Farm Labor

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

BAE

Washington, D. C. — January 14, 1944

FARM WAGE RATES BREAK JANUARY RECORD; EMPLOYMENT SLIGHTLY ABOVE YEAR AGO

The general level of farm wage rates declined less than usual during the last quarter of 1943 and on January 1 was at the highest point for that date in 20 years of record, the U. S. Department of Agriculture reported today. At 275 percent of the 1910-14 average, the January 1 farm wage rate index was down 5 points from October 1 but 51 points higher than a year ago.

Farm wage rates were sharply higher than a year earlier in every section of the nation. Compared with January last year wages per month with board ranged from $5 higher in the East South Central States to $15 higher in the Mountain States. Wages per month without board were up from $6 in the East South Central region to $28 in the Pacific States. Sharp increases in day wage rates were also reported from all parts of the country. Monthly farm wage rates with board usually decline in all parts of the country during the last quarter of the year. In 1943, however, the U. S. rates dropped less than seasonally and some regions actually showed upturns.

The demand for good dairy labor appears to have contributed to the advance in the North Atlantic States. Rates in the Southern States advanced generally to higher levels. However, these increases were more than offset by declines in the monthly wage rate with board in the East North Central, West North Central, and Mountain States. The decline was slight in the East North Central States. Quite sharp declines, however, occurred in the West North Central and Mountain States.

For the year 1943, the index of farm wage rates averaged higher than in any other year of record. The general level of all farm wage rates at 264 percent of the 1910-14 average, was up 63 points from a year earlier and was 22 points higher than in the previous record-high year - 1920.

Net income of farm operators from current operations is also at a record level and thus far in the war has advanced faster than farm wage rates. From 1938 - the year preceding the outbreak of the present World conflict - through 1943, farm wage rates increased 112 percent while net farm income was up 222 percent. Compared with 1942, however, wage rates were 31 percent higher in 1943 while net farm income was up 32 percent.

FARM EMPLOYMENT LESS-THAN-SEASONALLY LOWER

Farm employment declined less than usual during December and the total number of workers on farms January 1 was slightly above a year earlier. Employment, however, was smaller than on that date in any other of the 18 years of monthly records. The 8,202,000 persons estimated to be working on the nation's farms at the beginning of 1944 was only slightly above the 8,171,000 workers on farms on January 1, 1943, but was 367,000 fewer than on the same date in 1939(and about 1 million below the total employed two decades ago). War influences have undoubtedly accelerated the longer time downward trend of farm employment. Total farm employment in 1943 averaged 10,263,000 persons compared with 10,397,000 in 1942 and 10,361,000 in 1941.

The number of hired workers on farms January 1, estimated at 1,580,000, was slightly greater than a year earlier but was 4 percent smaller than the 5-year average for January 1, 1938-42. The increase over the same date last year was probably due to better than usual working conditions the past fall and early winter and to the desire of farm operators to "hold on" to their hired hands in anticipation of the heavy work load next spring.

The 6,622,000 family workers estimated to be on farms in early January were also somewhat more numerous than at that time in 1943, but were 3 percent fewer than the January 1, 1938-42 average.

Not unexpectedly, the number of farm family workers has held up much better during the past year than the number of hired farm workers. While the average number of hired workers decreased by about 5 percent from 1942, the number of family workers remained unchanged. The average number of family workers employed throughout 1943 was however, down 2 percent from the 1938-42 annual average with hired hand numbers dropping 6 percent.

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FARM LABOR SUPPLY SLIGHTLY IMPROVED

As usual the supply of farm labor increased from October 1 to January 1 with a seasonal slackening of demand although the supply index is now slightly above a year ago. The index of farm labor supply advanced from 56 percent of the 1935-39 base period average in

October to 58 percent in January while the index of demand for farm labor decreased 2 points to 123 percent of the 1935-39 average on January 1. Compared with a year earlier, the farm labor supply and the demand for farm labor as reported by farmers on January 1 were up 2 and 1 points respectively.

FARMERS BUSY THIS WINTER

Farmers appear to be taking advantage of the generally "open" winter and reports from all sections of the country show farmers hard at work cutting wood, butchering, repairing buildings, fences and machinery, doing their regular chores, (working on their income tax returns) and at the same time laying plans for the coming crop season which they believe will bring the greatest demand on their resources ever experienced in our agricultural history.

