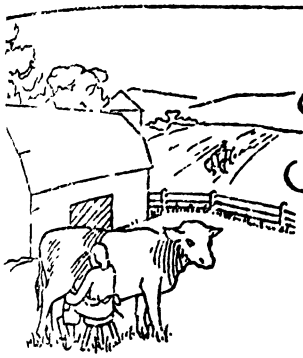

Farm Labor

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Washington, D. C. BAE June 12, 1947

RAIN STILL LIMITS FARM EMPLOYMENT

The number of people at work on farms on June 1 was held down to last year's level by unfavorable weather for the second successive month, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics reported today. There were 11,394,000 persons employed on farms for the entire Nation. Of this total, 8,913,000 were operators and unpaid members of their families and 2,481,000 were hired workers.

Both operators and hired workers put in less time per day than a year ago, continuing the trend of recent years. Operators worked 12.0 hours per day and hired workers 10.0 hours. The shorter working day prevailed in all regions.

Cold weather, frequent rains and snow in some northern sections delayed field work in most of the area east of the Rocky Mountains in the week before June 1. Rainfall was heavy from the Lake region, Iowa and Nebraska, south to Texas and Arkansas and then southeast to the middle and east Gulf Coasts. More than 4 inches of rain fell in sections of Iowa, eastern Nebraska and northwestern Illinois and in southern Florida in the last week of May. Corn planting was nearing completion in much of the western part of the Corn Belt but by June 1 was seriously delayed in the extreme eastern part of the Belt.

There were about the same number of family workers working 2 or more days on farms in the week preceding June 1 as there were a year ago. Fewer family workers were employed in the East North Central and West South Central States but a somewhat larger number in the Mountain States. Seasonal increases from a month earlier were larger than usual in the Middle Atlantic and Mountain States and less than usual in the West South Central States. In the New England and Pacific States there were small decreases in family employment in contrast to usual increases.

The number of hired farm workers on June 1 for the country as a whole was about the same as a year earlier. In only one region, the East South Central, were there sizeable decreases from last year in the number of hired hands. In the West North Central, the Mountain and the Pacific States there were moderate increases in hired hands at work. In other regions changes from June a year ago were slight but generally upward. For the country as a whole the seasonal increase during May in the number of hired workers was about the same as last year but larger than usual. Seasonal increases were greater than usual in all regions except the East Central and the Northeast.

In the New England and Middle Atlantic States plowing for and planting spring crops were underway wherever possible. Low lying fields were generally still too wet to work. Some tobacco was being transplanted in Pennsylvania and a little alfalfa hay being cut in New Jersey.

Field work was progressing slowly in the East North Central States.-- Corn planting was proceeding slowly because of wet weather. Fewer people were working than a year ago.

In some of the West North Central States weather was more favorable for field work in the week ended June 1 than in the States to the east. Iowa, Missouri, and eastern Kansas and Nebraska were suffering from excessive rains. Corn, flax, soybeans and potatoes were being planted, and in some cases replanted, in the other States of the region. Some beets were being thinned in northwestern Nebraska. In western Kansas ground was being prepared for sorghum and summer fallo operations were underway. With the heavy work load the number of hired workers was larger than a year ago. There were also a few more family workers employed.

In the South Atlantic States, on June 1 there were a few more family workers and a few more hired workers employed than a year ago. About a fifth more hired hands were working than a month earlier, a larger than usual seasonal increase. Truck crop harvest extended from Florida to South Carolina. Major crops harvested were sweet corn and watermelons in Florida and early potatoes in Georgia and South Carolina. Cotton chopping was underway in Georgia and South Carolina and a few early peaches were being picked. In North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland, tobacco plants were being set. Small grain harvest was also in progress in the central part of the region.

A smaller number of hired workers on farms in the East South Central States on June 1 was responsible for a small decrease in total employment from a year ago. There was generally too much rain for full-time field work in contrast to more favorable conditions last year. In the southern States of the region snap beans, strawberries, cabbage, potatoes and cucumbers were being harvested. Oats were being harvested in all States except Kentucky. Some cotton was being chopped in central Alabama and Mississippi. Tobacco plants were being set in Kentucky and Tennessee but progress was slow because of cold wet weather.

