FOREWORD

This report and summary of the Farm Labor Program in Colorado for the year 1949 is a prelude to an even more effective program in 1950. While this report is necessarily a statement of achievement of goals set in last year's campaign for the recruitment and mobilization of agricultural labor, it's primary purpose is a constructive review of procedures and problems as a basis for new plans, new goals, and new accomplishments.

This report serves as a text book for those who will be engaged in the farm labor program in 1950. It is a guide for the understanding and planning of all individuals and groups concerned with the success of agricultural production in Colorado.

On a broader scale, Colorado's "Post-Season Agricultural and Food Processing Report" becomes an important and integral part of The National Program . . . a contribution toward constant improvement of the excellent co-operation and coordination between the states in the exchange of labor market information and workers . . . and as an "idea exchange" to assist the State Employment Services in all states in recognizing problems peculiar to each state, and in profiting by successful experiences in solving mutual and kindred problems.

While serving these purposes, the 1949 Report also becomes a valuable source of information in the guidance and counseling of workers as to the places and seasons of agricultural work opportunity . . . and in early seasonal planning on the part of producers and processors, whose success often depends upon the timely availability of labor.

Thus, it is in the interest of rendering additional service, and with full acknowledgement to those whose cooperation made past success possible, that we offer this Report.

POST-SEASON FARM LABOR REPORT FOR 1949

STATE OF COLORADO

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ORGANIZATION OF THE FARM PLACEMENT PROGRAM

The Farm Placement Program of the Department of Employment Security in Colorado is a special function of the Colorado State Employment Service. The Program is under direction of a Farm Placement Supervisor who is responsible for developing, coordinating, and directing the carrying out of plans and programs on a state basis. The minimum staff of this section consists of an Assistant Farm Placement Supervisor and clerical assistants. The basic organization is expanded with seasonal work-load by temporary assignment of experienced interviewers and by temporary work assignments of other state office staff members.

Programs and policies are guided by a State Farm Advisory Council consisting of seven members representing various sections of the state and the major agricultural activities. Advisory Council members, with their addresses and agricultural activities, are as follows:

Mr. C. O. Plumb - Farmer - Greeley, Colorado
Mr. Lyman Wright - Farmer and Shipper - Monte Vista, Colorado
Mr. Fred Powell - Fruit Marketing - Grand Junction, Colorado
Mr. C. V. Maddux - National Farm Advisory Council - Denver, Colorado
Mr. C. F. Spaulding - Labor Supervisor, Holly Sugar Corporation - Colorado Springs, Colorado
Mr. Vern Lofgren - Manager, Rocky Ford Onion Growers Association - Rocky Ford, Colorado
Mr. Louis Reike - Farmer - Sterling, Colorado.

Similar committees have been organized in eleven of the major "problem areas" throughout the state, with membership following the same pattern as for the State Council.

In each of the thirty-one local offices of the Employment Service, responsibility for all phases of the Farm Placement Program rests with the Local Manager as an integral part of his placement operations.

In local offices where the farm program becomes a major seasonal function, additional personnel are assigned as work-load demands. In most local areas the basic program requires assignment of a farm interviewer exclusively.

Denver is the exception to this skeleton local office farm organization. Here, while the Manager is directly responsible for the program as conducted largely through two branch offices, he is assisted by a Coordinator.

PRE-SEASON PLANS

As a means of securing uniformity of operations in dealing with local problems and to insure maximum cooperation in the over-all state program, all local offices were assisted early in February in development of schedules in accordance with a *"Guide for the Development of the Farm Placement Program in Local Offices"*.

This Guide, prepared by the State Office, emphasized need for working out special programs for major crops on a state-wide cooperative basis. In this planning, it was recognized that the wide dispersion of special crops throughout the state would be a major factor in synchronizing the time and place of local requirements with the migrant flow toward these areas of peak crop demands.

On the basis of local office planning, special major crop programs were written at the state level for:

1. *Wheat and other small grains* - involving appointment of a "Coordinator" assigned for the purpose of assisting local office managers in the field in maintaining proper emphasis upon the major crop program.

2. *Vegetable harvest* - designed primarily for the Fort Lupton-Brighton and Northern Colorado areas.

3. *Sugar beets in Northern Colorado* - unique in that the problem is primarily one of planning for the utilization of la-

bor attached to the beet growing industry during slack periods between planting, hoeing, thinning, topping, and harvesting. Planning for sugar beet labor also involved considerable integration with hiring plans of company recruiters and with schedules of "supply" states.

4. *Sugar beets in the Arkansas Valley, San Luis Valley, and Western Slope* - complicated by the requirements of three different processing companies in these areas and tight scheduling for maximum utilization of beet labor in other crops in the areas.