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Farm wage rates and related data, United States, January 1, 1944
with comparisons

	Annual average 1910-14	Annual average 1935-39	Jan.1, 1943	Oct.1, 1943	Jan. 1 1944
FARM WAGE RATE INDEXES:					
Unadjusted	100	118	1/224	280	275
Adjusted for seasonal variation	100	118	232	272	286
FARM WAGE RATES:					
Per month, with board	$22.09	$26.01	$50.91	$65.22	$63.01
Per month, without board	29.18	34.17	62.43	75.44	76.06
Per day, with board	1.16	1.23	2.39	3.17	2.96
Per day, without board	1.42	1.50	2.83	3.51	3.50
FARM EMPLOYMENT INDEXES: (Adjusted for seasonal variation)					
Total	100	91	85	84	86
Family labor	100	91	85	87	86
Hired	100	89	83	80	87
FARM EMPLOYMENT: (Thousands of persons)					
Total	12,052	10,920	8,171	11,938	8,202
Family labor	9,160	8,353	6,615	8,834	6,622
Hired labor	2,892	2,567	1,556	3,104	1,580
NON-AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT			42,300	41,200	2/41,500
FARM WAGE RATE INDEXES					
United States	100	118	1/224	280	275
New England	100	143	255	298	303
Middle Atlantic	100	129	230	282	275
East North Central	100	115	212	256	254
West North Central	100	98	190	281	234
South Atlantic	100	111	200	223	245
East South Central	100	101	183	213	220
West South Central	100	102	209	247	264
Mountain	100	106	201	266	245
Pacific	100	129	277	345	342

1/ Revised.

2/ November 1943 - latest data available.

Based on reports from 20,158 farmers.

Farm wage rates, by geographic divisions, January 1, 1944
with comparisons

Geographic Division	Annual average 1910-14	Oct. 1, 1942	Jan. 1, 1943	Oct. 1, 1943	Jan. 1, 1944
FARM WAGE RATES	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars
PER MONTH WITH BOARD					
New England	24.18	59.40	61.43	72.80	73.40
Middle Atlantic	22.25	50.15	51.53	62.00	62.40
East North Central	23.75	49.99	50.60	60.50	60.00
West North Central	26.32	56.01	49.81	73.40	61.60
South Atlantic	14.62	26.21	28.68	32.80	35.20
East South Central	14.71	25.89	28.09	31.30	32.70
West South Central	17.35	34.97	38.29	44.30	48.70
Mountain	32.48	67.99	65.51	85.80	80.60
Pacific	33.45	90.93	93.21	118.00	118.00
PER MONTH WITHOUT BOARD					
New England	37.70	89.70	93.63	108.40	115.00
Middle Atlantic	33.41	73.78	75.26	94.00	89.70
East North Central	32.80	67.17	68.34	82.10	82.90
West North Central	36.86	1/72.15	67.37	93.10	83.20
South Atlantic	20.97	36.92	42.36	45.60	50.50
East South Central	20.80	35.30	39.02	43.20	45.50
West South Central	24.93	47.34	52.39	61.10	65.50
Mountain	46.42	89.62	89.30	115.40	111.00
Pacific	48.16	123.52	125.70	153.30	154.00
PER DAY WITH BOARD					
New England	1.27	3.10	3.18	3.86	3.67
Middle Atlantic	1.24	3.06	2.90	3.56	3.42
East North Central	1.31	2.96	2.80	3.47	3.36
West North Central	1.46	3.59	2.83	4.44	3.42
South Atlantic	.81	1.42	1.53	1.87	1.97
East South Central	.81	1.37	1.39	1.71	1.76
West South Central	.98	1.86	2.03	2.43	2.43
Mountain	1.50	3.61	3.20	4.42	3.82
Pacific	1.49	4.43	4.45	5.60	5.52
PER DAY WITHOUT BOARD					
New England	1.71	4.06	4.19	4.88	4.72
Middle Atlantic	1.63	3.88	3.75	4.49	4.37
East North Central	1.68	3.67	3.53	4.34	4.23
West North Central	1.88	4.33	3.65	5.54	4.42
South Atlantic	1.05	1.82	2.01	2.28	2.54
East South Central	1.05	1.75	1.79	2.20	2.23
West South Central	1.25	2.30	2.43	2.95	3.09
Mountain	2.05	4.34	1/3.91	5.34	4.56
Pacific	2.06	5.60	5.65	7.08	6.83

1/ Revised.

