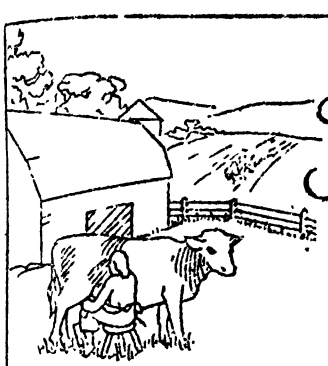

Farm Labor

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Washington, D. C. BAE December 14, 1944

F A R M E M P L O Y M E N T A T
N E W L O W F O R D E C E M B E R

There were about 9,337,000 persons working on farms on the first of December, 2 percent less than a year earlier and the smallest farm employment for the date on record, the U. S. Department of Agriculture reported today. This decline is explained entirely by a drop in the number of hired workers. The 2,048,000 hired workers on farms December 1 was 9 percent below the December 1, 1943 level and the lowest for the month in the last ten years. Family workers numbered about the same as a year ago. Total farm employment has been at a record low every month since February.

A review of the first-of-month employment estimates for the year indicates a further change in the seasonal pattern of numbers of family workers employed on farms. Relatively greater numbers of family workers were employed during 1944 than in any recent year, particularly during the periods of peak farm activity. This continued increase in the relative numbers of family workers indicates an increasing use of women and children and other members of farm families not ordinarily employed at farm work, and emphasizes the major contribution being made by farm families in sustaining the present high level of agricultural production.

The 1944 annual average number of family workers (including farm operators) was about 7 percent below the 1935-39 average level. The annual average for hired workers was about 13 percent below the 1935-39 average.

Farm operators worked an average of 10.8 hours per day around the first of December, compared with 12.1 hours about September 1. The respective average workday for hired workers was estimated at 9.3 and 10.0 hours. A slightly shorter workday prevailed in the South and West than in the North and East. Both family and hired workers were reported as working a fraction of an hour less than at this time a year ago.

In New England, farm employment changed very little during November, and the labor situation was reported easing somewhat with the completion of harvesting operations. Farm operators were reported working 11.3 hours per day, an hour less than they were working early in September. The length of workday for hired workers was down fractionally for the same period but remained near the level of a year ago.

Practically all harvesting operations have been completed in the Middle Atlantic States, although some harvesting of corn remained to be done. Farmers in this area, however, continue to report a scarcity of dairy hands.

In the North Central States, hired farm employment continued to show a considerably lower level, but numbers of family workers in most States remained steady or increased slightly compared with a year ago. With the period of peak requirements for hired workers passed, a considerable number of farm workers were accepting industrial work in war plants during the winter months. Farm labor was still in good demand in many localities, and fall plowing and completion of the fall harvesting operations were in progress. In Nebraska, about 35 percent of the record corn crop remained to be husked on December 1.

In the South Atlantic and East South Central States, reports of labor scarcity persisted, despite the seasonal decline in farm activities. The cotton harvest was about completed. In West Virginia, dairymen were reported having some difficulty securing and retaining experienced help. Tobacco stripping was in full swing in Kentucky and Tennessee.

In the West South Central States, farm employment remained relatively high. Harvesting of the cotton crop has been somewhat delayed in much of this area, due to the record production of late fall crops.

Most of the migrant and foreign workers had left the Mountain States with completion of the harvests of sugar beets, potatoes, corn, and vegetable crops. Fall plowing and the care of livestock were major activities.

Employment in the Pacific States showed a sharp decline during November although on December 1 considerable work remained to be done in completing the harvest of 1944 crops. The citrus and cotton harvests continued, with cotton picking far behind the usual schedule and cotton pickers somewhat short of the demand. Other crops on which some work remained were beans, rice, grain sorghums, sugar beets, walnuts, dates, a few grapes, and olives for oil. Orchard pruning was getting under way and the ground was being prepared for winter and early spring vegetable crops. In Washington, practically all harvesting had been completed. Seeding of fall grains was under way whenever weather and soil conditions permitted. Some labor was being employed in fall plowing, making or repairing irrigation outlets, and other clean-up jobs. The labor situation in regard to regular hands continued to be tight, particularly for milkers.

Farm employment indexes and related data, United States, December 1, 1944, with comparisons

	Annual average 1910-14	Nov. 1, 1943	Dec. 1, 1943	Nov. 1, 1944	Dec. 1, 1944
FARM EMPLOYMENT INDEXES--					
Total:					
Unadjusted	100	89	79	89	77
Seasonally adjusted ...	100	83	86	83	82
Family labor-					
Unadjusted	100	88	79	89	76
Seasonally adjusted ...	100	85	87	86	84
Hired labor-					
Unadjusted	100	91	78	87	71
Seasonally adjusted ...	100	78	84	74	76
FARM EMPLOYMENT- (Thousands of persons)					
Total:	12,052	10,698	9,519	10,690	9,337
Family labor	9,160	8,064	7,269	8,168	7,289
Hired labor	2,892	2,634	2,250	2,522	2,048

Continued from page 2.