5. *Peach harvest* - in which plans must be flexible enough to adjust readily to labor demands determined by such factors as weather, competition of other harvest demands, marketing and shipping problems, prices, and an extremely short period of peak labor demand, usually requiring about 6,000 workers during a two week period.

This program calls for the closest possible communication and coordination between the Grand Junction Office and all other local areas. It was necessary for the State Office to maintain daily control over supply and demand, not only between Colorado's applicant-holding offices, but also between neighboring state offices.

6. *Other special programs* - for example, schedules were drawn up for potato harvests in two major areas. One plan was devised for the Alamosa and Monte Vista offices, covering the San Luis Valley potato area where the problem was concerned with an area usually depleted of surplus labor at this time of year because of demands in other sections. The Northern Colorado potato program dealt with the problem of competing harvests and the close scheduling of labor transfers to achieve maximum utilization.

USE OF INDIAN WORKERS

Increasing interest in efforts to locate Reservation Indians in outside employment comes at a time when it is becoming more important in the agricultural program to have stable sources of reserve labor.

Taking advantage of interest in the several states of seasonal labor shortages and proximity to Indian Reservations, cooperative programs were arranged for two major areas: The Rosebud Indian Placement Program was developed in cooperation with the Rosebud Tribal Council, the Rosebud Reservation Indian Field Service, the Indian Service Area Office, and the State Employment Services of Colorado, Nebraska, and South Dakota.

ROSEBUD INDIAN PLACEMENT PROGRAM

Representatives of the Rosebud Tribal Council were conducted through a tour of Northern Colorado to observe crops, types of work, and to establish good relations with local farmers and farm groups. Later in the year, Employment Service representatives visited the Rosebud and Pine Ridge Indian Reservations to determine interests and potentials of Indian labor. Then, in cooperation with the Tribal Council, a tentative program was arranged for the processing of orders, recruitment, transportation arrangements and selective placement. Final approval of cooperative plans for the placement and utilization of Indian labor is now awaiting probable favorable action by the Tribal Councils of the two Reservations.

As the result of Employment Service "pioneer work", the program now in addition to a labor reserve for agriculture, provides for the expansion of opportunities for Indian workers in year-round agricultural and non-agricultural employment off the Reservations, and definite plans for improving working and living conditions in off-reservation employment through the cooperation of employers, community groups, civic organizations, and government officials.

NAVAJO INDIAN PLACEMENT PROGRAM

Upon completion early in 1949 of negotiations with the Navajo Indian

Welfare and Placement Service, the Cortez Local Office was designated as the official recruitment point and a qualified Navajo Indian was appointed as Special Farm Interviewer. This arrangement resulted in the placement of 900 Navajo Indians in 1600 different agricultural jobs during the 1949 season. Potentials for expanding services were explored through meetings with officials of the Navajo Indian Welfare Service from Shiprock, New Mexico and conferences with sugar company employers and peach growers.

In promotion of Navajo Indian employment, a booklet entitled, *"Recruitment of Navajo Indians for Colorado"* was published and distributed to select employers and civic leaders.

The booklet presented background information about the Navajo Indians, objectives of the program, responsibilities of the Indian Service and the Employment Service, housing and sanitation requirements, and recruitment regulations. A companion booklet, *"Information on Employment of Navajo Indians"*, containing more specific hiring suggestions, was published for use of likely employers.

FARM LABOR SUPPLY AND DEMAND

MAJOR ACTIVITIES

Major agricultural activities presenting problems of peak demand or difficult recruitment include:

1. Thinning, hoeing and harvesting of sugar beets.
2. Thinning and harvesting of peaches.
3. Weeding and harvesting of onions.
4. Harvesting of early and late potatoes.
5. Harvesting of vegetables, such as green peas, green beans, tomatoes, cucumbers, cabbage, and cauliflower.
6. Harvesting of broomcorn.
7. Wheat and other small grains.

The wheat and small grains harvests presented the greatest difficulties of mobilization of labor and equipment due to the uncertain routing of combines and crews in relation to harvests in other states and sporadic ripening in widely scattered areas in Colorado. At the beginning of the 1949 season, there were surpluses of combines and crews in nearly every harvest area, as a result of completed harvests in Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas. It was found that increased mechanical equipment in Colorado had lessened demand for the customary influx of out-of-state equipment. Most problems with other crops involved, primarily, a close watch upon peak schedules to permit a maximum transfer of labor from one crop to another and to the processing industries.

