Farm Labor

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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FARM EMPLOYMENT UP MORE THAN USUAL

h generally favorable weather in most parts of the country during May, considerle progress was made in catching up with seasonal farm work which had been retardby a late spring. The U. S. Department of Agriculture reported today that total rm employment is estimated at 11,285,000 for the first of June, an increase of 12 rcent from May 1 compared with a normal rise of 8 percent from May 1 to June 1. tal employment on June 1, however, was 3 percent below a year earlier, due mainly a 9.5 percent decrease in the number of hired workers, as the number of family rkers was only one percent below June 1, 1943. Compared with a year ago, declines total employment were shown in all of the Regions except the Pacific.

nily labor (including farm operator) totaled 8,845,000 persons on June 1 -- about rcent over May 1, although 117,000 under June 1, 1943. As usual this seasonal inease was largely the result of the addition of school children to the ranks of ailable farm labor with the close of the school year. Hired help reached 440,000 by the first of June compared to 2,697,000 on that date last year. This presents a gain of 451,000 workers during May which was slightly greater than the ual seasonal rise. Family labor including operator and unpaid family workers mposed 78 percent of the total farm labor force at the first of June.

vorable weather conditions in New England permitted the fullest utilization of ailable labor as farmers attempted to reach the normal stage of planting and tille for this time of year. The number of hired workers in this region on June 1 was percent below a year ago and was only slightly offset by a 1 percent increase in nily workers.

the Middle Atlantic States, farm operations are now proceeding at a fairly even ce despite a labor supply which is limited and the employment of workers who are ss skilled than those formerly used. There were 613 thousand workers on these rms this June 1 -- 33 thousand more than on May 1 but 19 thousand fewer than on ne 1, 1943. In New York, farm work had been delayed by adverse weather in early , but workers have been putting in long hours in the field in an attempt to get ops in with further delays. Favorable cultivating weather during May enabled Jersey farmers to keep up with the necessary field operations. Asparagus and inach harvesting has passed its peak in New Jersey with the strawberry crop in the ak season in early June.

most parts of the East North Central States good progress has been made in recent eks in planting and cultivating of row crops, although in some sections fields are

still too wet to be worked. Gardens and truck crops are showing rapid growth. The labor supply is none too plentiful, particularly in sections of more northern States, but farmers and their help are working longer hours to compensate for the small number of workers. In the East North Central States as a group, however, there were almost exactly the same number of persons employed on farms as on that date last year.

Somewhat similar conditions prevail in the West North Central region but in that area the number of family workers and of hired workers both fell below June 1943 levels. To a greater extent than usual farmers are practicing the good neighbor policy of helping each other in getting their farm work done. Many are working far into the night using headlight attachments on mechanized equipment. Floods and high winds retarded work in the northern section, but for the Region as a whole grain crops are making good growth, corn is up to a good stand and hay crops and pastures are in very good condition.

Improved weather conditions in May speeded up farming activities in the South. Early plantings progressed well -- corn, wheat, and small grains particularly; pastures were in excellent condition; and harvesting of early crops is proceeding rapidly. More rain is needed in some areas, especially in the truck crop regions of Florida and Georgia, the eastern shore of Virginia, and the ranges of western Texas. The labor supply appears adequate at present, but as the season progresses, the need for additional help is expected to become more pronounced. On June 1, farm employment in the South Atlantic region totaled 2,285,000 compared with 2,002,000 May 1 and 2,340,000 on June 1, 1943.

A cold spell in the Mountain States slowed down sheep-shearing operations, particularly in Wyoming where a considerable loss of old ewes resulted. Ranges are in good condition except in southern New Mexico where drought continues. Plantings are proceeding in all States but skilled labor is reported as scarce in parts of Idaho and Wyoming. As in most parts of the country, farm operators are working longer hours this June than last.

The greatest increase in farm employment during May appeared in the Pacific Coast States, where the total number of persons working on farms advanced more than 16 percent. Many jobs are now being performed in California which require large numbers of seasonal workers: peach thinning, cherry harvest, beet thinning, and harvest of various vegetables, potatoes, hay, grain, and flax. Cotton chopping in the San Joaquin Valley is nearly completed. Additional workers are needed in Washington, as farm work is still a little behind schedule for this time of year.

