John M. Sakrison | Wade E. Church, CHAIRMAN | Ray A. Hunt

Employment Security Commission of Arizona
ARIZONA STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE
Affiliated with
United States Employment Service

POST-SEASON FARM LABOR REPORT FOR 1949
STATE OF ARIZONA

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JANUARY 10, 1950

cantaloupes and can hardly be called a major activity in terms of labor demand since all packing shed activities combined rarely use more than 6,000 workers with a peak of 3,000 during any given period. The great bulk of the labor required for agricultural and food processing activities in Arizona is seasonal. There is no year-round activity that could be considered of major importance in terms of labor demand. Such year-round activities as the raising of livestock, dairy farming, and the care of citrus groves create no farm labor problem.

B. EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

Seasonal labor requirements vary widely from year to year in accordance with acreage planted and the condition of various crops. An example of this is the tremendous increase in requirements for the 1949 cotton crop over 1948. In 1948, there were 274,000 acres planted which produced a demand for approximately 30,000 cotton pickers. In 1949, with 375,000 acres planted to cotton and an excellent crop resulting from near ideal weather conditions, the demand increased to approximately 50,000 workers in spite of far more extensive use of mechanical pickers. The seasonal peak in labor requirements is determined entirely by the cotton crop with other activities completely overshadowed. The cotton harvest reaches its peak during the period from October 15 to November 15 with requirements for citrus pickers and vegetable harvest hands reaching a peak from November 15 to December 15. During this period the citrus and vegetable harvests require from 8,000 to 10,500 workers. This brings the total requirements to about 60,000 seasonal workers late in November. To this figure may be added approximately 6,000 to 8,000 year-round workers in a variety of agricultural activities. This year the seasonal employment pattern was in sharp variance with other years. Normally labor requirements increase rapidly with cotton chopping activity from April to June but drop again to reach a seasonal low in late July and early August. This season there was no appreciable drop after the seasonal increase in late April. Cotton chopping continued through July with picking starting earlier than usual in August. Large groups of workers were able to move from cotton chopping and the cantaloupe harvest directly into cotton picking without leaving the State. Growers arranged with certain selected workers to continue on in their housing at no cost during the interim period and extended the cotton chopping by allowing their workers to work but three days per week instead of six or seven. Because of this there was a large nucleous of workers already in the fields when cotton picking began.

C. LABOR SUPPLIES

1. LOCAL

Local labor is used in all crop activities, however, there are certain activities such as the fall lettuce cultivation and harvest which occur during cotton harvest that use local labor exclusively. Local workers will pick cotton until the word goes out that the lettuce is ready and overnight they change occupations. This causes no problem since all growers recognize and anticipate the need. The same situation exists in all other fresh vegetable crops as carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage but the labor demand in these last named crops is much less than for lettuce. Vegetable crops of one kind or another are being harvested from November until April. During June and July, cantaloupe and melon crops are harvested and again the labor force is almost entirely composed of local labor.

No definite statement may be made as to sex and race. Spanish-Americans, Anglo-Americans, and Indians in that order make up the local labor force and in all vegetable stoop labor activities, women and men work alongside of each other in the fields. Navajo Indians usually confine their activities to work in carrots with a few in cotton. Other Indians such as Papagos, Pimas, and Maricopas, work in all crops, changing as stated above to such activities as lettuce or cantaloupe harvesting when these activities get under way.

In a general statement as to sex, one-third of the labor force in vegetable activities are women with two-thirds men.

2. INTRASTATE AND INTERSTATE

In Arizona there is not the intrastate movement of domestic labor that is noted in other areas of the country. For some reason, probably because so many of the workers have their own small farms, they do not move to the different sections of the State as crop activities develop. Our findings in this matter merely confirmed last year's experience when we attempted to recruit local workers in the Mesa area, who were unemployed at that time, to work in cantaloupes in the Yuma valley. We met with a great deal of resistence and found that the workers preferred to wait for crop activities in their own area. They spent their unemployed time at various tasks on their own little farms. The same condition existed in several areas of the State this year and we met with increased resistence in proportion to our recruitment efforts.

The successful operation of the tri-state agreement started in 1948 with the Indian Service for recruiting workers from the Navajo Reservation gained considerable momentum in 1949. Although this constitutes a tremendous supply of farm labor, the workers are reluctant to leave their reservation until sure of the advantages. This season first-hand information from the previous year's experience was available to the Navajos with the result that we were able to get 400 for the cotton harvest compared with 100 last year and approximately 1,600 for work in vegetables compared with 1,000 a year ago.