Foreign workers and war prisoners continued to constitute a small but important segment of the farm labor force. The table on page 9 shows the numbers of foreign workers transported by the Office of Labor, that were employed on November 30. These included 29,891 Mexicans, mostly employed in California. 7,838 foreign workers were employed in Florida.

Quarterly composite wage rates by States, for the quarters of 1943 and 1944 are shown on page 8.

Farm employment, United States and geographic divisions, December 1, 1944, with comparisons

TOTAL FARM EMPLOYMENT

Geographic division	December average 1935-39	November 1, 1943	December 1, 1943	November 1, 1944	December 1, 1944
	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's
United States	9,736	10,698	9,519	10,690	9,337
New England	232	238	231	216	215
Middle Atlantic	567	630	588	614	575
East North Central	1,422	1,460	1,378	1,449	1,346
West North Central	1,549	1,617	1,512	1,593	1,490
South Atlantic	1,802	2,045	1,669	2,066	1,628
East South Central	1,525	1,754	1,534	1,774	1,472
West South Central	1,764	1,893	1,677	1,926	1,706
Mountain	392	450	402	431	386
Pacific	483	611	528	621	519
FAMILY WORKERS 1/					
United States	7,465	8,064	7,269	8,168	7,289
New England	156	165	162	155	155
Middle Atlantic	393	421	394	410	394
East North Central	1,107	1,178	1,118	1,189	1,114
West North Central	1,271	1,323	1,271	1,331	1,277
South Atlantic	1,352	1,552	1,296	1,597	1,300
East South Central	1,278	1,438	1,253	1,475	1,240
West South Central	1,338	1,387	1,205	1,410	1,240
Mountain	277	298	285	295	286
Pacific	293	302	285	306	283
HIRED WORKERS					
United States	2,271	2,634	2,250	2,522	2,048
New England	76	73	69	61	60
Middle Atlantic	174	209	194	204	181
East North Central	315	282	260	260	232
West North Central	278	294	241	262	213
South Atlantic	450	493	373	469	328
East South Central	247	316	281	299	232
West South Central	426	506	472	516	466
Mountain	115	152	117	136	100
Pacific	190	309	243	315	236

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

Based on reports from 21,451 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
Crop Reporting Board

Length of farm workday for operators and hired workers, December 1, 1944, with comparisons