In the West South Central States on June 1 major farm activities were planting and cultivation of row crops. Rain interfered with field work in Oklahoma and parts of Arkansas and Louisiana. Oats and potatoes were being harvested in Louisiana and rice planting was about completed both there and in Arkansas. In Texas onions and tomatoes were being harvested. Small grain harvest had started in the north central part of Texas. In contrast, last year the harvest had extended to northern Oklahoma by June 1. Timing of the grain harvest and rain in parts of the region were largely responsible for the employment of fewer family and hired workers than a year ago.

More persons, both family workers and hired hands were at work on farms in the Mountain States June 1 than a year earlier. Seasonal increases for both classes of workers were larger than usual. Sugar beets, potatoes, corn and other spring crops were nearly all planted in most of the region. Some replanting in the northern part was expected because of freeze damage. Blocking and thinning sugar beets were important jobs in many States of the region. In Arizona harvest of potatoes, onions and cantaloupes was in progress. Lettuce, green peas, and cherries were being harvested in Idaho. Cattle and sheep were being moved to summer ranges.

In the Pacific States an increase from last year in the number of hired workers was responsible for an increase in the total number of persons at work on June 1. There was little change in the number of family workers. Planting of general field crops was about completed. Early cherries were being picked in Washington and Oregon. Asparagus harvest was near its end in Washington. In Oregon harvest of canning peas was in progress. Hay making was starting in

Continued on last page.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau of Agricultural Economics

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

	Annual average 1910-14	June average 1935-39	June 1, 1946	May 1, 1947	June 1, 1947
FARM EMPLOYMENT (thousands of persons)					
Total	12,052	12,564	11,422	10,280	11,394
Family labor	9,160	9,579	8,969	8,281	8,913
Hired labor	2,892	2,985	2,453	1,999	2,481
FARM EMPLOYMENT INDEXES (Adjusted for seasonal variation)					
Total	100	91	85	83	84
Family labor	100	92	87	85	86
Hired labor	100	88	76	74	77
	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	83.80	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	419	---

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, June 1, 1947 with comparisons

TOTAL FARM EMPLOYMENT

Geographic division	June 1 average 1935-39	May 1, 1946	June 1, 1946	May 1, 1947	June 1, 1947
	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's
United States	12,564	10,366	11,422	10,280	11,394
New England	273	247	257	247	257
Middle Atlantic	651	607	637	606	640
East North Central	1,604	1,423	1,501	1,438	1,475
West North Central	1,794	1,574	1,713	1,623	1,759
South Atlantic	2,609	2,008	2,254	2,002	2,277
East South Central	2,285	1,771	1,950	1,695	1,903
West South Central	2,303	1,759	2,045	1,685	1,959
Mountain	476	426	476	430	496
Pacific	569	551	609	554	628

FAMILY WORKERS 1/

United States	9,579	8,391	8,969	8,281	8,913
New England	168	170	170	170	167
Middle Atlantic	427	414	422	402	422
East North Central	1,228	1,193	1,248	1,200	1,218
West North Central	1,436	1,335	1,446	1,383	1,475
South Atlantic	1,967	1,619	1,761	1,593	1,790
East South Central	1,933	1,590	1,687	1,521	1,674
West South Central	1,787	1,449	1,593	1,390	1,519
Mountain	306	310	323	304	353
Pacific	330	311	319	318	315

HIRED WORKERS

United States	2,985	1,975	2,453	1,999	2,481
New England	105	77	87	77	90
Middle Atlantic	224	193	215	204	218
East North Central	376	230	253	238	257
West North Central	361	239	267	240	284
South Atlantic	642	389	473	409	487
East South Central	352	181	263	174	229
West South Central	516	310	452	295	440
Mountain	170	116	153	126	163
Pacific	239	240	290	236	313

1/ Including farm operators and members of their families working without wages. Based on reports from 19,692 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 labor: Total, family and hired workers, United States, 1935-39 average and 1943-47 by months