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

	Annual average 1910-14	May 1 1943	June 1 1943	May 1 1944	June 1 1944
FARM EMPLOYMENT (thousands of persons)	12,052	10,492	11,659	10,068	11,285
Family labor	9,160	8,248	8,962	8,079	8,845
Hired labor	2,892	2,244	2,697	1,989	2,440
FARM EMPLOYMENT INDEXES:					
Total -					
Unadjusted	100	87	97	84	94
Adjusted for seasonal variation	100	85	86	81	84
Family labor -					
Unadjusted	100	90	98	88	97
Adjusted for seasonal variation	100	85	87	83	86
Hired labor -					
Unadjusted	100	78	93	69	84
Adjusted for seasonal variation	100	84	83	74	75

Foreign workers employed in or available for agricultural war work by country of origin and State of employment as of May 31, 1944

Mexicans		Jamaicans		Bahamians		Newfoundlanders		Jap. evacuees	
State	No. of workers	State	No. of workers	State	No. of workers	State	No. of workers	State	No. of workers
Nebr.	33	Maine	89	N.Y.	213	Maine	56	Ill.	69
Mont.	3,267	Conn.	1,921	Pa.	100	N.H.	42	Nebr.	3
Idaho	1,811	N.Y.	220	Del.	376	Vt.	65	Mont.	3
Wyo.	848	N.J.	967	Md.	868	Mass.	47	Idaho	766
Colo.	2,195	Pa.	227	Va.	311	Conn.	74	Colo.	1
Ariz.	1,302	Ohio	372	N.C.	252	N.Y.	135	Utah	280
Utah	550	Ind.	185	Fla.	2,788	N.J.	25	Wash.	67
Nev.	188	Ill.	93			Pa.	50	Oreg.	158
Wash.	1,877	Mich.	118			Del.	25		
Oreg.	1,419	Fla.	885						
Calif.	23,016								
Total	36,506	Total	4,977	Total	4,888	Total	519	Total	1,347

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

TOTAL EMPLOYMENT

Geographic division	Apr. 1, 1943	May 1, 1943	June 1, 1943	Apr. 1, 1944	May 1, 1944	June 1, 1944
	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's
United States	9,308	10,492	11,659	9,080	10,068	11,285
New England	223	246	257	217	232	250
Middle Atlantic	553	590	632	544	580	613
E.North Central	1,335	1,437	1,502	1,313	1,414	1,499
W.North Central	1,500	1,626	1,756	1,467	1,564	1,707
South Atlantic	1,758	2,083	2,340	1,723	2,002	2,285
E.South Central	1,512	1,750	2,021	1,466	1,662	1,924
W.South Central	1,542	1,802	2,079	1,470	1,685	1,928
Mountain	398	427	479	390	411	476
Pacific	487	531	593	490	518	603

FAMILY WORKERS 1/

United States	7,433	8,248	8,962	7,401	8,079	8,845
New England	161	169	166	158	159	168
Middle Atlantic	404	414	415	400	407	417
E.North Central	1,123	1,166	1,221	1,118	1,167	1,217
W.North Central	1,281	1,345	1,438	1,279	1,336	1,428
South Atlantic	1,361	1,603	1,812	1,357	1,583	1,785
E.South Central	1,295	1,524	1,703	1,283	1,457	1,681
W.South Central	1,209	1,404	1,564	1,203	1,359	1,503
Mountain	297	301	319	298	300	328
Pacific	302	322	324	305	311	318

HIRED WORKERS

United States	1,875	2,244	2,697	1,679	1,989	2,440
New England	62	77	91	59	73	82
Middle Atlantic	149	176	217	144	173	196
E.North Central	212	271	281	195	247	282
W.North Central	219	281	318	188	228	279
South Atlantic	397	480	528	366	419	500
E.South Central	217	236	318	183	205	243
W.South Central	333	398	515	267	326	425
Mountain	101	126	160	92	111	148
Pacific	185	209	269	185	207	285

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

Based on reports from 19,964 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.

