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Farm Labor

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FARM EMPLOYMENT DROPS AS HARVESTING SEASON CLOSES

The harvesting season neared completion throughout the Nation, during the week of November 23-29, accounting for the decline of slightly less than 2 million in total farm employment compared with a month earlier, the Crop Reporting Board announced today. Historically, demand for farm labor has declined at this time of year. For most recent years the decline from October to November has been near the 2 million mark. However, back about one decade a sharper seasonal decline involving close to 3 million people, occurred for several years, with the decline in 1948 totaling 3,229,000 workers. At that time the general level of farm employment was above recent years. Total farm employment during the November 1958 survey week was 6,817,000, a 22-percent decline from October, but 1 percent above November 1957.

There were 15 percent fewer family workers employed on farms during the November survey week than in late October. This was less than the 16 percent decline last year and the average decline for the period of 17 percent. The 5,286,000 family workers for November 1958 compare with 5,308,000 workers in November 1957 and the 5-year November average of 5,800,000.

The hired farm workers force in November totaled 1,531,000 persons and in contrast to family workers was above the 1,450,000 hired workers last November and the average of 1,530,000. Numbers of hired workers were down 38 percent from October 1958 which compares with the usual 37 percent decline and last year's drop of about 35 percent.

Length of Farm Workday

Farm operators across the country worked an average of 8.5 hours per day in late November which was a somewhat shorter day than the 9.9 hours for late August and 10.7 hours in late May of this year. The farm operator's workday in late November 1957, averaged 8.6 hours.

The working day of the hired hand generally is slightly shorter than the farm operator's day and as of late November averaged 8.3 hours. Hired hands were working about 9.0 hours per day in late August and 9.3 hours per day in late May. Last November hired hands put in an average of 8.2 hours per day.

Agricultural Activities

Bitter cold hit much of the northern half of the Nation during the later part of the November survey week. Freezing temperatures and blowing snows

brought agricultural activities to a standstill, except for routine chores, in many areas. Subzero temperatures equaled or exceeded record November lows in Indiana and Ohio and temperatures dropped to near record lows in most of the Great Lakes region. Below freezing temperatures extended to some sections of the Gulf Coast. Light to heavy snows fell in many northern areas east of the Rockies. The icy weather stood out in even sharper contrast because of the near to record breaking warm temperatures which prevailed in the Middle and South Atlantic Coastal States during the early part of the week. Even with these warmer temperatures in some parts of the country, it was at best a cool week for most of the United States with temperatures generally below normal.

Fortunately the wintery weather had been preceded by much favorable harvesting weather and most of the northern crops had already been gathered in by the time the storms hit. To the South, harvesting continued in the advance stages with much of the remaining work in the category of a cleanup operation.

Cotton picking was nearly finished by late November in the eastern portions of the Cotton Belt, but unfavorable weather interrupted final harvest operations in the central and southwestern sections. Cotton in New Mexico was 90 percent picked while in Arizona it was over three-fourths picked. The volume of cotton picking was decreasing in California except in the desert areas.

Farming activities were confined to routine chores, especially the care of livestock, as the cold wave moved across the country. Harvesting and other field work made good progress early in the week in the lower Mississippi Valley but were halted by rains and freezing temperatures which moved southward to the middle Gulf Coast during the last part of the week.

The unseasonably warm weather in Florida continued to force rapid growth and development of fall vegetables with most at peak harvest. Harvesting of citrus fruit was increasing but was still behind normal. Planting of vegetables for late-season harvest progressed in southern Texas and clearing and cultivating of early planted fields made headway. Mild and mostly dry weather in the far Southwest favored harvesting of numerous vegetables and fruits and the preparation of land for planting. Active harvesting of navel oranges was under way in California, with lemon and avocado harvesting increasing.

Employment by Geographic Region

Total number of persons at work on farms during the week, November 23-29, declined from a month earlier in all regions. The sharpest seasonal declines occurred in the East South Central, West South Central, Mountain and New England regions. The 31-percent drop for the East South Central region was the greatest decrease. The smallest regional decline in farm employment was in the East North Central where the drop was only 9 percent.