Interstate labor provides the great bulk of our seasonal cotton workers. The characteristics of these migratory farm workers are brought out in another portion of this report; i.e., the section dealing with Information Stations. We have been unable in the two years of operation of the farm program to establish a definite pattern of migrations other than that the bulk of the workers flow from states to the east of Arizona from September through December. We operated interstate information stations during the August-December period in 1948 and 1949 and found that the majority of migratory farm workers came into Arizona over Arizona State Highway 86. The second largest group of farm workers came into the State via U. S. Highway 70. The greatest number of both years came from Texas, with Oklahoma second, and New Mexico third. See Information Station report under IV, B below.

While many growers were sent by the Arizona State Employment Service to the states of Texas, Oklahoma, and Idaho to conduct positive recruitment of cotton pickers, we have no way of knowing with any degree of accuracy to what extent workers were brought in under contract. According to the information obtained at the Arizona Information Stations, there were 5,783 workers in crews. It is presupposed that a crew has a crew leader or contractor for its direction; however, we find that to some extent large family groups (consisting of several families) will appoint one of their number as crew leader or contractor in order to take advantage of the bonus rate of 25¢ per cwt. paid to the contractor. On the other hand there were 10,029 workers who entered the State with definite work arrangements. If one considers an oral promise of work upon arrival at a specific place a contract then we may consider that the above number had contracts.

3. OTHER SOURCES

No Puerto Ricans were used in Arizona in 1949 because of the distance involved in the recruitment and transportation of these workers. Because Arizona borders the State of Sonora, Mexico, and because Mexican Agricultural labor has crossed the border to

work in cotton ever since the crop was first raised in Arizona, Mexican National Agricultural workers were contracted again this year. Statements of need were issued for 7,200. However only 6,223 were actually contracted and approximately 350 of these had returned or had been returned home within a period of two weeks after the initial contracting in Mexico.

D. MECHANIZATION

The only significant increase in mechanization which has taken place during the past year is the increased use of cotton picking machines. From 120 to 125 mechanical pickers worked in the State at some time during the season. Pinal County growers made the widest use of machines with about 60 in that area alone; Maricopa County used about 50. Seven were used intermittently in Graham and Greenlee Counties and five in Pima County. There is a wide difference of opinion concerning the advantages of mechanical picking. Some gins and growers report an equal or better grade than with hand picking; an equal number report a considerably poorer grade. The fact remains that in most cases machines were used most extensively during the period of the greatest shortage of hand pickers and were replaced as hand pickers became available. Some growers who had machines available let them lie idle this season as long as they could be assured of getting their cotton hand picked with no more than a thirty-day delay. It is estimated that less than 10% of the total crop will be harvested by mechanical pickers. There has been some use of disc cross-cultivation as a means of cotton thinning, however this has been on an experimental basis and as far as we have heard no determination has been made as to increased use of this method. Actually, mechanization has done little to reduce labor requirements.

E. SHORTAGES AND SURPLUSES

Significant labor shortages and surpluses follow a constant pattern in Arizona. Starting with January when the cotton harvest is fairly well completed, the first surpluses appear. These increase as the cotton harvest is completed and then within a two-weeks' period the surplus drops considerably as the migratory farm workers return to their home states. (This is supposition on our part as we have no statistical information as to where these workers go when they leave Arizona in February and March.) Some workers remain in the State until May when farming operations open in the sugar beet fields in other states, at which time they leave. There is some in-migration of labor into the State from Texas and New Mexico in May and June and, this labor is utilized in cotton chopping and the cantaloupe harvest.

Throughout the summer there are no appreciable shortages or surpluses of labor. Local domestic laborers usually work on their own small farms and are available for recruitment if work is offered by the large growers.