Due to improved planning on the part of local offices and growers . . . based largely upon experience of the previous year . . . local utilization and efficient transfer of workers contributed to a record harvest season in which there was no reported crop loss due to shortage or slow supply of labor.

EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

The post-season review indicates that the pre-season estimates secured through program planning totaled very close to the actual demand for 53,135 workers.

Because of ideal conditions, about 75% of the planted sugar beet acreage was ready for blocking and thinning at the same time. It appeared that the 8,000 Texas migrant workers recruited by the sugar processors, in addition to local labor, would not be sufficient to meet the immediate needs. However, a quickly increased tempo of interstate and intrastate recruitment according to schedule secured adequate labor to complete this phase of the sugar beet campaign without loss.

The sugar beet harvest was completed with equal efficiency, with usual end-of-season problems alleviated by the fact that about 45% of the crop was brought in by mechanical harvesters, under ideal conditions for this process. Although labor estimates were revised downward early in the program, the availability of Navajo Indians and contract transportation of some 234 Mexican Nationals by the sugar beet companies resulted in more than adequate labor for the beet harvest.

Most extensive local and state-wide mobilization of labor was carried out in the interest of Colorado's peach harvest. This program was aided by an extensive advertising and promotional campaign sponsored by the Peach Board of Control in cooperation with the Colorado State Employment Service. Twenty-nine of Colorado's thirty-two local offices referred workers to this program, while five surrounding states also contributed workers as a result of wide-spread promotion. In this campaign also, sixty Navajo Indians were used to advantage. Although the peach harvest comes at a time when workers are available for transfer from other crops and areas, the short two week work period and the transportation involved necessitate an intensive pre-harvest recruitment campaign.

In the green pea harvest, mechanization is also relieving a traditional problem of securing workers for a short harvest and packing shed program, in an area offering little opportunity for supplementary work.

The mid-summer potato harvest in Southern Colorado offered good opportunity for interim jobs with few recruiting problems. In Northern Colorado, however, a late harvest competes with the sugar beet campaign, again calling for close cooperation of local offices in transferring small surpluses to meet the peak demand.

An increasing broomcorn harvest in Southern Colorado is a perennial problem due to competition of jobs in other areas and sparse local population and opportunity at this time of year.

LABOR SUPPLIES

Local. Such area programs were designed to make maximum utilization of local labor first. In many instances, local supplies were found to meet requirements adequately and useless migration was avoided through constant dissemination of farm labor market information.

In the stoop crop areas the customary migration to Colorado supplemented a basic local supply of Spanish Americans. In some instances, notably in the sugar beet areas, additional workers were recruited under contract for peak operations.

Normally, Colorado's seasonal agricultural workers and inmigrants from other states have an agricultural background, but many come from the industrial centers and coal mining areas to secure work during slow or off-season lags.

Small grain harvests, other than wheat, were generally manned by local labor augmented by a scattering of crop followers. College and high school students on vacation are again becoming an important source of summertime labor supply in agriculture.

Food processing, canning, packing, and other operations are traditionally composed of local housewives and young and older people not normally in the labor market except for these seasonal campaigns.

Intrastate and interstate. In localities where local supplies were not adequate for year-round or seasonal needs, a well scheduled and well controlled system of intrastate and interstate recruitment resulted in an orderly supply of workers as needed, with few instances of surplus or shortage.

The state-wide recruitment program included considerations of sugar company plans for contract recruitment of a majority of labor needed for sugar beet blocking, thinning, hoeing, and harvesting . . . largely from Texas and New Mexico . . . with the assistance of the Employment Service.

Except for recruitment problems already discussed, there were few instances of need for emergency interstate recruitment . . . although a vast majority of agricultural workers in Colorado throughout the season actually came from other states. The overall problem was not one of "drafting" workers, but rather of orderly direction and planned utilization.

In the lesser, but picturesque, peach harvest program, improved operations of the Employment Service teamed with ideal weather and economic conditions to accomplish one of the most efficient harvests in many years. Prices were right to enable the crop to move quickly . . . which attracted workers and induced them to stay throughout the harvest. More adequate specifications and promotion resulted in a better selection and referral of qualified workers . . . more males and fewer women and children than in years past. As a result of

pre-season negotiations and planning, there was closer cooperation on the part of peach growers in the area.

RECRUITMENT AND DIRECTION OF SEASONAL AND YEAR-ROUND WORKERS

LOCAL RECRUITMENT

Intensive use of every media of public information and of public contacts was used in proportion to local needs for peak and emergency recruitment.

One of the most effective media . . . and most cooperative . . . was radio. Local newspapers also went beyond standards of "news" to disseminate information about labor needs.