Changes in total number of workers from the corresponding week last year varied among regions with all except the Middle Atlantic, East North Central, and West North Central regions being slightly above last year. Some labor was required on almost all farms even though some of the survey week was unfavorable for farm work and most of the crops were already harvested prior to that time.

The number of family workers in November as compared with one month earlier shows a slightly less than usual to usual drop in 6 of the 9 regions. Sharpest changes from October occurred in the East South Central region with a 25-percent decline compared with the average decline for the region of 32 percent. More than usual declines were recorded in only three regions, New England, Middle Atlantic, and West North Central.

Sharp decreases in number of hired workers employed on farms occurred during the period in all regions. The end of the harvesting season, in northern sections of the country, reduced farm labor demand largely to that required for feeding and care of livestock, resulting in sharp declines in the number of hired workers while completion of cotton harvesting in most parts of the South, led to some even sharper declines in those areas.

Farm employment and indexes for week of November 23-29, 1958, United States, with comparisons

	November average 1953-57 1/	November 17-23, 1957	October 19-25, 1958	November 23-29, 1958
FARM EMPLOYMENT (Thousands of persons)				
Total	7,330	6,758	8,723	6,817
Family labor	5,800	5,308	6,238	5,286
Hired labor	1,530	1,450	2,485	1,531
FARM EMPLOYMENT INDEXES (Adjusted for seasonal variation, 1910-14=100)				
Total	60	56	55	56
Family labor	61	56	54	55
Hired labor	58	55	59	58

1/ Employment during the last full calendar week ending at least one day before the end of the month.

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Farm wage rates, indexes, and related data, October 1, 1958, United States, with comparisons 1/

	July 1, 1957	October 1, 1957	July 1, 1958	October 1, 1958
FARM WAGE RATES				
Per month with house	$177.00	$168.00	$181.00	$176.00
Per month with board and room	133.00	134.00	135.00	138.00
Per week with board and room	34.25	33.75	34.00	34.25
Per week without board or room	42.50	41.00	42.75	42.25
Per day with house	4.50	4.75	4.60	5.10
Per day with board and room	6.20	5.80	6.40	6.00
Per day without board or room	5.70	6.30	5.80	6.70
Per hour with house	.86	.94	.87	.96
Per hour without board or room	.93	.84	.94	.88
Composite rate per hour 2/	.717	.757	.728	.795
FARM WAGE RATE INDEXES (1910-14=100)				
Adjusted for seasonal variation	552	565	566	594
RELATED INDEXES (1910-14=100)				
Prices received by farmers 3/	246	242	254	255
Ratio of prices received to farm wage rates	45	43	45	43

1/ Wage rates on the average refer to a date 2 or 3 days before the first of the month.
2/ Weighted average of all rates on a per hour basis.
3/ Average of the 15th of the given and the 15th of the previous month.

Total workers on farms during week of November 23-29, 1958,
by regions and selected States, with comparisons

State and region	November average 1953-57 1/	October 20-26, 1957	November 17-23, 1957	October 19-25, 1958	November 23-29, 1958
	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands
New England	163	193	143	196	147
New York	177	191	156	195	160
New Jersey	46	56	44	55	42
Pennsylvania	206	217	178	217	175
Middle Atlantic	429	464	378	467	377
Ohio	276	286	260	290	256
Indiana	232	225	219	238	214
Illinois	293	273	273	289	266
Michigan	210	226	201	227	200
Wisconsin	292	292	281	289	275
East North Central	1,303	1,302	1,234	1,333	1,211
Minnesota	249	259	228	270	225
Iowa	288	313	277	323	266
Missouri	282	322	258	341	262
North Dakota	85	100	78	100	76
South Dakota	88	101	85	101	83
Nebraska	142	154	132	165	131
Kansas	152	174	142	178	137
West North Central	1,286	1,423	1,200	1,478	1,180
Delaware-Maryland	71	75	67	77	64
Virginia	208	222	181	214	193
West Virginia	85	78	73	80	74
North Carolina	417	466	346	438	363
South Carolina	178	240	161	218	163
Georgia	216	268	193	265	184
Florida	93	102	101	107	96
South Atlantic	1,268	1,451	1,122	1,399	1,137
Kentucky	266	320	232	323	251
Tennessee	302	390	298	402	299
Alabama	201	305	177	296	180
Mississippi	284	433	250	401	253
East South Central	1,053	1,448	957	1,422	983
Arkansas	222	287	211	324	217
Louisiana	148	200	124	232	141
Oklahoma	169	191	150	220	143
Texas	406	495	398	556	427
West South Central	945	1,173	883	1,332	928
Montana	48	56	43	53	43
Idaho	51	74	52	77	51
Colorado	57	85	59	88	59
New Mexico-Arizona	119	125	116	149	122
Wyoming-Utah-Nevada	50	71	50	74	50
Mountain	325	411	320	441	325
Washington	93	112	85	109	84
Oregon	82	86	75	84	77
California	383	456	361	462	368
Pacific	558	654	521	655	529
UNITED STATES	7,330	8,519	6,758	8,723	6,817

