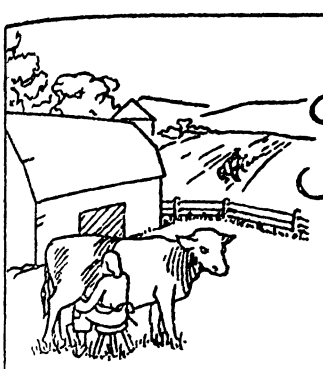

Farm Labor

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Washington, D. C. BAE August 13, 1947

FARM EMPLOYMENT AT HIGHEST AUGUST LEVEL SINCE 1942

On August 1, 11,140,000 people were working on farms, an increase of 100,000 from the same date a year ago, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics reported today. This is the third consecutive year in which total employment on August 1 has been higher than a year previously, and the current number of workers is the largest for this time of year since 1942. However, it falls short of the 1935-39 average by more than three percent, and is below the August 1 level of all years from 1925 through 1940 except the drought year of 1934.

Farm operators and unpaid members of their families working on farms totaled 8,301,000 on August 1, the largest number on that date since the thirties but about three percent less than the 1935-39 average. 2,839,000 hired hands were working on farms on August 1, 2 percent more than a year ago, but 5 percent less than during the 1935-39 period. This is above all other August 1 levels since 1943 but well below the number employed at this season before the war. Lower levels of hired employment were reached only in the depression.

The less than usual decline in the total number of workers from the July 1 peak was due partially to the lateness of the season over most of the area east of the Rocky Mountains. Some harvesting operations which are ordinarily completed in many parts of the country by late June or early July were still under way or just reaching completion during the last week of July this year. Small grain harvest has been delayed somewhat because of the lateness of the season. Rain in the New England and Middle Atlantic States interfered seriously with outdoor operations during the last week in July; elsewhere, weather favored farm work. In the North Central States, a good deal of time and effort was going into the repair of flood damage.

Numbers of family workers, like those of total workers, fell off less than usual from July 1 and on August 1 were higher than a year previously in New England and the Middle Atlantic, North Central, and East South Central States and below their August 1946 level in only the South Atlantic, West South Central, and Pacific States.

The number of hired farm workers increased for the United States as a whole, in contrast to the usual decline, and decreased from July 1 only in the South Central States. Hired hands are now more numerous than a year ago in all parts of the country except New England, the Middle Atlantic States, and the East South Central States.

In New England farm work, particularly haying, was hindered by rain late in July. Truck crops and early potatoes were being harvested in southern New England. Total employment was up seasonally from July 1, family employment by more than the usual amount and hired employment less than usual. There were about the same number of hired hands at work as a year ago but six percent more family workers.

The farm work situation in the Middle Atlantic States was somewhat similar to that in New England except that the season was a bit more advanced. The potato harvest was in full swing in central New Jersey and just starting on Long Island, while mid-summer truck crops were moving in volume from Central and South Jersey. Showers seriously interfered with haying in all three states of the region, and much of the hay harvested was poor quality. Cherry picking was almost over in New York, and the wheat harvest was advancing in New York and Pennsylvania, with some threshing in Pennsylvania. Both family and hired employment were up more than usual from July 1. Compared with a year ago there were a few more family workers, a few less hired workers, and about the same number of workers altogether.

In the East North Central States small grain harvest proceeded with very little weather interference. Wheat harvest was practically completed in the three southern states of the region and beginning in Michigan and Wisconsin. Oat harvest was well under way in the southern half of the area. Farmers were still haying and cultivating corn and soybeans in late fields. They were also plowing for winter wheat, principally in fields idle this year because of wet weather. In parts of Illinois plowing was retarded by dry soil. Redtop harvest was practically completed in southeastern Illinois, and the harvest of early apples, peaches, and tomatoes was well under way. The cherry harvest in northern Michigan was just getting under way on the first of the month. The total number of workers on August 1 was moderately higher than a month earlier, primarily because of a 12 percent increase in the number of hired workers. Normally there is little change from July 1 to August 1. As compared with a year ago, there were slightly more of both family and hired workers.