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

State	Operator			Hired workers		
	June 1, 1940	June 1, 1943	June 1, 1944	June 1, 1940	June 1, 1943	June 1, 1944
	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours
Maine	12.5	13.1	12.9	9.7	9.7	9.5
N. H.	11.5	12.1	12.2	9.4	9.4	9.7
Vt.	12.5	13.0	12.9	10.6	11.0	11.1
Mass.	11.5	11.9	11.6	10.0	10.0	9.8
R.I.	12.0	13.2	12.8	10.0	10.0	10.0
Conn.	11.5	12.1	12.0	10.1	10.1	10.1
N. Eng.	12.0	12.5	12.4	10.0	10.1	10.0
N.Y.	12.5	12.8	13.1	10.7	11.0	11.1
N.J.	12.0	12.5	12.6	10.6	10.6	10.0
Pa.	12.5	13.3	13.1	10.4	11.0	10.9
M.Atl.	12.5	13.0	13.1	10.6	10.9	10.9
Ohio	12.4	13.3	13.3	10.1	10.6	10.4
Ind.	12.6	13.3	13.5	10.4	11.1	11.0
Ill.	12.3	13.5	13.9	11.0	11.6	12.2
Mich.	12.4	13.2	13.4	10.4	10.8	11.1
Wis.	12.9	13.5	13.6	11.7	12.1	12.1
E.N.Cent.	12.5	13.4	13.5	10.8	11.3	11.4
Minn.	12.6	13.4	13.7	11.2	11.7	11.9
Iowa	12.6	13.7	14.0	11.2	11.9	12.3
Mo.	12.4	13.2	13.3	10.5	11.0	10.7
N.Dak.	12.5	14.0	13.6	11.5	12.4	12.0
S.Dak.	12.7	13.8	13.9	11.3	12.2	11.8
Nebr.	12.8	13.5	14.2	11.1	11.6	11.7
Kans.	12.5	13.2	13.1	10.7	10.9	11.0
W.N.Cent.	12.6	13.5	13.6	11.0	11.6	11.6
Del.	12.3	13.5	13.3	10.4	10.5	10.2
Md.	12.4	13.0	12.9	10.4	10.5	10.8
Va.	11.9	12.6	12.7	10.0	10.3	10.3
W.Va.	11.5	12.2	12.1	9.4	9.5	9.9
N.C.	11.7	12.0	12.3	10.2	10.2	10.4
S.C.	12.0	12.4	12.3	10.7	10.7	10.6
Ga.	11.9	12.3	12.6	10.8	10.8	10.8
Fla.	11.0	11.5	11.1	9.5	9.7	9.4
S.Atl.	11.8	12.3	12.4	10.3	10.4	10.5
Ky.	11 7	12.7	12.7	10.4	10.6	10.5
Tenn.	11.9	12.6	12.8	10.6	10.7	10.9
Ala.	11.8	12.4	12.1	10.7	10.7	10.6
Miss.	11.5	12.1	12.1	10.6	10.6	10.6
E.S.Cent.	11.7	12.4	12.4	10.5	10.6	10.6
Ark.	11.9	12.4	12.1	10.3	10.3	10.2
La.	11.2	12.0	11.3	10.0	10.0	9.9
Okla.	11.9	13.0	12.8	10.2	10.4	10.3
Tex.	11.9	12.8	12.7	10.4	10.4	10.4
W.S.Cent.	11.8	12.6	12.3	10.3	10.3	10.3
Mont.	12.6	13.3	13.1	10.7	11.2	10.8
Idaho	12.8	13.5	13.6	10.0	10.0	10.0
Wyo.	12.1	13.2	13.2	10.4	10.7	10.6
Colo.	12.5	13.2	13.4	10.5	11.0	10.7
N.Mex.	12.0	12.9	12.9	10.4	10.4	10.0
Ariz.	11.5	11.7	12.2	9.4	9.6	9.3
Utah	12.0	13.2	13.2	9.0	9.0	9.1
Nev.	11.6	12.9	12.1	9.0	9.0	10.5
Mount.	12.3	13.1	13.2	10.1	10.3	10.1
Wash.	11.5	12.7	12.3	10.0	10.0	9.8
Oreg.	11.8	12.5	12.2	9.6	9.6	9.5
Calif.	11.0	11.6	11.7	9.3	9.4	9.2
Pacific	11.3	12.1	12.0	9.5	9.6	9.3
U. S.	12.1	12.8	12.8	10.4	10.7	10.6