Farm wage rates, by States, January 1, 1943 and January 1, 1944

State	Per month, with board		Per month, without board		Per day, with board		Per day, without board	
	1943	1944	1943	1944	1943	1944	1943	1944
	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.
Maine	60.25	74.00	86.75	106.00	3.20	3.90	4.15	4.90
N. H.	58.75	73.00	88.50	110.00	3.40	3.70	4.30	4.90
Vt.	56.25	67.25	79.50	94.00	3.15	3.60	3.85	4.55
Mass.	64.25	78.00	98.50	117.00	3.25	3.60	4.30	4.70
R. I.	65.00	79.00	101.00	119.00	3.30	3.60	4.40	4.80
Conn.	61.75	72.00	100.00	109.00	3.10	3.55	4.25	4.70
N. Y.	56.50	69.50	80.75	96.50	3.05	3.60	4.00	4.60
N. J.	58.75	73.00	87.00	103.00	3.10	3.65	3.90	4.65
Pa.	44.25	52.00	66.50	78.50	2.70	3.15	3.40	4.05
Ohio	44.50	52.00	61.00	73.25	2.75	3.25	3.45	4.00
Ind.	47.25	56.00	62.75	76.00	2.75	3.30	3.40	4.05
Ill.	54.00	65.00	68.75	83.75	2.85	3.50	3.55	4.30
Mich.	52.25	61.75	73.25	90.00	3.00	3.55	3.80	4.50
Wis.	52.00	61.00	73.00	88.00	2.65	3.25	3.50	4.25
Minn.	48.50	60.00	69.00	85.00	2.80	3.50	3.70	4.65
Iowa	57.00	71.75	72.50	92.00	3.15	3.90	3.95	4.80
Mo.	41.00	47.00	54.00	62.50	2.10	2.50	2.60	3.20
N. Dak.	45.50	59.00	67.00	87.00	2.60	3.25	3.60	4.25
S. Dak.	51.75	67.75	73.50	92.50	3.15	3.65	3.95	4.70
Nebr.	53.25	66.50	71.50	86.25	3.40	4.05	4.25	5.10
Kans.	51.25	62.25	70.25	85.10	3.15	3.60	3.95	4.50
Del.	46.50	54.00	66.50	81.00	3.10	3.60	4.00	4.35
Md.	42.75	50.25	62.50	70.00	2.65	3.05	3.35	3.90
Va.	34.50	39.75	48.25	55.25	1.85	2.30	2.40	2.90
W. Va.	34.50	38.75	49.75	54.00	1.80	2.10	2.30	2.70
N. C.	30.25	37.50	42.50	52.00	1.65	2.15	2.05	2.60
S. C.	21.75	27.00	30.50	38.00	1.05	1.40	1.35	1.75
Ga.	21.50	28.00	30.50	39.25	1.15	1.55	1.45	1.95
Fla.	32.00	38.50	53.00	62.00	1.70	2.20	2.30	3.10
Ky.	34.50	40.00	48.00	54.50	1.65	2.05	2.10	2.65
Tenn.	27.00	32.75	37.75	45.75	1.35	1.70	1.75	2.10
Ala.	25.75	29.50	36.00	42.00	1.30	1.65	1.65	2.10
Miss.	24.00	29.50	33.25	41.00	1.25	1.70	1.35	2.10
Ark.	29.50	36.25	41.75	50.25	1.50	1.95	1.95	2.40
La.	25.00	32.50	35.00	45.75	1.35	1.95	1.70	2.35
Okla.	40.00	50.00	54.00	69.00	2.30	2.85	2.75	3.40
Tex.	42.00	53.50	57.50	71.50	2.20	2.75	2.60	3.30
Mont.	71.25	90.00	95.00	120.00	3.60	4.50	4.40	5.30
Idaho	74.25	93.50	100.00	123.00	3.75	4.35	4.55	5.50
Wyo.	68.00	79.75	90.50	108.00	3.30	3.80	4.25	4.70
Colo.	59.75	72.25	83.25	103.00	3.30	3.70	4.10	4.60
N.Mex.	50.00	64.00	71.00	86.50	2.50	3.20	3.00	3.70
Ariz.	73.50	83.00	104.00	124.00	2.70	3.55	3.90	4.45
Utah	84.25	106.00	105.00	131.00	3.45	3.90	4.15	4.75
Nev.	67.00	90.00	91.00	115.00	3.65	3.90	4.60	4.90
Wash.	85.50	110.00	118.00	146.00	4.45	5.60	5.60	6.70
Oreg.	86.75	108.00	115.00	142.00	4.20	5.50	5.10	6.40
Calif.	95.00	120.00	128.00	156.00	4.45	5.50	5.70	6.90
U. S.	50.91	63.01	62.43	76.06	2.39	2.96	2.83	3.50