The first significant shortage usually appears in August when a demand for cotton pickers is made. The shortage increases until mid-October which begins the peak of cotton picking operations. From mid-November until mid-December the shortage demand drops rapidly, completing the cycle with the first appreciable surplus appearing in mid-January. The following table gives a visual picture of the 1949 shortages and surpluses:

SURPLUS		ADEQUATE	SHORTAGE	
January 15	+ 2400	June	August 26	- 200
January 30	+ 3450	July	September 9	- 4600
February 15	+ 6500		September 15	- 7000
February 28	+ 2750		September 30	- 8950
March 15	+ 1800		October 15	-15300
March 30	+ 1300		October 30	-10250
April 30	+ 1200		November 15	- 8000
May 15	+ 700		November 30	- 3100
			December 15	- 1800

INFORMATION STATIONS--MIGRATION BY MONTH

STATE OF ORIGIN						
STATE	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	TOTALS
Alabama	3	9	16	-	10	38
Arizona	127	249	227	247	187	1,037
Arkansas	140	118	485	523	875	2,141
California	103	101	93	146	416	859
Colorado	17	24	14	17	44	116
Florida	2	-	-	2	-	4
Georgia	4	-	-	-	-	4
Idaho	4	-	3	-	10	17
Illinois	-	8	14	7	4	33
Indiana	-	25	10	31	16	82
Iowa	-	-	-	11	-	11
Kansas	-	11	19	2	27	59
Kentucky	-	9	20	13	12	54
Louisiana	28	2	5	9	5	47
Michigan	9	7	30	44	38	128
Mississippi	11	5	17	40	42	115
Missouri	72	50	112	143	549	926
Montana	-	-	-	7	14	21
Nebraska	-	-	-	14	10	24
New Jersey	-	-	11	-	-	11
New Mexico	346	427	495	598	661	2,527
New York	-	-	-	2	-	2
North Dakota	-	-	-	4	-	4
Ohio	5	-	24	24	17	70
Oklahoma	734	1,498	779	485	960	4,456
Oregon	11	-	-	11	-	22
Tennessee	6	7	31	15	12	71
Texas	1,168	2,363	1,819	2,319	5,295	12,964
Washington	-	-	6	-	27	33
Utah	1	-	12	-	-	13
Wyoming	-	3	-	-	-	3
Unknown	35	65	74	85	47	306
Total	2,824	4,981	4,316	4,799	9,278	26,198

STATE OF DESTINATION						
STATE	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	TOTALS
Arizona	2,605	4,765	3,796	4,311	8,829	24,306
California	193	198	505	441	920	1,757
Oregon	11	8	-	5	-	24
Texas	-	-	-	37	24	61
Washington	11	7	-	-	-	18
Unknown	4	3	15	5	5	32
Total	2,824	4,981	4,316	4,799	9,278	26,198

Note: Because reporting was on a weekly basis rather than monthly basis, the above figures are not in every case an exact monthly count.

INFORMATION STATIONS
WEEKLY MIGRATION OF WORKERS

Week Ending	Benson	Safford	Yuma	Weekly Total	Aggregate Total	1948 Total
Aug. 7	91	25		116	116	93
14	436	37	9	482	598	320
21	757	63	43	863	1,461	884
28	639	87	23	749	2,210	1,767
Sept. 4	797	103	16	916	3,126	2,910
11	891	132	26	1,049	4,175	4,053
18	700	140	46	886	5,061	5,212
25	812	150	75	1,037	6,098	6,397
Oct. 2	384	187	24	595	6,693	7,581
9	520	132	27	679	7,372	9,236
16	502	98	40	640	8,012	11,023
23	475	174	9	658	8,670	12,337
30	544	208	Closed 1 Wk.	752	9,422	13,161
Nov. 6	419	196	47	662	10,084	14,312
13	556	334	34	924	11,008	15,826
20	564	346	57	967	11,975	17,347
27	747	481	50	1,278	13,253	18,487
Dec. 4	1,070	775	45	1,890	15,143	19,606
11	1,440	514	337	2,291	17,434	21,174
18	1,372	399	55	1,826	19,260	22,394
25	437	181	Closed 1 Wk.	618	19,878	22,982
31	527	130	16	673	20,551	23,136
Total	14,680	4,892	979	--	--	--

INFORMATION STATIONS
CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRANTS -- BY WEEK

