POST SEASON FARM LABOR REPORT

STATE of MICHIGAN • 1948

EMPLOYMENT SERVICE DIVISION

57

PREPARED BY PLANNING, RESEARCH & STATISTICS DIVISION
MICHIGAN UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION COMMISSION

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MICHIGAN POST-SEASON FARM LABOR REPORT - 1948

Statewide Recruitment

The problem of keeping labor mobilized within the State is an important function of the Farm Placement Section. Labor must be shifted from one crop to another and from area to area. This must be done quickly and efficiently. Out-of-state labor has a tendency to leave the State after the completion of a crop activity in one area. If these workers are immediately directed to areas where work is available, they usually remain in the State and save the expense and effort of recruiting more out-of-state labor. It is important to the migrant workers to have steady work, as excess traveling and long delays between jobs soon consume their savings.

Local labor must be kept mobilized as well as the migrant workers. Both groups are kept informed and directed from area to area, through the several information centers in the State, exchange bulletins from the crop area specialists and constant use of the Clearance Section of the Employment Service Division.

Orders for out-of-state workers are not processed until the Clearance Section has checked the supply of workers in all the branch offices, farm labor centers and with the crop area specialists. When surplus workers are found in one area, they are quickly directed to areas where there is a demand for labor.

This centralized system enables the Farm Placement Section to make the most efficient use of all farm labor in the State.

Regional and National Recruitment

If the demand for a specific type of labor cannot be met within the State, the orders for workers are placed with the Regional Office of the Bureau of Employment Security by the State Clearance Section. The orders are then forwarded to all the State offices in the region. The states having a labor supply available recruit workers and send them to Michigan.

The Farm Placement Section placed seventy separate orders for farm workers with the Clearance Section during 1948. In filling these orders the Clearance Section recruited over 9,000 workers. Approximately seventy percent of the labor recruited by the Clearance Section were stoop-type workers.

To supplement the small supply of stoop-type workers, the National Office cleared orders with the U. S. Immigration and Naturalization Service for 952 Mexican Nationals and 377 Jamaicans.

The prompt and efficient service of the Clearance Section was particularly useful in meeting sudden and critical labor shortages.

The Supply of Out-of-State Labor

Approximately fifty-two percent of the entire seasonal labor force was out-of-state and foreign workers. Most of the labor came from the south central states.

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Texas supplied the greatest number of workers -- 6,000 contract workers and 6,500 free lance workers. Most of the contract labor from Texas was recruited by Michigan Field Crops, Inc. The labor was used in sugar beets, snap beans, tomatoes and cucumber activities.

Other states furnishing labor were Missouri, Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Florida, Georgia and Louisiana. These states contributed about 26,000 migrants during the 1948 crop season. Migrant labor entered the State along the established migratory routes. Over half of these workers came through Benton Harbor. Other points of entry were Coldwater, Monroe, Hillsdale and Sturgis.

Migrant labor followed crop activities throughout the State and was quite dependent on information furnished at the various labor centers. Many of the migrant workers leave the State as cool weather approaches - - much additional recruitment of labor is required for the harvesting of crops during September, October and November.

Use of Foreign Workers

Michigan Field Crops, Inc. were assigned 952 Mexican Nationals and Eastern Michigan Cooperative Growers, South Western Michigan Farm Labor Services, Jackson and Ingham Muck Growers Association, Lenawee and Monroe Special Crop Growers' Association and Michigan Field Crops, Inc. received 377 Jamaican workers.

About October 1, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania transferred another 110 Jamaicans and Bahamians to Michigan to help with the sugar beet harvest.

Although foreign workers were only a small part of the total seasonal labor force, their usefulness should not be underestimated. These workers were on hand to alleviate critical shortages in numerous instances.

Facilitating Services

In addition to the regular staff of 14 full-time Farm Placement employees, 26 seasonal workers were employed during the crop season. These employees were stationed at various Commission offices throughout the State so that all areas would be adequately served. The seasonal personnel was employed for about four and one-half months.

Several temporary offices and placement centers were operated during the season in order to meet the needs of growers and as a convenience to workers.

A placement center located near the large fruit and vegetable market was established in Benton Harbor. This center operates during the entire year and serves the entire southwestern Michigan area. The center accounted for nearly

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AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES
SEASONAL LABOR FORCE FOR 1948.

Month	Total Labor Force	Total Out of Area Labor	Agricultural		Food Processing		% out of Area Labor	Principal Activities Requiring Seasonal Labor
			Total	Out-of Area	Total	Out-of Area		
May	10,500	6,400	10,000	6,400	500	—	61	Sugar beet thinning, blocking and hoeing — harvesting of asparagus and strawberries.
June	27,400	[illegible] 600	25,064	17,560	2,336	40	64	Strawberry harvesting -- cultivation of upland vegetables and muck crops - sugar beet hoeing and blocking.
July	50,[illegible]00	26,930	43,543	25,780	6,557	1,150	54	Harvesting and processing cherries, bush fruits and row crops -- thinning of peaches.
August	38,800	21,410	34,450	21,220	4,350	190	55	Harvesting and processing of tomatoes, cucumbers, snap beans and lima beans — peach harvest and early apple harvest.
September	34,200	17,275	29,573	17,045	4,627	230	50	Continued harvesting and processing of tomatoes, picking apples, pears and plums -- harvesting potatoes and muck crops.
October	24,600	11,662	21,083	11,547	3,517	115	47	Harvesting and processing of sugar beets -- apples -- chicory and picking potatoes, rutabagas, turnips and cabbage.
November	8,235	4,850	4,970	4,700	3,265	150	58	Harvesting and processing of sugar beets and picking potatoes. All seasonal activity completed by November 20.

FOREIGN WORKERS IN MICHIGAN
BY MONTH - 1948.

Month	TOTAL - ALL Foreign Workers	Mexican Workers	Jamaican Workers
May	86	---	86 *
June	1,125	952	173
July	1,073	900	173
August	1,247	870	377
September	1,057	680	377
October	1,037	550	487
November	1,007	520	487
** November 20.	---	---	102

* Held over from 1947 crop season.
** Repatriated all Mexican Nationals and all but 102 Jamaicans who were recertified until May 1, 1949.

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