Month	Average 1935-39	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947
	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's
TOTAL						
January 1	8,834	8,171	8,202	8,005	7,732	8,272
February 1	9,019	8,369	8,363	8,051	7,799	8,280
March 1	9,412	8,730	8,562	8,414	8,263	8,591
April 1	10,273	9,308	9,080	8,982	9,121	9,242
May 1	11,465	10,492	10,068	10,017	10,366	10,280
June 1	12,564	11,659	11,285	10,994	11,422	11,394
July 1	12,458	11,749	11,355	11,100	11,586	
August 1	11,515	11,020	10,608	10,612	11,044	
September 1	11,973	11,502	11,040	10,307	11,111	
October 1	12,389	11,938	11,839	11,052	11,486	
November 1	11,399	10,698	10,690	10,747	10,809	
December 1	9,736	9,519	9,337	9,245	9,405	
Annual average 1/	10,920	10,263	10,037	9,844	10,012	
FAMILY WORKERS 2/						
January 1	7,159	6,615	6,622	6,571	6,412	6,747
February 1	7,191	6,638	6,702	6,537	6,375	6,693
March 1	7,492	7,003	6,935	6,894	6,774	7,046
April 1	8,031	7,433	7,401	7,322	7,469	7,571
May 1	8,870	8,248	8,079	8,153	8,391	8,281
June 1	9,579	8,962	8,845	8,657	8,969	8,915
July 1	9,320	8,763	8,623	8,556	8,875	
August 1	8,532	8,058	7,914	7,970	8,258	
September 1	8,860	8,402	8,223	8,094	8,334	
October 1	9,190	8,834	8,928	8,558	8,862	
November 1	8,543	8,064	8,168	8,178	8,306	
December 1	7,465	7,269	7,289	7,217	7,345	
Annual average 1/	8,352	7,857	7,810	7,726	7,864	
HIRED WORKERS						
January 1	1,675	1,556	1,580	1,434	1,320	1,525
February 1	1,828	1,731	1,681	1,494	1,424	1,587
March 1	1,920	1,727	1,627	1,520	1,489	1,545
April 1	2,242	1,875	1,679	1,660	1,652	1,671
May 1	2,595	2,244	1,989	1,864	1,975	1,999
June 1	2,985	2,697	2,440	2,357	2,453	2,431
July 1	3,138	2,986	2,732	2,544	2,711	
August 1	2,983	2,962	2,694	2,642	2,736	
September 1	3,113	3,100	2,817	2,813	2,777	
October 1	3,199	3,104	2,911	2,494	2,624	
November 1	2,856	2,634	2,522	2,569	2,503	
December 1	2,271	2,250	2,048	2,028	2,060	
Annual average 1/	2,368	2,406	2,227	2,118	2,148	

1/ Annual averages are simple averages of first of month employment estimates.
2/ Includes farm operators and members of their families working without wages.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau of Agricultural Economics

Farm Employment: Length of Farm Work Day for Operators and Hired Workers, June 1, 1945-47