Other printed devices included direct mail, distribution of pamphlets (note samples included in this report), calling cards, and bulletin boards.

If demands required, contacts were made with community centers, county agents, schools, public and civic groups, and churches.

Probably one of the most effective devices used during the 1949 season was a *mobile unit.* This was a specially constructed thirty foot house trailer drawn by a Ford panel truck . . . both are identified by department and Employment Service signs.

Both the truck and trailer were equipped with loud speaker equipment effectively used in announcing manpower needs and the temporary location of the mobile recruiting office.

The trailer was so designed as to afford a "rapid service" small office and convenient living quarters for a two man crew. In many centers the trailer was located to permit tie-in with telephone service for state-wide communication with other local offices. This equipment was introduced during the Palisade peach harvest with such success that its availability is being considered in relation to other critical points in the 1950 schedule.

INTERSTATE AND INTRASTATE RECRUITMENT AND DIRECTION

In actual operation the Farm Placement Program in Colorado is a seasonal expansion of the *Clearance* program. After plans and schedules for meeting farm requirements were drawn up at the local level and integrated at the state level, recruitment, transfers, and job information followed the well established channels of the clearance procedure, varying only in the addition of essential reports and bulletins in keeping with the stepped up volume and speed of activities. Thus, the machinery for both interstate and intrastate recruitment and direction was well established and equipped to take on the additional burden of the farm program.

This clearance system was augmented by several special techniques and devices peculiar to the farm labor program.

Special youth programs were instituted in the Denver and other urban areas to permit daily transportation of young farm workers to nearby fields. Volunteer farm labor representatives provided "information centers" in far flung localities not served by local offices. Six temporary offices were established in major crop areas to speed local recruitment and clearance processes.

One of the most useful devices for streamlining the clearance procedure for speedy farm labor recruitment was a weekly *"Colorado Farm Labor Bulletin"*. This was published from June 2 through November 3, 1949 . . . supplemented for brief periods by almost daily editions during peak activities.

This bulletin, containing information on crop conditions, progress of harvesting, labor supply and demand, wages and housing, became a valuable tool for local office referrals and was accepted as valuable news copy by both state and local press.

The 1949 program was facilitated remarkably with the centering of considerable recruiting and referring of workers through the Fort Lupton *labor camp*. The Fort Lupton Farm Labor Improvement Association was given federal lease to operate the government owned labor camp. Arrangements were made for adding two Colorado State Employment Service interviewers to the camp staff

with access to that source of labor supply and with freedom to offer labor camp facilities to qualified workers recruited through clearance procedures for anticipated needs in the area.

The Colorado State Employment Service worked closely with officials of health, educational, and youth organizations in exchange of information and facilities toward the improvement of living, working, and welfare conditions of local and migrant labor throughout the season.

RECRUITMENT AND PLACEMENT PROBLEMS

HOUSING

Through a continuous program of advice and information by the Employment Service, Colorado agricultural employers are becoming increasingly aware of the impediments to full and timely recruitment of labor caused by inadequate housing.

While there were no major housing problems encountered last year, the inadequacy of suitable dwelling units, particularly in the beet areas, added to the cost and time of recruitment for both the Employment Service and the employers.

The 1950 farm program includes an intensified campaign to acquaint employers with the fact that they can reduce the element of outside competition for labor with the added inducement of better housing.

TRANSPORTATION

Most Colorado employers, while depending upon Employment Service and normal migration for ordinary needs, have become accustomed to sharing a responsibility for transportation or transportation payment to workers for special activities. Sugar companies, for example, pay transportation for all workers recruited for or by them. Many employers in the Fort Lupton and Brighton areas provided transportation for workers recruited in Denver for vegetable harvests,

The peach growers have normally depended upon migration and "vacation" interest to attract workers for the two week harvest in the Western Slope Area. Last year, however, transportation was paid for sixty Navajo Indians.

WAGES

The minimum wage for blocking, thinning, and topping of sugar beets is established by the Sugar Section of the United States Department of Agriculture. Very few employers divert from this scale of wages and then only because of some unusual condition when a higher wage is paid.

Wages paid in the small grains harvest varied because of the large surplus of men and machines. Wage scale ranges were reported as follows:

Laborers - $6.00 to $12.00 per day, with board and room only on the lower scale.

Truck Drivers - Mostly paid on the basis of 5¢ per bushel for the first 5 miles plus ½¢ per bushel per mile over 5 miles.

Combine Operators - $8.00 to $20.00 per day with board and room furnished in many cases.

Combines - $2.50 to $4.00 per acre with bonuses from 5¢ to 10¢ per bushel for over 20 bushels.