In the West North Central States the late season resulted in a total number of farm workers on August 1 about 5 percent larger than a year ago, with about 12 percent more hired workers. Following the extremely wet weather of late June, the weather during most of July was dry and favorable for all sorts of farm work except plowing. Small grain harvest was almost completed as far north as northern Iowa and Nebraska by the end of the month. Fall-sown grains were being harvested in the Dakotas and Minnesota, and spring wheat harvest was starting as far north as North Dakota. Employment was lower than usual in late June because of wet weather, and higher than usual in late July, so that instead of the usual seasonal decrease, total employment went up moderately and hired employment rose rather sharply from July 1 to August 1.

Farm activity reached or neared a summer low in the South Atlantic States, with corn and cotton mostly laid by, most of the truck crops already harvested as far north as southern Virginia, and small grain harvest fairly well completed everywhere. The big jobs currently under way are the harvest of assorted truck crops in Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia, peach picking from Georgia north to Virginia, and tobacco harvest in North Carolina and Virginia. Total employment was off less than usual from July 1, and the number of hired workers was somewhat larger than a month ago. There were about the same number of both family and hired workers as on August 1 a year ago.

The midsummer lull in farm work in the East South Central States found total and family employment at levels somewhat above those of last year and other recent years, while the number of hired workers was lower than on any other August 1 since 1932. The seasonal declines from July 1 were slightly less than average for both family and hired workers. Threshing was practically finished everywhere and cultivation of all crops was virtually completed throughout the region. Some hay harvest was under way, cotton was being dusted, and in southern Alabama the digging of Spanish peanuts and sweet potatoes was starting.

In the West South Central States the number of hired workers declined very little during July and on August 1 was slightly larger than a year earlier. Family worker numbers decreased seasonally and on the first of August were moderately lower than a year ago. Crops being harvested in Texas included corn, peanuts, grain sorghum and cotton in the extreme south and cotton and soybeans just to the north. Threshing and haying were major jobs in Oklahoma and Arkansas. Plowing of stubble was retarded somewhat by dry soil in Texas and Oklahoma but had still made satisfactory progress. Preparation of land for fall vegetables was well under way in South Texas.

In the Mountain States the number of hired farm workers increased less than seasonally from late June to late July while family worker numbers increased more than usual. On August 1 hired workers were slightly more numerous than last year, while family workers numbered the same as a year ago. Harvest operations currently using considerable labor were sweet cherries in western Montana, apples and peaches in Idaho, peaches and apricots in Utah, peaches and cantaloups in New Mexico, and cherries in Colorado. Wheat harvest had started in Montana, was about to start in Wyoming, and continued in the states to the south. Dry pea harvest was well started in Montana. Cultivation of crops was virtually completed throughout the region except in southern irrigated areas.

In the Pacific States the season was earlier than usual this year and most operations have been ten days or two weeks ahead of schedule throughout the season. Increases from July 1 to August 1 in both hired and total employment were not quite so great as usual this year. Family worker numbers declined slightly as usual. Somewhat fewer people are now working in these three states than a year ago. Small grain harvest was under way everywhere and past its peak in California. The big jobs going on everywhere were the harvesting of fruits, ranging from cherries and apricots in Washington to table grapes in the San Joaquin Valley and citrus in southern California. In other areas apples, peaches, pears, prunes, and plums were being picked, while almond and fig harvests were just starting in the central valley of California. Flax harvest in the Imperial Valley was practically over, and sugar beets were being harvested in central California. The planting, cultivation, and irrigation of many vegetable crops proceeded as usual in southern California.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau of Agricultural Economics