State and division	Farm operator				Hired help			
	Dec. 1, 1939	Dec. 1, 1943	Sept. 1, 1944	Dec. 1, 1944	Dec. 1, 1939	Dec. 1, 1943	Sept. 1, 1944	Dec. 1, 1944
	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours
Maine	12.0	12.3	12.8	11.6	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.2
N.H.	11.0	11.8	12.2	11.1	9.3	9.6	10.0	9.6
Vt.	12.0	12.3	12.5	12.6	10.7	10.7	11.1	10.7
Mass.	11.0	11.5	12.2	10.4	9.9	9.3	9.5	9.3
R.I.	11.0	11.9	12.2	11.6	10.0	10.5	9.7	9.4
Conn.	11.0	10.8	11.7	10.7	10.0	9.6	9.7	9.4
N.Eng.	11.5	11.8	12.3	11.3	9.9	9.7	9.9	9.6
N.Y.	11.0	11.9	12.6	11.6	10.0	10.6	10.7	10.3
N.J.	11.0	11.2	12.1	10.8	9.8	9.8	10.0	9.8
Pa.	11.3	12.0	12.8	11.7	9.7	10.2	10.3	9.9
M.Atl.	11.1	11.9	12.7	11.6	9.8	10.3	10.4	10.1
Ohio	11.3	11.7	12.4	11.2	9.5	9.7	10.1	9.5
Ind.	10.5	11.5	12.1	10.8	9.2	9.7	10.1	9.3
Ill.	10.0	11.3	11.9	10.9	10.0	10.2	10.8	9.9
Mich.	11.3	12.0	12.7	11.5	10.1	10.3	10.4	10.0
Wis.	11.8	12.5	13.0	12.2	10.8	11.3	11.6	11.2
E.N.Cent.	11.0	11.8	12.4	11.3	10.0	1/ 10.3	10.7	10.1
Minn.	11.0	12.0	13.0	11.6	10.0	10.8	11.0	10.5
Iowa	11.0	11.8	12.6	11.3	10.0	10.6	11.0	10.2
Mo.	10.7	11.3	12.3	11.0	9.1	9.3	10.0	9.0
N.Dak.	10.1	10.9	13.5	10.4	9.7	10.0	11.1	10.0
S.Dak.	10.0	11.3	13.3	11.3	10.0	10.1	11.1	10.1
Nebr.	10.0	11.8	12.7	11.8	10.0	9.9	10.6	9.8
Kans.	10.0	11.4	12.7	11.1	9.0	9.6	10.5	9.3
W.N.Cent.	10.5	11.6	12.7	11.3	9.7	10.1	10.8	9.9
Del.	10.6	11.0	12.8	11.6	9.2	9.5	10.1	9.6
Md.	11.0	11.7	12.8	11.5	9.5	9.8	10.0	9.8
Va.	10.0	11.0	12.2	11.1	9.0	9.3	9.8	9.0
W.Va.	10.0	10.9	11.9	10.6	9.0	8.8	9.3	8.9
N.C.	10.0	10.5	11.9	10.5	9.0	8.6	9.7	8.7
S.C.	10.0	10.2	11.6	10.1	9.0	8.7	9.8	9.5
Ga.	9.8	10.3	11.6	10.3	8.8	8.8	10.1	8.9
Fla.	10.0	10.4	10.7	10.1	9.0	9.0	9.0	8.8
S. Atl.	10.0	10.6	11.8	10.5	9.0	8.9	9.8	9.1
Ky.	10.0	10.9	11.8	10.7	9.0	9.2	10.0	9.0
Tenn.	9.8	11.0	11.7	10.6	8.9	9.1	10.1	9.1
Ala.	10.0	10.3	11.1	10.1	9.0	8.7	9.7	8.8
Miss.	9.3	10.2	11.2	10.2	8.8	8.9	9.5	8.9
E.S.Cent.	9.8	10.6	11.4	10.4	8.9	9.0	9.8	8.9
Ark.	9.6	10.5	11.4	10.1	8.9	8.8	9.6	8.7
La.	10.0	10.6	10.9	9.9	9.0	8.9	9.5	8.7
Okla.	10.0	10.8	11.7	11.0	9.0	9.1	10.1	8.9
Tex.	10.0	11.0	11.8	10.7	9.0	9.3	10.0	9.0
W.S.Cent.	9.9	10.8	11.5	10.5	9.0	9.1	9.9	8.9
Mont.	10.0	10.5	12.9	10.1	9.0	9.1	10.9	9.3
Idaho	10.0	10.7	12.9	10.3	9.0	9.0	9.9	8.7
Wyo.	10.0	11.0	12.9	10.7	9.0	9.2	10.0	9.3
Colo.	10.0	11.0	12.7	10.7	9.0	9.7	10.0	8.9
N.Mex.	10.0	10.8	12.5	10.9	9.0	8.5	10.2	8.8
Ariz.	10.0	11.2	11.9	10.7	9.0	8.9	9.0	8.6
Utah	10.6	11.2	12.7	10.3	8.6	8.6	8.7	8.0
Nev.	10.4	11.2	12.3	10.9	8.6	8.8	9.0	8.5
Mount.	10.1	10.9	12.7	10.5	9.0	9.1	9.9	8.8
Wash.	10.0	11.2	12.1	10.2	9.0	9.3	9.8	9.0
Oreg.	10.0	10.9	12.1	10.7	9.0	8.8	9.2	8.7
Calif.	9.9	10.7	11.3	10.1	8.9	8.8	9.1	8.9
Pacific	10.0	10.9	11.7	10.3	8.9	8.9	9.3	8.9
U. S.	10.3	11.1	12.1	10.8	9.3	9.4	10.0	9.3

1/ Revised.

Farm employment: Annual averages of number of persons employed, and index numbers, United States, 1909-44 1/