The wage paid for the peach harvest workers has remained constant for several years; 70¢ per hour or 10¢ per bushel for picking with a bonus of 10¢ per hour or 2¢ per bushel to those continuing throughout the harvest.

Potato harvest wages started at 10¢ to 12¢ per 100 pound sack for picking in Northern Colorado and around 14¢ in the San Luis Valley, and from 2¢ to 4¢ for loading or bucking. In many instances, growers advanced the wage in order to keep the labor in the fields.

Due to more experienced year-round workers being available, wages were reduced in some areas, generally the wages ranged from $85.00 to $100.00 for single men, board and room furnished; and from $125.00 to $175.00 for married men, living quarters furnished. Wages offered at times were not satisfactory

to the workers and caused considerable shifting of labor from area to area, seeking higher wages.

FOREIGN LABOR (Mexican Nationals)

All Mexican Nationals were brought in under contract by the Great Western Sugar Comapny, which in turn assigned them to their individual growers without the assistance of the Employment Service; therefore, the actual number of employers is unknown.

There was only one request made for certification of need for Mexican Nationals and that was by the Great Western Sugar Company. This request was made for a certification of need for a maximum of 1500.

There were actually 234 Mexican Nationals employed in Northern Colorado at the peak of the sugar beet harvest. They were used from the first part of October until the first part of November.

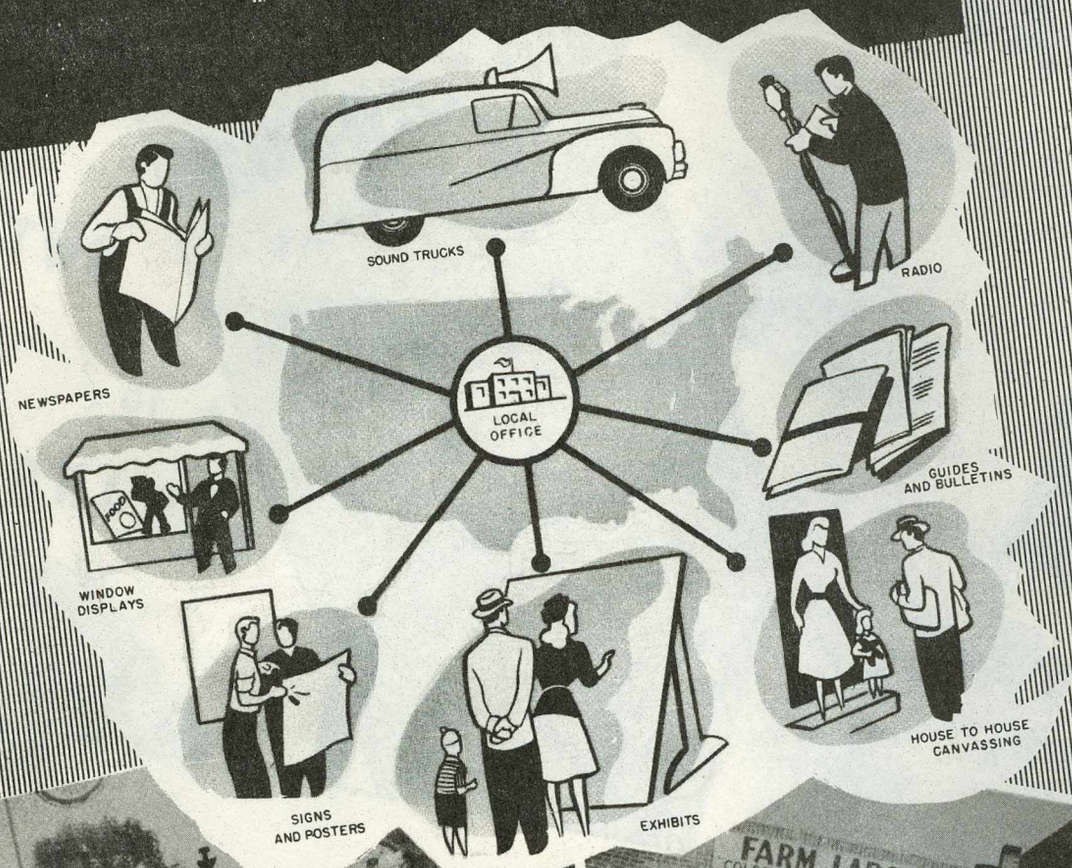
Very few problems were encountered except for a few cases of investigations having to be made to justify individual contracts being cancelled and the worker returned to Mexico.