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

	Annual average 1910-14	August average 1935-39	August 1, 1946	July 1, 1947	August 1, 1947
FARM EMPLOYMENT (thousands of persons)					
Total	12,052	11,515	11,044	11,513	11,140
Family labor	9,160	8,532	8,258	8,833	8,501
Hired labor	2,892	2,983	2,786	2,685	2,639
FARM EMPLOYMENT INDEXES (Adjusted for seasonal variation)					
Total	100	91	86	83	87
Family labor	100	91	88	86	89
Hired labor	100	90	79	73	80
	Annual average 1910-14	July average 1935-39	July 1, 1946	Apr. 1, 1947	July 1, 1947
FARM WAGE RATES					
Per month, with board	$22.09	27.08	92.00	91.50	93.70
Per month, without board	29.18	34.92	106.00	107.00	114.00
Per day, with board	1.16	1.49	4.25	4.17	4.54
Per day, without board	1.42	1.53	4.84	4.77	5.17
Composite rate per month 1/	24.76	30.01	96.40	96.20	103.00
FARM WAGE RATE INDEXES					
Unadjusted	100	121	389	389	416
Adjusted for seasonal variation	100	118	378	397	404
FARM WAGE RATE INDEXES BY REGION					
New England	100	146	367	383	389
Middle Atlantic	100	132	374	389	400
East North Central	100	120	342	362	369
West North Central	100	104	346	349	373
South Atlantic	100	112	336	363	357
East South Central	100	101	292	303	315
West South Central	100	105	348	355	367
Mountain	100	110	339	342	374
Pacific	100	131	426	413	428
RELATED INDEXES					
Prices received by farmers 2/	100	106	231	278	274
Ratio of prices received to farm wage rates	100	88	59	71	65
Average weekly factory earnings 3/	100	198	386	423	--

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.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

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

TOTAL FARM EMPLOYMENT

Geographic division	August 1 average 1935-39	July 1, 1946	August 1, 1946	July 1, 1947	August 1, 1947
	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's
United States	11,515	11,586	11,044	11,515	11,140
New England	297	275	289	282	299
Middle Atlantic	732	760	765	740	766
East North Central	1,635	1,513	1,531	1,496	1,555
West North Central	1,391	1,516	1,790	1,798	1,872
South Atlantic	2,305	2,271	2,134	2,279	2,132
East South Central	1,669	1,776	1,496	1,740	1,501
West South Central	1,855	1,994	1,796	1,966	1,759
Mountain	502	473	509	488	515
Pacific	629	708	734	729	741

FAMILY WORKERS 1/

United States	8,532	8,875	8,258	8,833	8,301
New England	178	182	169	170	179
Middle Atlantic	457	473	451	453	458
East North Central	1,223	1,233	1,224	1,220	1,245
West North Central	1,422	1,502	1,445	1,503	1,485
South Atlantic	1,772	1,790	1,647	1,317	1,641
East South Central	1,425	1,562	1,312	1,533	1,329
West South Central	1,410	1,502	1,367	1,520	1,324
Mountain	309	311	331	306	331
Pacific	336	320	311	311	309

HIRED WORKERS

United States	2,983	2,711	2,786	2,685	2,839
New England	119	93	120	112	120
Middle Atlantic	275	287	314	287	308
East North Central	412	280	307	276	310
West North Central	469	314	345	295	387
South Atlantic	533	481	487	462	491
East South Central	244	214	134	207	172
West South Central	445	492	429	446	435
Mountain	193	162	173	182	184
Pacific	293	338	442	418	432

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

Based on reports from 16,515 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, 1946-August 1, 1947 1/

Year and Month	Total farm employment 1,000's	Family workers 2/ 1,000's	Hired workers 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
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	10,309	8,306	2,003
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
June 1	11,394	8,913	2,481
July 1	11,518	8,833	2,685
August 1	11,140	8,301	2,839