Week Ending	Total Workers	With Work Arrangements	COMPOSITION					RACE			
			Total Persons	As Families	As Crews	As Individuals	Unknown	White	Latin American	Negro	Other
Aug. 7	116	24	154	119	-	35	-	116	33	5	-
14	482	340	637	312	235	90	-	234	343	54	6
21	863	637	1,134	927	139	68	-	318	453	363	-
28	749	499	899	549	180	163	7	389	273	237	-
Sept. 4	916	685	1,205	806	184	215	-	436	575	185	9
11	1,049	794	1,395	942	255	186	12	350	601	438	6
18	886	593	1,081	594	349	138	-	554	375	145	7
25	1,037	761	1,300	770	278	219	33	355	642	278	25
Oct. 2	595	337	785	529	158	93	5	347	298	120	20
9	679	426	871	518	261	92	-	314	362	192	3
16	640	411	854	597	161	78	18	446	238	164	6
23	658	336	893	598	162	91	42	305	310	272	6
30	752	349	913	524	296	93	-	365	209	339	-
Nov. 6	662	268	830	499	205	126	-	287	372	165	6
13	924	369	1,154	739	192	223	-	536	320	298	-
20	967	416	1,180	638	342	195	5	527	402	251	-
27	1,278	359	1,632	940	454	214	24	682	607	342	1
Dec. 4	1,890	779	2,334	1,259	738	337	-	1,154	823	357	-
11	2,291	1,018	2,808	1,562	715	531	-	1,164	1,117	476	51
18	1,826	383	2,420	1,771	252	365	32	935	1,173	312	-
25	618	68	844	611	64	133	36	318	464	82	-
31	673	177	875	619	163	93	-	290	458	127	-
TOTALS	20,551	10,029	26,198	16,423	5,783	3,778	214	10,422	10,448	5,182	146

Transportation is never a problem in Arizona. Growers are willing to transport workers in their trucks under positive recruitment efforts and have gone as far as Idaho and central Texas in such recruitment.

Wages do not present any problem. Arizona growers seem aware of the wage factor and meet any competitive bid. The prevailing wage in Arizona is fair and workers are willing to travel long distances to work here when proper housing is assured.

Because of predominantly good weather in Arizona, health is not a problem. Medical facilities are available in all small communities; however, growers do not provide medical care for their workers. Neither do growers provide mess halls or other feeding facilities for seasonal workers. As usual there are one or two exceptions where the grower operates a mess hall and provides meals at a nominal cost.

Most of the problems encountered in recruiting migratory workers are caused by improper handling of clearance procedures or are the result of poor training and broken promises. The first cause creates no serious problem as the cooperation between all local and State offices in the far Western States is excellent and refinements in regular clearance procedures can be readily developed as needed. The second becomes a real problem, and one that is extremely difficult to overcome. As an example, a grower requests clearance into another state to conduct positive recruitment. All arrangements are made, the grower is given a letter of identification and states his leaving and estimated arrival time at the applicant-holding office. Everything appears to be fine. The next that is heard is a call from the applicant-holding office that the grower did not arrive and is now a day overdue. The workers called in for his arrival and interview are disgruntled and are dispersing. A check at the grower's home reveals that just as the truck was ready to leave somebody told him that he could get workers in "X" State for $2.00 per head, so he decided to go there. This sort of thing happens often enough to threaten the sanity of local office personnel. The methods available to combat it are few. You cannot call a man guilty until he is proven guilty, neither can you suggest that the stunt Farmer Joe Doe just pulled is not cricket in your book and you hope that Farmer Smith is not thinking of using such methods. The example above is just one of the several that perplex Farm Office personnel and is a matter which must be taken on an individual basis.

V. PUERTO RICAN AND FOREIGN LABOR

A. Because of the geographic location of Arizona, Mexican National Agricultural workers were the only foreign workers used in 1949. In accordance with the suggestions of the International Executive Agreement between United States and Mexico for the importation of farm labor, the only requests entertained were from employer associations. All cotton growers in the State belong to the Cotton Growers' Association and all vegetable growers belong to the Agricultural Commodities Inc., or the Yuma Producers Cooperative Association. This situation simplified what would otherwise have been a difficult problem. We, therefore, received three orders, one from each of the three above named associations. The Arizona Cooperative Cotton Growers' Association requested a total of 6,000 workers. The Agricultural Commodities, Inc., requested a total of 800 workers, and the Yuma Producers Cooperative Association requested a total of 2,000 workers.

On October 1, 1949 our local farm offices listed 303 orders for 21,283 workers. On these orders 7,591 workers had been supplied, not including contracted Mexican National workers, leaving a need of 13,746 workers. On November 1, the same local farm offices listed a total of 430 orders for 22,414 workers. On these orders 11,204 had been supplied (exclusive of contracted workers) leaving a need for 11,210 workers.

B. The Arizona State Employment Service issued statements of need for each of the three associations named above. Various requests were received for increased numbers but in the final analysis the Cotton Growers received a certification for 4,700, the Yuma Producers Cooperative for 1,700, and the Agricultural Commodities, Inc., for 800.