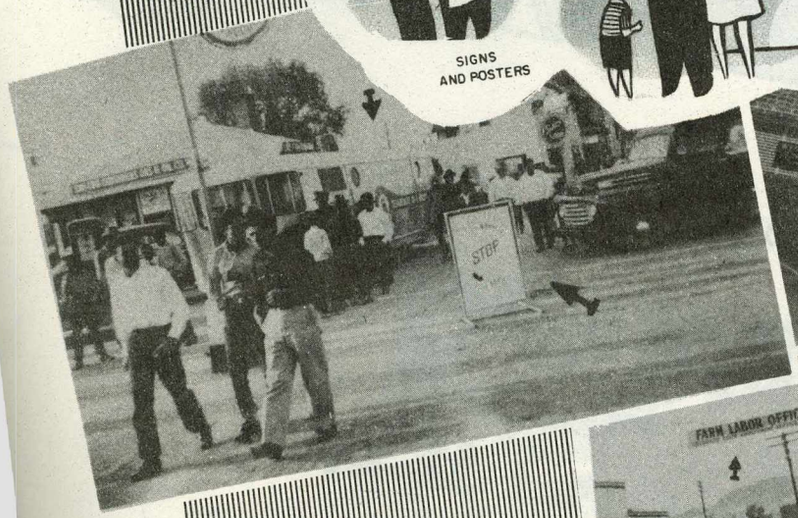
It is hoped that with the final approval of the Sioux Indian recruitment programs, a supply of labor will be available to eliminate much of future needs for any foreign labor.

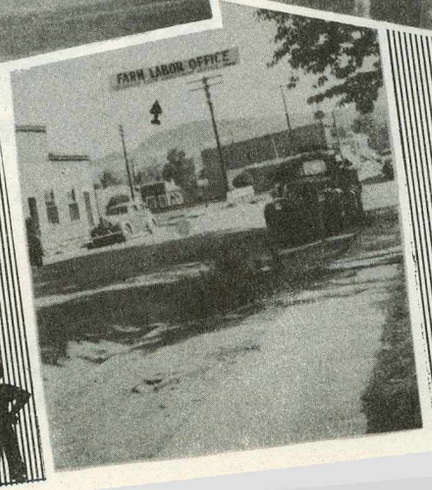
EVALUATION

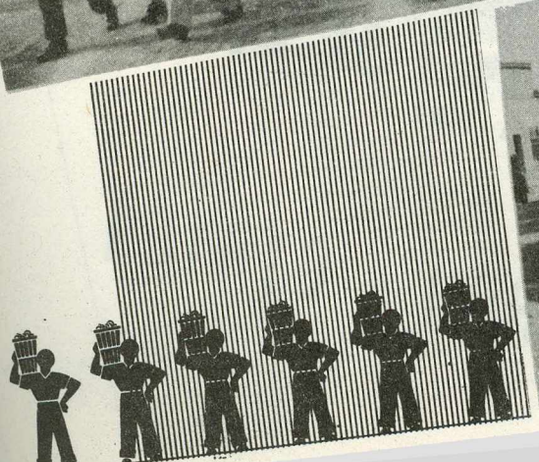
Colorado's Farm Placement Program must be evaluated in terms beyond the more than 200,000 placements made during the season. Due to experience gained after the first year of re-assumed responsibility for recruitment of farm labor, early season planning by local offices and at the state level was more complete in 1949 . . . and interpretations of local, statewide, and interstate data were more useful. Early in the season goals of 25% increase in farm placements and 25% increase in farm employer visits were established. These goals were were exceeded . . . placements increased 54.4% and employer visits 42.3%.