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

TOTAL FARM EMPLOYMENT

Geographic Divisions	Oct. 1, 1941	Jan. 1, 1942	Oct. 1, 1942	Jan. 1, 1943	Oct. 1, 1943	Jan. 1, 1944
	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's
United States	11,988	8,287	11,921	8,171	11,938	8,202
New England	272	210	285	207	276	201
Middle Atlantic	705	497	719	485	704	493
East North Central	1,463	1,226	1,445	1,233	1,464	1,223
West North Central	1,723	1,408	1,675	1,380	1,661	1,383
South Atlantic	2,216	1,459	2,315	1,463	2,312	1,477
East South Central	2,131	1,271	2,187	1,242	2,171	1,275
West South Central	2,313	1,424	2,155	1,400	2,190	1,366
Mountain	500	361	477	343	486	348
Pacific	635	431	663	418	674	436

FAMILY WORKERS 1/

United States	8,537	6,632	8,353	6,615	8,334	6,622
New England	162	151	181	155	170	153
Middle Atlantic	423	377	434	371	429	373
East North Central	1,123	1,027	1,140	1,047	1,152	1,038
West North Central	1,331	1,205	1,321	1,197	1,337	1,200
South Atlantic	1,642	1,131	1,695	1,139	1,713	1,156
East South Central	1,677	1,096	1,740	1,079	1,782	1,095
West South Central	1,608	1,102	1,522	1,099	1,616	1,074
Mountain	297	272	296	263	311	262
Pacific	304	271	324	265	324	271

HIRED WORKERS

United States	3,421	1,655	3,268	1,556	3,104	1,580
New England	110	59	104	52	106	48
Middle Atlantic	282	120	285	114	275	120
East North Central	340	199	305	186	312	185
West North Central	392	203	354	183	324	183
South Atlantic	574	328	620	324	599	321
East South Central	454	175	447	163	389	130
West South Central	705	322	633	301	574	292
Mountain	203	89	181	80	175	86
Pacific	361	160	339	153	350	165

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

Bases on reports from 20,158 farmers.

Annual Farm Wage Rates and Index Numbers, United States, 1909-43

Year	Per month		Per day		Weighted average rate per month	Index numbers of farm wage rates (1910-14 = 100)
	With board	Without board	With board	Without board		
	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	
1909	22.21	28.10	1.09	1.30	23.77	96
1910	21.22	28.08	1.12	1.39	23.93	97
1911	21.49	28.54	1.13	1.39	24.15	98
1912	22.23	29.34	1.18	1.43	24.98	101
1913	22.89	30.21	1.20	1.46	25.59	103
1914	22.62	29.74	1.17	1.43	25.13	101
1915	22.97	30.06	1.18	1.44	25.41	103
1916	25.17	32.84	1.31	1.58	27.93	113
1917	31.11	40.52	1.65	1.98	34.79	141
1918	37.96	48.80	2.15	2.54	43.73	177
1919	43.29	56.63	2.54	3.03	51.13	207
1920	51.73	65.40	2.98	3.46	59.88	242
1921	33.62	44.67	1.77	2.12	38.29	155
1922	32.75	43.33	1.73	2.07	37.47	151
1923	37.24	48.25	1.89	2.25	41.87	169
1924	37.92	49.32	1.94	2.29	42.91	173
1925	38.77	49.90	1.97	2.29	43.51	176
1926	39.87	50.83	1.98	2.31	44.36	179
1927	40.11	50.85	1.98	2.28	44.36	179
1928	40.11	50.72	1.98	2.27	44.28	179
1929	40.61	51.22	1.96	2.25	44.52	180
1930	37.59	48.10	1.76	2.08	41.25	167
1931	28.77	38.38	1.32	1.62	32.11	130
1932	20.85	28.88	.94	1.20	23.66	96
1933	18.07	25.67	.85	1.11	21.10	85
1934	20.24	28.19	.98	1.26	23.61	95
1935	22.42	30.24	1.07	1.33	25.53	103
1936	24.53	32.28	1.15	1.42	27.51	111
1937	28.00	36.32	1.33	1.61	31.25	126
1938	27.73	36.18	1.31	1.58	30.91	125
1939	27.39	35.82	1.30	1.56	30.56	123
1940	28.05	36.68	1.36	1.59	31.28	126
1941	34.85	43.64	1.69	1.93	38.14	154
1942	46.64	56.07	2.19	2.49	49.85	201
1943	61.91	72.85	2.87	3.27	65.45	264