Year	Total employment		Family workers		Hired workers	
	Average number of persons	Index 1910-14 = 100	Average number of persons	Index 1910-14 = 100	Average number of persons	Index 1910-14 = 100
	1,000's		1,000's		1,000's	
1909	12,209	101	9,341	102	2,868	99
1910	12,146	101	9,269	101	2,877	99
1911	12,042	100	9,172	100	2,870	99
1912	12,038	100	9,149	100	2,889	100
1913	12,033	100	9,128	100	2,905	100
1914	12,000	100	9,081	99	2,919	101
1915	11,981	99	9,047	99	2,934	101
1916	12,016	100	9,050	99	2,966	103
1917	11,789	98	8,856	97	2,933	101
1918	11,348	94	8,507	93	2,841	98
1919	11,106	92	8,322	91	2,784	96
1920	11,362	94	8,479	93	2,883	100
1921	11,412	95	8,511	93	2,901	100
1922	11,443	95	8,528	93	2,915	101
1923	11,385	94	8,491	93	2,894	100
1924	11,362	94	8,488	93	2,874	99
1925	11,448	95	8,577	94	2,871	99
1926	11,534	96	8,507	93	3,027	105
1927	11,246	93	8,296	91	2,950	102
1928	2/ 11,296	94	8,340	91	2,956	102
1929	11,289	94	8,305	91	2,984	103
1930	11,173	93	8,323	91	2,850	99
1931	11,159	93	8,469	92	2,690	93
1932	11,069	92	8,571	94	2,498	86
1933	11,023	91	8,590	94	2,433	84
1934	10,852	90	8,506	93	2,346	81
1935	11,131	92	8,702	95	2,429	84
1936	11,047	92	8,486	93	2,561	89
1937	10,892	90	8,261	90	2,631	91
1938	10,789	90	8,169	89	2,620	91
1939	10,740	89	8,145	89	2,595	90
1940	10,585	88	8,019	88	2,566	89
1941	10,361	86	7,829	85	2,532	88
1942	10,397	86	7,855	86	2,542	88
1943	10,263	85	7,857	86	2,406	83
1944	10,037	83	7,810	85	2,227	77

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

Farm employment: United States total with unadjusted index numbers, by months, January 1943-December 1944

(1910-14 = 100)

Year and month	Total employed	Index	Family workers 1/	Index	Hired workers	Index
	1,000's		1,000's		1,000's	
1943						
January	8,171	68	6,615	72	1,556	54
February	8,369	69	6,638	72	1,731	60
March	8,730	72	7,003	76	1,727	60
April	9,308	77	7,433	81	1,875	65
May	10,492	87	8,248	90	2,244	78
June	11,659	97	8,962	98	2,697	93
July	11,749	97	8,763	96	2,986	103
August	11,020	91	8,058	88	2,962	102
September	11,502	95	8,402	92	3,100	107
October	11,938	99	8,834	96	3,104	107
November	10,698	89	8,064	88	2,634	91
December	9,519	79	7,269	79	2,250	78
1944						
January	8,202	68	6,622	72	1,580	55
February	8,383	70	6,702	73	1,681	58
March	8,562	71	6,935	76	1,627	56
April	9,080	75	7,401	81	1,679	58
May	10,068	84	8,079	88	1,989	69
June	11,285	94	8,845	97	2,440	84
July	11,355	94	8,623	94	2,732	94
August	10,608	88	7,914	86	2,694	93
September	11,040	92	8,223	90	2,817	97
October	11,839	98	8,928	97	2,911	101
November	10,690	89	8,168	89	2,522	87
December	9,337	77	7,289	76	2,048	71