1/ Persons employed during the last full calendar week ending at least one day before the end of the month.

Family and hired workers on farms during week of November 23-29, 1958, by regions and selected States, with comparisons

State and region	Family 1/				Hired 2/			
	November average 1953-57 3/	Nov. 17-23, 1957	Oct. 19-25, 1958	Nov. 23-29, 1958	November average 1953-57 3/	Nov. 17-23, 1957	Oct. 19-25, 1958	Nov. 23-29, 1958
	Thous.	Thous.	Thous.	Thous.	Thous.	Thous.	Thous.	Thous.
New England	107	95	109	94	56	48	87	53
New York	129	112	124	113	48	44	71	47
New Jersey	31	29	31	27	15	15	24	15
Pennsylvania	167	148	173	146	39	30	44	29
Middle Atlantic	327	289	328	286	102	89	139	91
Ohio	244	229	244	224	32	31	46	32
Indiana	209	194	198	193	23	25	40	21
Illinois	251	230	234	226	42	43	55	40
Michigan	180	169	178	167	30	32	49	33
Wisconsin	266	257	254	250	26	24	35	25
East North Central	1,150	1,079	1,108	1,060	153	155	225	151
Minnesota	229	208	237	208	20	20	33	17
Iowa	258	244	281	237	30	33	42	29
Missouri	256	237	268	234	26	21	73	28
North Dakota	72	64	76	64	13	14	24	12
South Dakota	79	75	89	74	9	10	12	9
Nebraska	128	116	141	118	14	16	24	13
Kansas	141	130	157	127	11	12	21	10
West North Central	1,163	1,074	1,249	1,062	123	126	229	118
Delaware-Maryland	49	46	49	45	22	21	28	19
Virginia	174	151	162	159	34	30	52	34
West Virginia	74	63	67	62	11	10	13	12
North Carolina	371	301	366	316	46	45	72	47
South Carolina	137	126	156	119	41	35	62	44
Georgia	150	136	196	124	66	57	69	60
Florida	48	49	54	49	45	52	53	47
South Atlantic	1,003	872	1,050	874	265	250	349	263
Kentucky	237	202	267	221	29	30	56	30
Tennessee	256	255	325	251	46	43	77	48
Alabama	161	146	227	143	40	31	69	37
Mississippi	231	214	285	208	53	36	116	45
East South Central	885	817	1,104	823	168	140	318	160
Arkansas	155	138	180	147	67	73	144	70
Louisiana	111	96	122	102	37	28	110	39
Oklahoma	145	128	149	121	24	22	71	22
Texas	268	253	291	249	138	145	265	178
West South Central	679	615	742	619	266	268	590	309
Montana	37	34	41	35	11	9	12	8
Idaho	40	40	55	40	11	12	22	11
Colorado	44	45	58	47	13	14	30	12
New Mexico-Arizona	37	35	46	34	82	81	103	88
Wyo.-Utah-Nev.	37	38	46	38	13	12	28	12
Mountain	195	192	246	194	130	128	195	131
Washington	76	70	75	68	17	15	34	16
Oregon	70	64	65	66	12	11	19	11
California	145	141	162	140	238	220	300	228
Pacific	291	275	302	274	267	246	353	255
UNITED STATES	5,800	5,308	6,238	5,286	1,530	1,450	2,485	1,531

1/ Includes farm operators doing one or more hours of farm work and members of their families working 15 hours or more during the survey week without cash wages.
2/ Includes all persons doing one or more hours of farm work during the survey week for pay.
3/ Persons employed during the last full calendar week ending at least one day before the end of the month.