State	Operator			Hired workers		
	June 1, 1945	June 1, 1946	June 1, 1947	June 1, 1945	June 1, 1946	June 1, 1947
	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours
Maine	12.6	12.2	12.7	9.7	9.5	9.1
N. H.	11.9	12.0	12.5	9.6	9.0	9.5
Vt.	12.7	12.8	12.1	11.3	11.0	10.3
Mass.	11.3	11.2	11.1	9.6	9.0	9.0
R. I.	12.8	12.8	12.3	10.3	9.5	9.5
Conn.	11.0	11.2	11.5	9.9	9.8	9.6
N. Eng.	12.0	11.9	11.9	10.0	9.6	9.4
N. Y.	12.5	12.4	12.2	10.6	10.5	10.3
N. J.	12.2	12.0	11.5	10.1	9.8	9.7
Pa.	13.0	12.7	12.4	10.5	10.2	10.0
M. Atl.	12.7	12.5	12.2	10.5	10.3	10.1
Ohio	12.9	12.2	12.0	10.6	10.1	10.0
Ind.	13.0	12.7	12.5	10.7	10.3	10.3
Ill.	13.5	12.8	12.8	11.4	11.1	11.3
Mich.	12.7	12.6	12.0	10.3	10.3	10.1
Wis.	13.2	13.0	13.0	11.8	11.8	11.6
E. N. Cent.	13.1	12.6	12.4	11.1	10.8	10.7
Minn.	13.2	13.0	13.1	11.5	11.5	11.5
Iowa	13.2	12.8	12.9	11.5	11.2	11.2
Mo.	13.1	12.4	12.4	10.4	10.2	10.3
N. Dak.	13.5	12.8	12.5	11.9	11.4	11.4
S. Dak.	13.2	12.8	12.9	11.3	10.8	11.1
Nebr.	13.3	12.7	12.6	11.3	10.9	10.8
Kans.	12.9	12.5	12.1	10.6	10.2	10.0
W. N. Cent.	13.2	12.7	12.7	11.2	10.9	10.9
Del.	12.6	12.8	12.7	10.5	10.0	10.0
Md.	11.6	12.2	12.2	10.5	10.2	10.2
Va.	12.4	12.1	12.0	9.9	9.8	9.7
W. Va.	12.0	11.9	11.4	9.0	9.4	8.9
N. C.	11.9	11.9	11.5	9.7	9.7	9.7
S. C.	12.1	11.7	11.6	10.1	10.0	10.0
Ga.	11.9	11.9	11.4	10.3	10.3	10.2
Fla.	10.6	11.0	10.2	9.0	9.0	9.1
S. Atl.	11.9	11.9	11.5	10.0	9.9	9.9
Ky.	12.1	11.9	11.9	10.2	9.9	10.0
Tenn.	12.4	12.2	12.1	10.5	10.1	10.0
Ala.	12.0	12.0	11.7	10.2	10.0	10.0
Miss.	11.8	11.6	11.6	9.7	9.9	10.0
E. S. Cent.	12.1	11.9	11.8	10.1	10.0	10.0
Ark.	11.9	11.7	11.6	9.9	10.0	9.7
La.	11.0	10.9	11.3	9.4	9.6	9.5
Okla.	12.8	12.3	11.7	10.1	9.5	9.5
Tex.	12.3	11.9	11.6	10.3	10.3	10.0
W. S. Cent.	12.1	11.8	11.6	10.1	10.1	9.8
Mont.	13.2	12.2	12.3	10.6	10.0	10.5
Idaho	12.8	12.5	12.3	9.7	9.5	9.0
Wyo.	13.0	12.4	12.3	10.5	10.2	10.4
Colo.	13.0	12.5	12.4	10.0	10.1	9.7
N. Mex.	12.1	11.8	11.8	9.2	9.8	9.4
Ariz.	11.6	11.4	11.3	9.3	9.5	9.3
Utah	12.9	12.6	12.3	9.0	9.0	8.7
Nev.	12.0	12.0	11.5	9.0	9.0	9.0
Mount.	12.7	12.3	12.2	9.7	9.8	9.5
Wash.	12.2	11.9	11.5	9.8	9.7	9.6
Oreg.	12.0	11.8	11.4	9.2	9.2	9.2
Calif.	11.1	11.1	10.7	9.2	9.2	9.1
Pacific	11.6	11.5	11.1	9.3	9.3	9.2
U. S.	12.4	12.2	12.0	10.2	10.1	10.0