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, August 1,1947 1/

State	Mexicans	Jamaicans	Bahamians	British Hondurans	Barbadians	Newfoundlanders	Total
Maine		3	27			22	52
N. H.	2/ 7	11				23	41
Vt.	2/ 16					46	62
Mass.		22	120			1	143
R.I.						3	3
Conn.		1,781	21			36	1,838
N. Y.	193	301	343		2	49	1,388
N. J.		225	673			1	899
Pa.		265				8	273
Ohio		142	210				352
Ind.	114		48				162
Ill.	658	92	7				757
Mich.	29	136	67				232
Wis.	2,538	68	124	2			2,732
Minn.	2,013						2,013
Iowa	118						118
Mo.		11					11
N. Dak.	1						1
S. Dak.	154						154
Nebr.	515						515
Kans.	96						96
Del.		60	112			3	175
Md.		177	400			4	581
Va.			358				358
W. Va.							
N. C.	304		538				842
S. C.							
Ga.			102				102
Fla.		938	573		375		1,886
Ky.							
Tenn.			147				147
Ala.							
Miss.							
Ark.							
La.							
Okla.							
Tex.							
Mont.	1,175						1,175
Idaho	1,833						1,833
Wyo.	294						294
Colo.	239						239
N. Mex.							
Ariz.	727						727
Utah	975						975
Nev.	203						203
Wash.	493						493
Oreg.	554						554
Calif.	13,611						13,611
U.S. 3/	26,860	4,234	4,370	2	377	196	36,037

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

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

State	June 1946	June 1947	January 1 to June 30 1946	January 1 to June 30 1947
Maine	1,678	892	2,309	1,203
N. H.	930	426	1,537	351
Vt.	464	477	922	905
Mass.	434	103	1,578	351
R. I.	27	18	82	48
Conn.	2,054	374	6,151	4,860
N. Y.	27,471	11,691	50,336	14,693
N. J.	5,221	1,903	9,957	3,978
Pa.	1,567	1,718	3,460	3,222
Ohio	6,036	6,287	10,448	10,624
Ind.	1,921	1,580	3,446	2,651
Ill.	4,448	2,359	13,724	9,812
Mich.	17,139	6,518	20,090	10,093
Wis.	4,270	1,931	6,313	4,018
Minn.	1,894	5,287	6,078	7,984
Iowa	1,178	383	3,661	2,048
Mo.	2,573	1,321	4,432	3,275
N. Dak.	3,298	1,704	8,721	6,373
S. Dak.	5,447	4,134	7,549	6,128
Nebr.	995	960	2,350	3,275
Kans.	2,220	749	2,620	1,085
Del.	960	417	2,358	787
Md.	12,898	10,782	30,157	13,222
Va.	18,221	5,192	21,832	6,162
W. Va.	87	47	441	212
N. C.	31,612	74,726	53,119	80,970
S. C.	3,032	4,758	6,786	9,924
Ga.	11,537	14,135	34,547	42,179
Fla.	174	76	18,119	26,663
Ky.	1,090	6,405	10,146	22,911
Tenn.	5,066	4,294	28,026	25,734
Ala.	3,138	1,268	11,075	4,562
Miss.	11,333	10,088	66,287	30,213
Ark.	23,940	105,997	104,198	194,898
La.	8,635	7,759	26,682	16,923
Okla.	16,483	14,922	49,065	22,299
Tex.	28,351	35,310	75,739	74,905
Mont.	15,307	3,134	22,596	9,183
Idaho	75,080	41,829	121,746	92,430
Wyo.	5,683	3,471	7,862	6,279
Colo.	23,027	10,569	44,546	20,601
N. Mex.	1,963	1,198	3,050	4,337
Ariz.	488	414	25,632	2,562
Utah	27,173	1,904	35,660	4,832
Nev.	539	436	1,930	1,852
Wash.	48,141	48,411	72,245	84,686
Oreg.	25,249	22,255	47,667	55,922
Calif.	66,425	67,106	238,327	241,223
Total	557,012	548,318	1,331,272	1,194,668

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- June 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	4,804	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
April	7,325	1,024	8,349
May	11,622 2/	591	12,213 2/
June	16,369	1,300	17,669

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

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

Area	As hired hands	As tenants or sharecroppers	All placements
New England	92	1	93
Middle Atlantic	263	10	273
East North Central	833	93	926
West North Central	1,227	8	1,235
South Atlantic	563	652	1,215
East South Central	433	317	750
West South Central	6,837	189	7,026
Mountain	1,261	26	1,287
Pacific	5,460	4	5,464

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

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