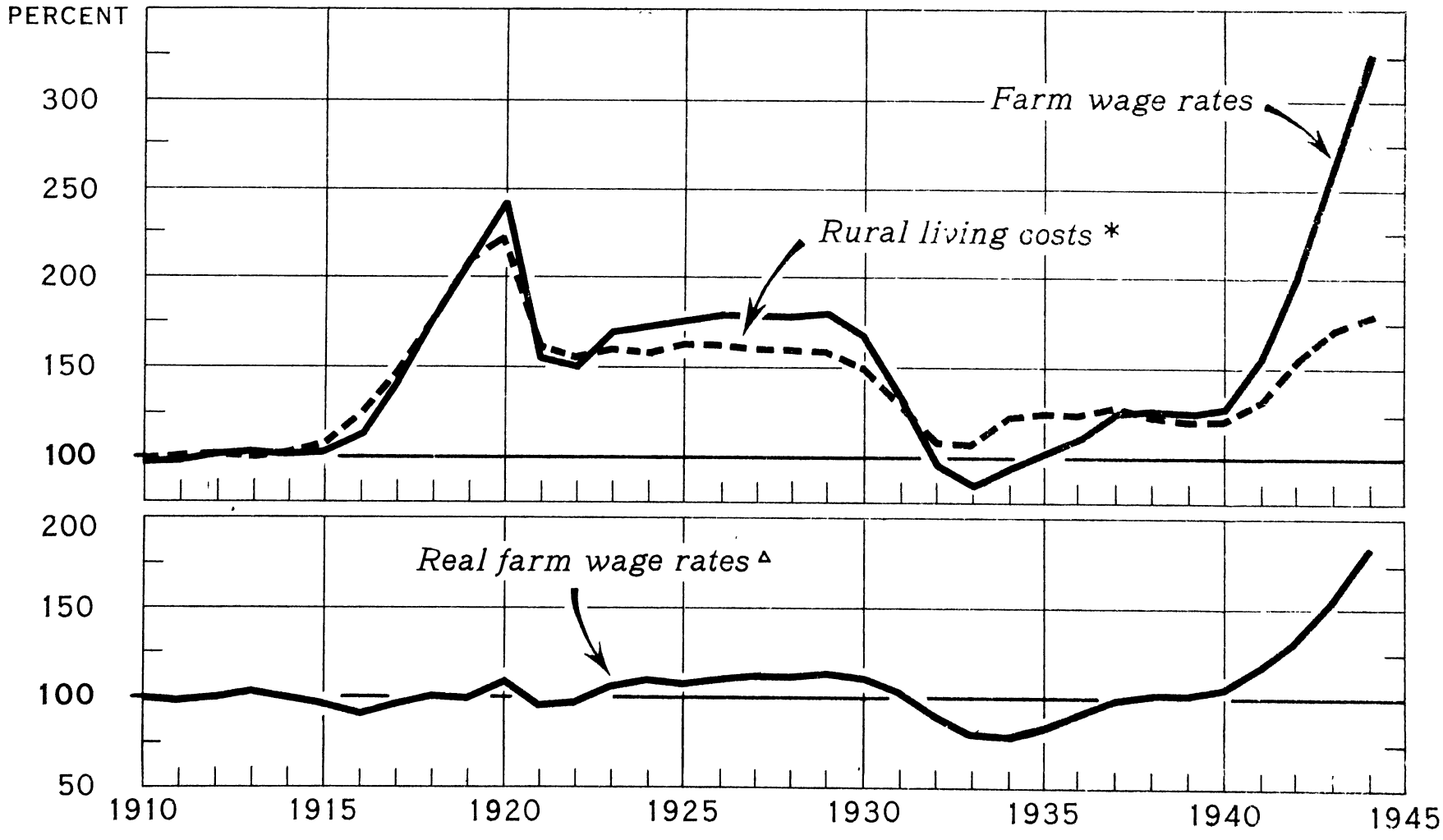
Farm wage rates, rural living costs, and real farm wage rates, United States, 1910-44
(Index numbers, 1910-14 = 100)

Year	Farm wage rates	Rural living costs 1/	Real farm wage rates 2/
1910	97	98	99
1911	98	100	98
1912	101	101	100
1913	103	100	103
1914	101	102	99
1915	103	107	96
1916	113	124	91
1917	141	147	96
1918	177	177	100
1919	207	210	99
1920	242	222	109
1921	155	161	96
1922	151	156	97
1923	169	160	106
1924	173	159	109
1925	176	163	108
1926	179	162	110
1927	179	160	112
1928	179	160	112
1929	180	159	113
1930	167	150	111
1931	130	128	102
1932	96	108	89
1933	85	108	79
1934	95	122	78
1935	103	124	83
1936	111	123	90
1937	126	128	98
1938	125	122	102
1939	123	120	102
1940	126	121	104
1941	154	131	118
1942	201	154	131
1943	264	170	155
1944 3/	325	178	183

1/ Prices paid by farmers for commodities used in family living.
2/ Wage rates divided by rural living costs.
3/ Preliminary estimates.

FARM WAGE RATES, RURAL LIVING COSTS, AND REAL FARM WAGE RATES, UNITED STATES, 1910-44

INDEX NUMBERS (1910-14=100)



*PRICES PAID BY FARMERS FOR COMMODITIES USED IN LIVING

△WAGE RATES DIVIDED BY RURAL LIVING COSTS

DATA FOR 1944 ARE PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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