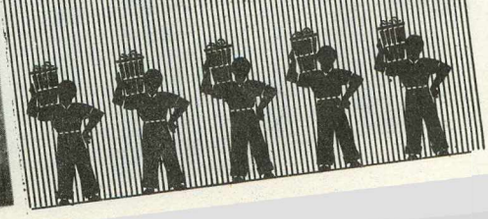
Labor Requirements FOR AGRICULTURE

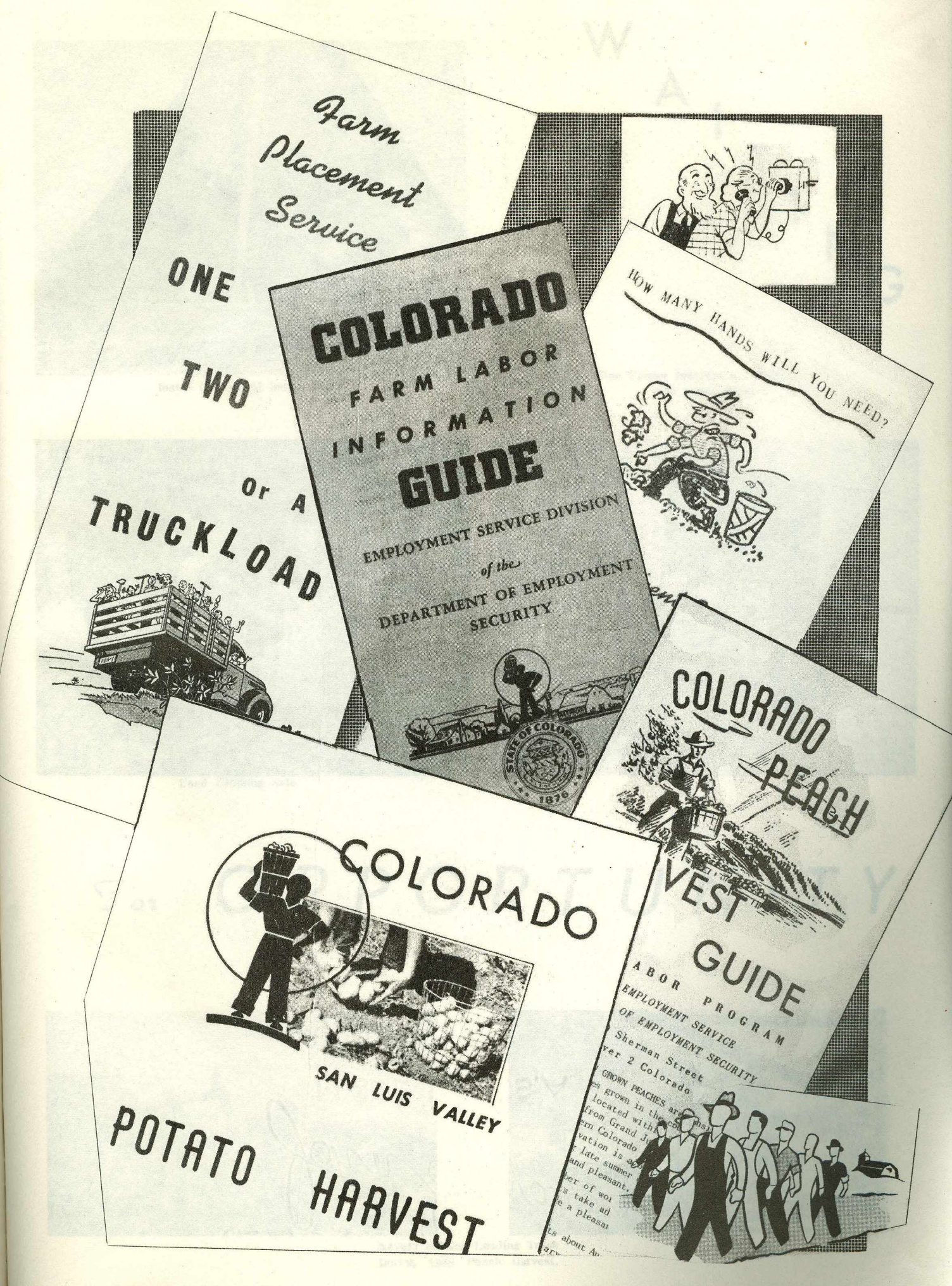











Farm Placement Service
ONE
TWO
or A
TRUCKLOAD
COLORADO
FARM LABOR
INFORMATION
GUIDE
EMPLOYMENT SERVICE DIVISION
of the
DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY
STATE OF COLORADO
1876
HOW MANY HANDS WILL YOU NEED?
COLORADO
PEACH
VEST
GUIDE
ABOR PROGRAM
EMPLOYMENT SERVICE
OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY
Sherman Street
ver 2 Colorado
COLORADO
SAN LUIS VALLEY
POTATO HARVEST

WAITING

Inside Of Typical Indian Tent

One Farmer Provides a Commissary
For Indian Workers

Used Clothing Sale

For OPPORTUNITY

Navajo Indians Loading Truck
During 1949 Peach Harvest.