C. The group at Yuma were all legalized "wet-backs" and the entire 1,700 were contracted and employed. Of the 800 for the Agricultural Commodities, approximately 780 were contracted and employed. There were circumstances connected with the certification for the Cotton Growers' Association which made it impossible to contract the entire number. Approximately 4,000 were contracted in Phoenix and Hermosillo and when the 700 amendment was approved, the contracting center at Hermosillo was closed. This resulted in only 68 wet-backs who were in the area being contracted. Also while nearly 4,000 were brought into Arizona under the certification, within two weeks over 300 had skipped or were shipped home at their request or at the request of the grower. Actually there were only about 3,700 workers picking cotton under the 4,700 certification. This total of approximately 6,200 workers continued on until about mid-December when cotton growers began shipping them home in increased numbers daily. The contracts which had been written for three months began expiring on December 23 and on December 30 there was less than 1,500 workers contracted by the Cotton Growers' Association remaining in the State. This balance was being sent home as fast as transportation could be provided.

D. Such problems as were encountered during the 1949 cotton picking season were ones of misunderstanding and were easily corrected. The use of Mexican National Agricultural Workers is nothing new in Arizona. Historically, "wet-backs" have constituted a part of the labor force and many growers consider the use of Nationals not a privilege but a right.

E. It is felt that with the refinement and extension of the recruitment which was undertaken with Oklahoma and Texas this past year a larger number of cotton pickers will be available earlier in the season. This will alleviate the worker demand substantially. We have also developed a contact with the State of Idaho and were very successful in recruiting workers from this source later in the season. With these and other media such as the Farm Bulletin which is distributed to 16 states, 9 information stations, and other interested persons, we feel that the demand for foreign workers should be reduced substantially next season.

VI. EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

At the end of the second calendar year of operations in the Farm Placement Program, we feel that we have much better employer relations than a year ago. This is because our Farm Representatives have attempted to serve the employer honestly, to provide him with the type and number of employees he demands, and where this has been impossible to tell him the truth about the situation. Through the flow of intrastate information provided our farm representatives, they are able to discuss, and where requested, advise growers on conditions and problems. They have a better over-all grasp of state-wide farming conditions and growers are more frequently seeking this information. Because we have attempted to serve the growers in such minor phases as the providing of lighted areas in the pre-daylight hours from 5:00 a.m. on, growers are using our facilities more and more.

We do not believe that our farm representatives are working any harder than they did last year, as that would be impossible. They do, however, have a better grasp of the Program. They are all without exception, men who have had some farming experience and they have through a two-years association come to talk the farmers' language. A challange was given the State Employment Service in the increased acreage planted to cotton this year. An increase of 100,000 acres meant a demand for an additional 10,000 workers. With increased acreage in all the cotton growing states the outlook for more workers than were obtained in 1948 was

I. SAKRISON

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EMPLOYMENT SECURITY COMMISSION

ARIZONA STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

Affiliated with

UNITED STATES EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

Farm Labor Office
224 W. Jefferson
Phoenix, Arizona

Date

Gentlemen:

For the purpose of planning and arranging for sufficient harvest hands for the melon crop in this area we have taken the liberty of sending this inquiry.

At the present time there is no contract in force with the Mexican Government for the further importation of Mexican Nationals. We do not have information as to when an agreement may be reached as our Government has taken exception to portions of the previous contract wherein the Mexican Government elects to arbitrarily, select areas and associations within such area that may participate; designate certain areas in the interior where recruitment may occur; and designate points of entry for workers.

We are enclosing a self-addressed postcard containing requests for information that will enable us to plan channeling of domestic labor to this area for the peak melon requirements. We wish to avoid a labor surplus in this period, however, we also wish to guard against a severe shortage as was experienced last year.

This survey will be of little value unless all cards are returned. Should you desire to discuss your needs with us personally, please contact this office and a representative will call on you.

Your early attention to this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Yours truly,

John R. Foley
Manager

RM LABOR

Exhibit C

REQUEST FOR PRE-SEASON LABOR DEMAND--SPECIFIC CROPS

Gentlemen:

Harvest of this company's melon crop of____acres cantaloupe,_____acres honeydew and_____acres watermelon will require_____harvest hands. Of this number we have arranged for_____locally (former employees, etc.). We anticipate the need for_____workers other than previous commitments.

_____
(Company)

By:_____

one cent
stamp

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