,446

1/ Data provided by Requirements and Certifications Section, Program Division, Labor Branch, F.W.A. 2/ Canadians. 3/ Including Canadians.

Farm labor program: Farm labor placements, March 1947 1/

State	March		January 1 to March 31	
	1946	1947	1946	1947
Maine	58	48	168	113
N. H.	92	62	223	218
Vt.	67	99	192	251
Mass.	208	19	275	72
R. I.	12	5	23	11
Conn.	309	445	1,680	1,949
N. Y.	6,172	628	11,001	1,334
N. J.	192	151	426	412
Pa.	255	197	657	426
Ohio	536	337	1,940	1,051
Ind.	336	185	615	410
Ill.	1,413	1,052	3,607	2,456
Mich.	717	586	1,388	1,371
Wis.	371	327	980	842
Minn.	547	385	1,111	800
Iowa	546	538	1,063	989
Mo.	192	233	469	580
N. Dak.	1,094	882	1,468	1,989
S. Dak.	498	287	815	683
Nebr.	366	340	790	698
Kans.	90	21	159	168
Del.	232	52	797	105
Md.	4,307	292	8,941	1,327
Va.	701	35	1,997	108
W. Va.	71	21	203	107
N. C.	1,426	1,069	8,466	3,209
S. C.	446	982	2,080	2,604
Ga.	2,557	1,979	10,082	9,417
Fla.	4,539	2,288	12,266	23,073
Ky.	253	198	1,735	679
Tenn.	3,076	1,571	11,015	5,230
Ala.	1,049	594	2,980	1,521
Miss.	11,475	3,703	38,946	12,321
Ark.	13,176	1,582	54,749	4,254
La.	3,405	648	9,768	2,700
Okla.	7,453	1,085	14,352	2,624
Tex.	5,152	8,025	18,637	18,516
Mont.	534	472	885	808
Idaho	526	239	830	415
Wyo.	411	267	797	565
Colo.	913	923	2,482	2,305
N. Mex.	1,833	470	4,776	879
Ariz.	153	257	24,247	1,414
Utah	113	128	248	247
Nev.	230	401	568	730
Wash.	3,754	5,469	5,920	7,590
Oreg.	2,215	3,979	4,191	7,084
Calif.	17,765	18,397	72,310	56,507
U. S.	101,876	61,981	323,318	183,162

1/ Data from monthly reports of Extension Farm Labor Program, Extension Service, U. S. D. A., Washington, D. C.

Farm labor program: Placements of World War II veterans on farms, United States, by months, January 1946 - March 1947 1/

Month	As hired hands	As tenants or sharecroppers	All placements
1946			
January	3,186	1,750	4,936
February	3,544	1,844	5,383
March	4,538	1,527	6,065
April	5,707	1,627	7,334
May	8,048	990	9,038
June	12,569	974	13,543
July	16,062	824	16,886
August	21,097	874	21,971
September	12,199	883	13,082
October	12,635	789	13,424
November	6,921	927	7,848
December	4,802	1,507	6,309
Total	111,308	14,516	125,824
1947			
January	4,060	1,453	5,513
February	4,763	1,982	6,745
March	5,143	1,676	6,819

1/ Data from monthly reports of Extension Farm Labor Program, Extension Service, U.S.D.A., Washington, D. C.

Farm labor program : Placements of World War II veterans on farms, by geographic divisions, March 1947 1/

Area	As hired hands	As tenants or sharecroppers	All placements
New England	60	4	64
Middle Atlantic	152	26	178
East North Central	405	571	976
West North Central	616	44	660
South Atlantic	134	193	327
East South Central	280	320	600
West South Central	560	500	1,060
Mountain	562	10	572
Pacific	2,374	8	2,382

1/ Data from monthly reports of Extension Farm Labor Program, Extension Service, U.S.D.A., Washington, D. C.

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