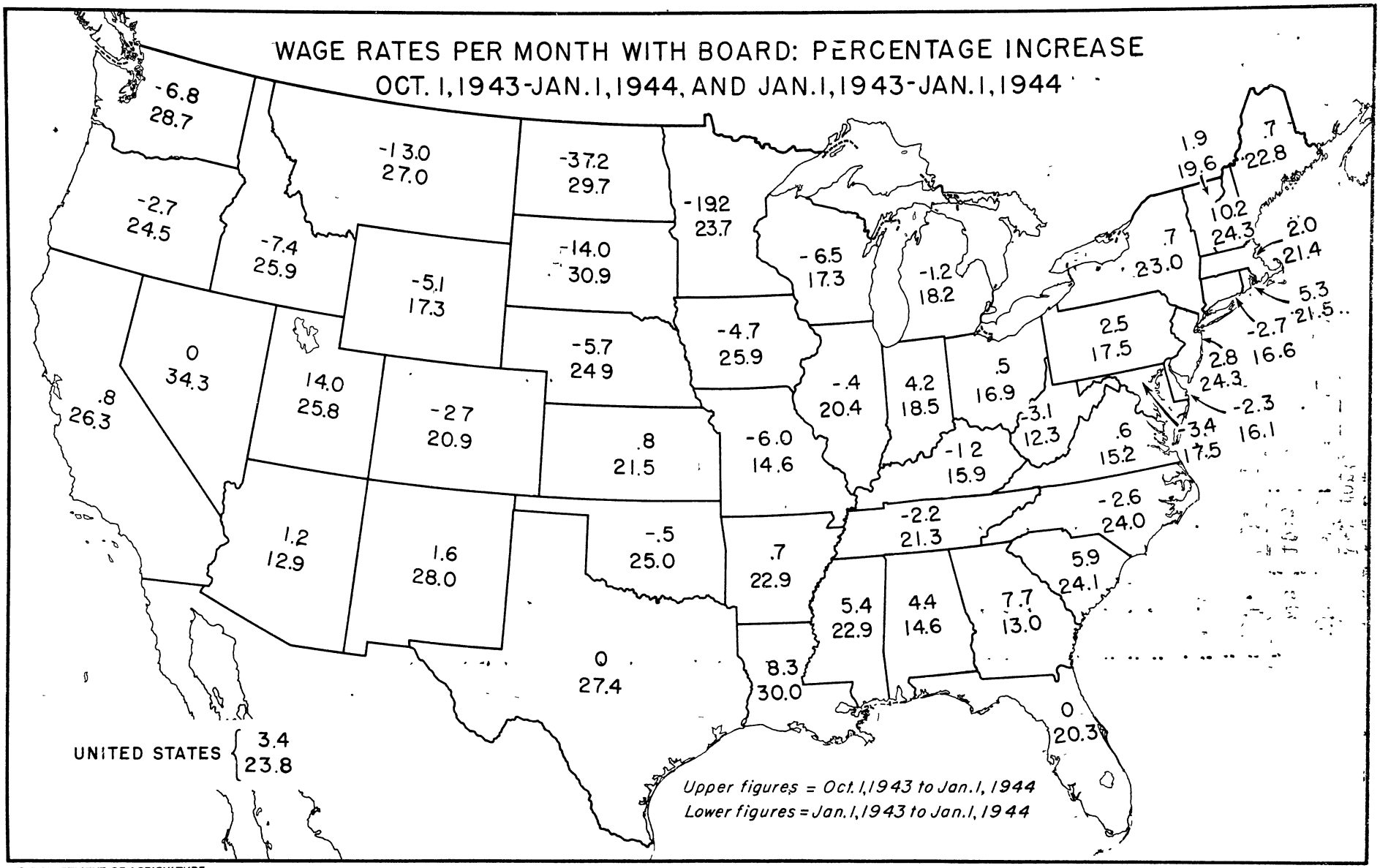
Farm wage rates: Annual averages, United States and geographic divisions, 1942 and 1943