Farm labor program: Foreign workers employed in agriculture, May 30,1947 1/

State	Mexicans	Jamaicans	Bahamians	British Honcurans	British Barbadians	Newfound-landers	Total
Maine		3	30			23	56
N. H.	2/ 7	9				24	40
Vt.	2/ 16					50	66
Mass.		20	115			3	138
R. I.						4	4
Conn.		1,820				42	1,862
N. Y.		254	227		2	60	543
N. J.		230	700			2	932
Pa.		284				8	292
Ohio		127	79				206
Ind.	85		59				144
Ill.	468	42	148				658
Mich.	26	133	51				210
Wis.	33	39	10	2			84
Minn.	20						20
Iowa	86						86
Mo.		20					20
N. Dak.	201						201
S. Dak.	209						209
Nebr.	1,044						1,044
Kans.	338						338
Del.		62	97			3	162
Md.		147	332			4	483
Va.			100				100
W. Va.							---
N. C.			5				5
S. C.							---
Ga.			34				34
Fla.		1,186	1,349		431		2,966
Ky.							---
Tenn.							---
Ala.							---
Miss.							---
Ark.							---
La.		125					125
Okla.							---
Tex.							---
Mont.	1,888						1,888
Idaho	4,839						4,839
Wyo.	959						959
Colo.	1,649						1,649
N. Mex.							---
Ariz.	909						909
Utah	1,509						1,509
Nev.	218						218
Wash.	1,079						1,079
Oreg.	1,061						1,061
Calif.	14,230						14,230
U. S. 3/	30,874	4,501	3,336	2	433	223	39,369

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

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

State	April 1946	April 1947	January 1 to April 30 1946	January 1 to April 30 1947
Maine	52	82	220	195
N. H.	201	99	434	317
Vt.	118	103	310	354
Mass.	297	96	572	168
R. I.	13	9	36	20
Conn.	816	1,058	2,496	3,007
N. Y.	5,616	699	16,617	2,033
N. J.	807	716	1,233	1,128
Pa.	510	366	1,167	792
Ohio	893	1,606	2,833	2,657
Ind.	270	300	885	710
Ill.	1,781	2,108	5,388	4,564
Mich.	904	856	2,292	2,227
Wis.	576	449	1,556	1,291
Minn.	1,474	673	2,585	1,473
Iowa	488	390	1,551	1,379
Mo.	245	240	712	820
N. Dak.	2,939	720	4,407	2,709
S. Dak.	559	561	1,354	1,247
Nebr.	391	666	1,181	1,364
Kans.	107	79	266	247
Del.	157	113	954	218
Md.	3,929	252	12,870	1,579
Va.	579	12	2,576	120
W. Va.	76	15	279	122
N. C.	3,165	1,107	11,651	4,316
S. C.	555	875	2,653	3,479
Ga.	4,967	6,128	15,049	15,545
Fla.	4,565	1,517	18,831	24,590
Ky.	1,359	151	3,094	830
Tenn.	4,096	1,962	15,111	7,192
Ala.	1,533	895	4,313	2,526
Miss.	6,694	3,183	45,640	15,509
Ark.	29,965	5,535	64,714	9,789
La.	2,620	739	12,388	3,459
Okla.	7,366	2,164	21,718	4,788
Tex.	15,243	8,175	35,880	26,691
Mont.	953	1,411	1,838	2,219
Idaho	2,365	1,323	3,195	1,738
Wyo.	575	517	1,372	1,082
Colo.	2,062	2,426	4,544	4,731
N. Mex.	446	567	3,222	1,446
Ariz.	236	261	24,483	1,675
Utah.	212	175	460	402
Nev.	421	298	989	1,028
Wash.	6,269	6,558	12,189	14,148
Oreg.	5,009	6,917	9,200	14,001
Calif.	30,233	35,050	102,543	91,557
Total	154,483	100,100	477,801	283,262

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 - April 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	5,388
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	111,508	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
April	7,325	1,024	8,349

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, April 1947 1/

Area	As hired hands	As tenants or sharecroppers	All placements
New England	71	3	74
Middle Atlantic	182	26	208
East North Central	396	91	487
West North Central	944	71	1,015
South Atlantic	126	218	344
East South Central	251	241	492
West South Central	646	363	1,009
Mountain	357	8	365
Pacific	3,852	3	3,855

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

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both States. In California major activities using seasonal labor in quantity were harvest of citrus fruit, cherries, early plums and apricots and planting. cultivation, irrigation and harvest of truck crops. In addition thinning peaches and other fruit, chopping cotton, hay baling and grain harvest were also important jobs. Potato harvest in Kern County was at its peak and sugar beets were being harvested in the Imperial Valley.