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

Quarterly farm wage rates, composite by States, Jan. 1943-Oct. 1944 1/

State	1943 Jan. Dol.	1943 Apr. Dol.	1943 July Dol.	1943 Oct. Dol.	1944 Jan. Dol.	1944 Apr. Dol.	1944 July Dol.	1944 Oct. Dol.
Maine	76.00	79.50	88.50	95.50	89.50	99.00	107.00	110.00
New Hampshire	76.00	82.00	83.75	88.00	97.75	94.75	96.00	99.75
Vermont	2/72.25	77.00	80.75	82.50	80.75	91.50	93.00	92.25
Massachusetts	83.25	87.25	88.25	97.00	103.00	99.50	102.00	103.00
Rhode Island	83.75	99.00	93.50	96.50	119.00	104.00	105.00	107.00
Connecticut	80.00	85.25	88.75	93.75	93.00	97.75	99.25	102.00
New York	68.25	76.25	79,75	82.75	82.00	88 25	91.00	94.00
New Jersey	71.75	77.00	83.50	84.50	86.50	91.50	98.50	98.25
Pennsylvania	2/55.75	59.25	2/61.50	2/64.75	65.75	69.00	70.25	73.00
Ohio	54.25	58.00	62.50	63.50	63.75	67.00	69.00	70.00
Indiana	55.25	60.00	64.00	65.50	66.25	69.00	73.25	74.50
Illinois	60.75	68.00	73.50	74.00	74.00	80.75	85.00	85.50
Michigan	62.75	67.00	71.75	75.50	74.50	79.75	84.75	85.25
Wisconsin	60.75	68.50	74.25	76.00	72.50	78.75	85.00	86.50
Minnesota	55.25	68.00	78.25	83.75	68.75	79.00	89.25	94.00
Iowa	62.75	2/76.25	80.60	82.50	78.75	90.00	96.00	93.50
Missouri	44.25	46.75	50.75	54.00	51.50	56.75	62.00	62.50
North Dakota	54.00	74.00	86.00	110.00	68.25	85.25	104.00	126.00
South Dakota	60.75	2/73.25	79.75	88.25	75.50	87.75	95.75	104.00
Nebraska	62.50	69.00	74.75	79.50	75.50	83.25	90.00	92.50
Kansas	58.75	63.25	73.50	72.25	70.25	75.75	85.50	91.00
Delaware	64.25	65.50	71.50	72.00	74.00	79.25	84.75	87.00
Maryland	57.75	60.25	64.25	67.25	65.25	68.00	73.75	76.25
Virginia	43.00	44.00	47.50	50.25	50.50	52.25	55.00	57.50
West Virginia	44.00	2/44.75	48.00	2/50.25	48.50	50.75	54.25	57.50
N. Carolina	37.75	40.00	43.00	46.50	47.00	49.50	50.50	52.75
S. Carolina	26.25	2/27.25	29.75	31.00	33.00	33.75	35.75	38.25
Georgia	26.75	29.25	31.50	32.75	35.25	36.75	39.50	41.00
Florida	2/43.25	43.25	48.25	52.75	53.50	56.50	61.25	65.25
Kentucky	41.25	41.50	47.00	50.50	49.25	50.00	53.75	62.50
Tennessee	33.25	34.50	38.75	40.75	40.50	42.25	44.50	46.50
Alabama	31.75	32.75	34.00	37.25	38.25	38.50	42.75	46.00
Mississippi	30.25	32.75	33.75	36.50	38.00	40.25	41.50	46.50
Arkansas	37.00	39.75	43.25	45.50	45.75	49.25	50.00	56.00
Louisiana	32.00	34.00	36.75	40.50	43.00	44.25	45.50	47.25
Oklahoma	50.75	54.50	63.00	65.00	63.50	67.25	75.75	83.00
Texas	51.00	52.25	58.50	65.50	64.25	67.00	73.25	81.00
Montana	74.75	90.25	100.00	112.00	94.25	107.00	116.00	127.00
Idaho	79.00	89.00	96.75	107.00	96.75	110.00	119.00	132.00
Wyoming	2/74.25	76.50	2/87.50	89.25	85.25	95.50	103.00	107.00
Colorado	2/65.75	70.50	75.25	82.75	77.75	80.75	92.75	96.00
New Mexico	54.00	56.50	2/60.25	66.50	68.25	68.00	78.00	79.50
Arizona	75.50	77.75	84.50	86.50	86.25	89.25	100.00	101.00
Utah	79.25	83.50	92.00	93.25	114.00	107.00	105.00	115.00
Nevada	2/74.50	80.25	83.75	93.25	90.00	89.50	104.00	110.00
Washington	102.00	119.00	128.00	140.00	125.00	140.00	152.00	153.00
Oregon	99.50	109.00	119.00	125.00	123.00	130.00	139.00	143.00
California	108.00	117.00	128.00	132.00	134.00	139.00	146.00	149.00
United States	2/55.36	59.29	2/67.62	2/69.11	68.08	72.33	81.29	80.50

1/ Composite farm wage rates are weighted averages of the four classes of wage rates (per month with and without board, per day with and without board).

2/ Revised.

Number of Agricultural Workers Transported by the Office of Labor, W.F.A., that were employed on November 30, 1944 1/

State	Mexicans	Jamaicans	Bahamians	Newfound-landers	Barbadians
Maine		10		77	
N.H.		7		63	
Vt.				89	
Mass.		109		70	
R.I.				8	
Conn.		772		81	
N.Y.		76		328	
N.J.		581		65	
Pa.		213		103	
Ohio		168			
Ind.		44			
Ill.		19			
Mich.	49	289			
Wis.		108			17
Minn.	17				
S Dak.	27				
Nebr.	193				
Kans.	211				
Del.		65	53	13	
Md.		57	75		
Va.			31		
Fla.		3,391	4,447		
Ark.			69		
Idaho	1,471				
Colo.	722				
Ariz.	687	472			
Utah	357				
Nev.	353				
Wash.	714				
Oreg.	871				
Calif.	24,219				
Total	29,891	6,331	4,675	897	17

1/ Data provided by Requirements and Certification Division, Program Branch, Office of Labor, W.F.A.

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