Average number of persons working on farms, January through November 1958, United States and geographic divisions, with comparisons 1/

Class of workers and geographic division	Average 1953-57	1955	1956	1957	1958
	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT					
United States	8,470	8,591	8,031	7,753	7,699
New England	194	192	183	176	175
Middle Atlantic	510	514	474	454	455
East North Central	1,433	1,450	1,383	1,328	1,326
West North Central	1,545	1,565	1,466	1,428	1,429
South Atlantic	1,516	1,549	1,426	1,382	1,342
East South Central	1,109	1,124	1,031	994	954
West South Central	1,162	1,200	1,083	1,031	1,053
Mountain	378	376	373	362	365
Pacific	623	621	612	598	600
FAMILY WORKERS 2/					
United States	6,378	6,480	6,018	5,772	5,656
New England	122	120	114	108	107
Middle Atlantic	365	372	341	326	323
East North Central	1,219	1,234	1,178	1,127	1,122
West North Central	1,317	1,338	1,253	1,214	1,206
South Atlantic	1,121	1,147	1,040	999	954
East South Central	892	904	822	800	756
West South Central	789	812	725	680	668
Mountain	240	238	237	221	222
Pacific	313	315	308	297	298
HIRED WORKERS 3/					
United States	2,092	2,111	2,013	1,981	2,043
New England	72	72	69	68	68
Middle Atlantic	145	142	133	128	132
East North Central	214	216	205	201	204
West North Central	228	227	213	214	223
South Atlantic	395	402	386	383	388
East South Central	217	220	209	194	198
West South Central	373	388	358	351	385
Mountain	138	138	136	141	143
Pacific	310	306	304	301	302

1/ Persons employed during the last full calendar week ending at least one day before the end of the month.

2/ Includes farm operators doing one or more hours of farm work and members of their families working 15 hours or more during the survey week without cash wages.

3/ Includes all persons doing one or more hours of farm work during the survey week for pay.

Length of farm workday for operators and hired workers, December 1, 1957
June 1, September 1, and December 1, 1958