Geographic division	Per month				Per day			
	With board		Without board		With board		Without board	
	1942	1943	1942	1943	1942	1943	1942	1943
	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.
United States	46.64	61.91	56.07	72.85	2.19	2.87	2.49	3.27
New England	55.27	69.54	85.94	103.65	2.90	3.55	3.82	4.56
Middle Atlantic	47.68	60.09	71.05	89.81	2.75	3.34	3.54	4.26
East North Central	46.60	58.25	63.02	79.25	2.61	3.24	3.26	4.04
West North Central	49.14	66.25	63.78	85.75	2.77	3.63	3.47	4.56
South Atlantic	25.07	31.91	36.14	45.36	1.32	1.72	1.70	2.20
East South Central	24.37	30.61	33.73	42.16	1.21	1.58	1.55	2.02
West South Central	32.25	42.75	43.98	58.70	1.67	2.27	2.04	2.74
Mountain	60.10	80.14	80.84	107.57	2.97	3.86	3.59	4.77
Pacific	80.99	112.89	110.72	148.10	3.80	5.23	4.85	6.57

Farm employment: Annual averages, United States and geographic divisions, 1942 and 1943 1/

Geographic division	Total		Family		Hired	
	1942	1943	1942	1943	1942	1943
	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's
United States	10,397	10,263	7,855	7,857	2,542	2,406
New England	252	249	167	167	85	82
Middle Atlantic	629	619	418	416	211	203
East North Central	1,431	1,410	1,151	1,144	280	266
West North Central	1,639	1,608	1,322	1,322	317	286
South Atlantic	1,977	1,950	1,489	1,487	488	463
East South Central	1,662	1,655	1,384	1,394	278	261
West South Central	1,788	1,755	1,324	1,325	464	430
Mountain	441	439	294	297	147	142
Pacific	578	578	306	305	272	273

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



U S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

Farm Labor Supply and Demand: Index Numbers, by Geographic Divisions

January 1, 1941 - January 1, 1944

Geographic Division	Base period 1935-39 1/	1941				1942				1943				1944
		Jan.	April	July	Oct.	Jan.	April	July	Oct.	Jan.	April	July	Oct.	Jan.
Index of Supply														
New England	100	84	73	60	57	60	56	52	48	49	48	50	44	45
Middle Atlantic	100	92	77	60	61	65	60	57	51	52	53	55	54	58
East North Central	100	95	80	66	66	69	66	64	52	57	57	55	54	60
West North Central	100	96	84	74	71	70	66	61	48	53	54	55	52	57
South Atlantic	100	92	80	75	71	71	70	67	60	61	60	60	58	59
East South Central	100	94	87	82	74	76	71	71	63	66	63	64	61	62
West South Central	100	91	84	76	70	71	69	65	56	55	57	57	53	56
Mountain	100	93	85	72	69	69	64	56	47	50	53	53	53	59
Pacific	100	93	84	73	69	66	66	54	47	52	52	55	62	61
United States	100	93	82	73	70	70	67	62	54	56	56	57	56	58
Index of Demand														
New England	100	103	112	113	114	109	117	119	116	116	123	120	124	119
Middle Atlantic	100	103	111	111	114	108	117	116	120	118	124	122	122	119
East North Central	100	105	111	115	117	112	118	119	124	122	127	123	123	119
West North Central	100	112	122	127	127	125	130	131	139	135	138	139	137	132
South Atlantic	100	105	108	108	108	110	116	114	118	117	120	117	117	121
East South Central	100	103	111	107	113	116	120	119	123	122	125	122	125	124
West South Central	100	107	114	121	124	120	123	128	136	128	131	132	129	125
Mountain	100	108	115	124	128	119	125	131	131	126	135	130	132	126
Pacific	100	104	111	113	115	113	114	121	122	122	122	121	122	122
United States		105	112	115	117	114	119	121	125	122	126	125	125	123

1/ Base average of reported data for 20 quarters, January 1935 - October 1939.

After five days return to
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Penalty for private use to avoid payment of postage, $300

Foreign workers employed in or available for agricultural work by country of origin and State of employment, as of January 1, 1944

Mexicans		Jamaicans		Bahamians	
State	No. of workers	State	No. of workers	State	No. of workers
South Dakota	1	Connecticut	222	Michigan	50
Nebraska	134	New Jersey	187	Florida	3,616
Montana	6	Ohio	6		
Idaho	1	Michigan	18		
Wyoming	10	Florida	1,702		
Colorado	1				
Arizona	1,499				
Nevada	98				
Washington	49				
Oregon	265				
California	12,981				
Total	15,045		2,135		3,666