COLORADO
FARM LABOR BULLETIN

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

COLORADO STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE
1280 Sherman Street
Denver 2, Colorado

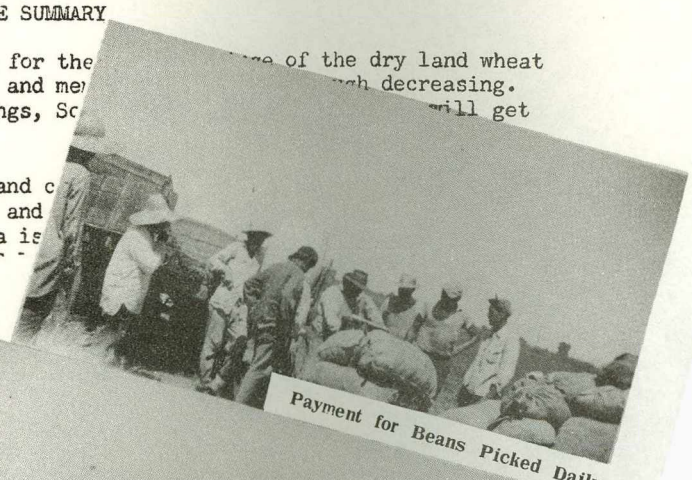
NUMBER 9-49 JULY 29, 1949

STATE SUMMARY

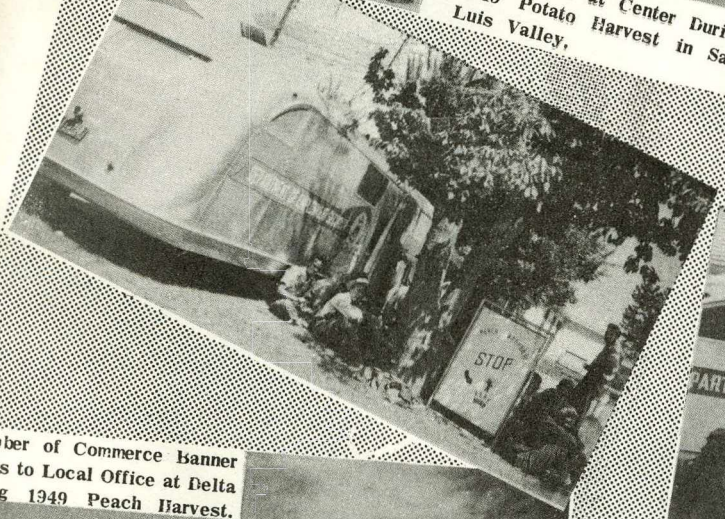
The wheat harvest is completed except for the ...ge of the dry land wheat belt. A surplus of combines, trucks, and me... ...gh decreasing. ...hay harvest in the Steamboat Springs, So... ...will get ...next week.

...plete. Bean and c... ...ets, and ...alfa is...

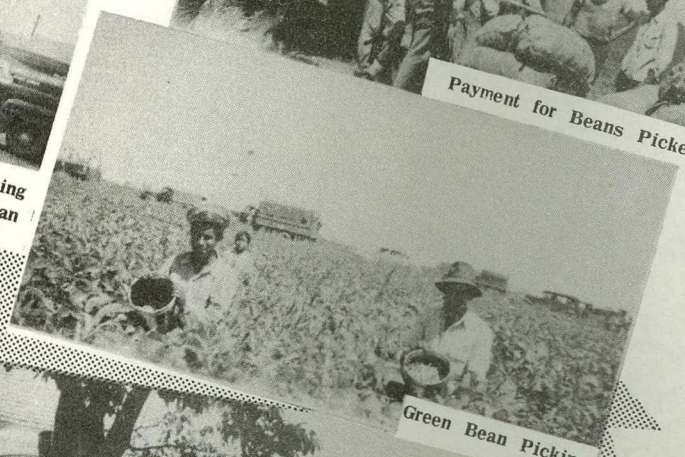
Mobile Unit at Center During 1949 Potato Harvest in San Luis Valley.



Payment for Beans Picked Daily

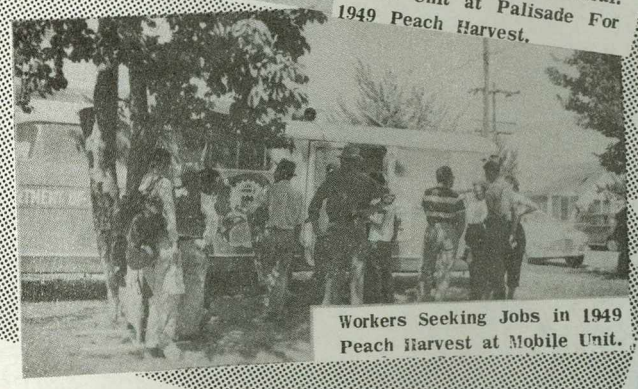


Chamber of Commerce Banner Points to Local Office at Delta During 1949 Peach Harvest.



Green Bean Picking

Applicants Waiting Referral. Mobile Unit at Palisade For 1949 Peach Harvest.



Workers Seeking Jobs in 1949 Peach Harvest at Mobile Unit.