State and division	Operators				Hired workers			
	Dec. 1, 1957	June 1, 1958	Sept. 1, 1958	Dec. 1, 1958	Dec. 1, 1957	June 1, 1958	Sept. 1, 1958	Dec. 1, 1958
	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours
Maine	9.6	10.3	10.2	9.3	8.2	8.2	8.1	7.9
New Hampshire	10.3	10.7	10.7	10.0	8.7	8.4	8.6	8.5
Vermont	10.7	11.4	11.1	10.9	9.5	9.2	9.2	9.1
Massachusetts	9.8	10.6	10.7	10.1	8.7	8.4	8.5	8.4
Rhode Island	9.4	10.3	10.0	9.2	8.2	9.0	9.0	8.0
Connecticut	9.5	10.0	10.1	9.9	8.3	9.2	9.0	8.8
New England	9.9	10.6	10.5	10.0	8.7	8.6	8.5	8.4
New York	9.9	11.4	10.9	10.1	9.1	9.4	9.4	9.0
New Jersey	9.3	10.8	10.3	9.3	8.3	9.1	9.2	8.6
Pennsylvania	9.5	11.3	10.8	9.5	8.3	8.8	8.6	8.3
Middle Atlantic	9.6	11.3	10.8	9.7	8.7	9.1	9.1	8.7
Ohio	8.8	10.9	10.0	8.6	8.1	8.7	8.2	8.1
Indiana	8.6	10.8	9.4	8.1	8.4	9.5	8.3	7.9
Illinois	8.7	11.2	9.7	8.1	8.5	9.6	8.9	8.0
Michigan	9.0	10.8	10.5	8.8	8.4	9.2	8.7	8.1
Wisconsin	10.7	12.1	11.5	10.6	9.6	10.2	9.8	9.0
East North Central	9.1	11.2	10.2	8.8	8.6	9.4	8.7	8.2
Minnesota	9.6	11.6	10.9	8.9	8.5	9.7	9.3	8.3
Iowa	9.1	11.3	10.2	8.7	8.6	9.8	8.9	8.3
Missouri	8.5	10.8	9.7	8.2	8.0	9.3	8.6	8.0
North Dakota	8.0	11.6	11.7	7.6	8.2	10.3	10.4	7.8
South Dakota	9.0	11.6	10.7	7.9	8.5	10.3	9.8	7.9
Nebraska	9.0	11.7	10.6	8.4	8.5	10.1	9.2	8.0
Kansas	8.7	11.2	10.6	8.1	8.0	9.6	9.3	8.0
West North Central	8.9	11.3	10.4	8.4	8.3	9.7	9.2	8.1
Delaware	8.4	10.4	9.6	8.3	8.0	8.7	8.8	8.0
Maryland	9.2	10.8	10.1	8.7	9.0	9.2	8.6	8.1
Virginia	8.6	10.6	9.9	8.7	8.1	9.4	8.9	8.3
West Virginia	8.0	9.6	9.5	8.0	7.6	8.0	7.9	7.7
North Carolina	7.9	10.3	9.4	8.0	7.6	9.0	8.4	7.7
South Carolina	8.4	10.2	9.2	8.4	7.9	9.3	8.8	7.9
Georgia	8.2	10.4	9.3	8.5	8.0	9.5	8.9	8.2
Florida	8.4	8.9	8.5	8.3	8.1	8.4	8.2	7.9
South Atlantic	8.2	10.2	9.4	8.3	8.0	9.1	8.6	8.0
Kentucky	8.6	10.2	9.6	8.4	8.3	9.3	8.7	8.4
Tennessee	8.8	10.9	9.9	8.8	8.2	9.6	8.9	8.8
Alabama	7.8	10.1	9.1	7.9	7.7	9.1	8.9	7.9
Mississippi	8.0	9.9	8.7	7.6	7.6	9.1	8.7	7.5
East South Central	8.3	10.3	9.3	8.2	7.9	9.2	8.8	8.2
Arkansas	8.1	10.3	9.1	8.3	8.0	9.3	9.0	7.9
Louisiana	7.5	9.2	9.0	8.0	7.8	8.6	8.7	8.0
Oklahoma	8.1	10.6	9.8	7.8	7.6	9.4	9.1	7.8
Texas	8.3	10.5	9.8	8.5	8.2	9.7	9.4	8.5
West South Central	8.1	10.3	9.5	8.2	8.0	9.4	9.1	8.3
Montana	7.9	10.7	10.2	7.8	7.5	9.5	9.6	7.8
Idaho	8.3	11.6	10.9	8.1	7.7	9.4	8.8	8.0
Wyoming	8.3	11.4	10.5	8.2	8.1	9.9	9.2	8.1
Colorado	8.2	11.3	10.7	8.0	8.0	9.6	9.6	8.2
New Mexico	9.0	11.2	10.3	8.4	8.2	9.6	9.5	8.1
Arizona	9.3	10.0	9.9	8.8	9.2	9.1	9.5	9.0
Utah	7.7	10.6	10.2	8.4	7.8	8.2	7.9	7.5
Nevada	8.0	9.6	10.0	8.0	8.0	8.5	8.6	8.0
Mountain	8.3	11.1	10.5	8.1	8.4	9.3	9.2	8.5
Washington	7.8	10.1	9.9	7.8	7.7	9.0	8.9	7.5
Oregon	8.0	10.2	9.6	7.6	7.7	8.5	8.4	7.2
California	8.4	10.2	9.8	8.6	8.7	9.4	9.4	8.6
Pacific	8.2	10.2	9.8	8.2	8.6	9.2	9.2	8.5
UNITED STATES	8.6	10.7	9.9	8.5	8.2	9.3	9.0	8.3

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