



Agricultural Labor Survey

United States Department of Agriculture

National Agricultural Statistics Service

2008

The Agricultural Labor Survey is conducted quarterly by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). It provides regional and national farm labor estimates for the number of hired workers, average hours worked and average wage rates by type of worker – field, livestock, combined field and livestock, and all hired workers.

HOW ARE THE DATA COLLECTED?

The Agricultural Labor Survey is conducted quarterly in all states. NASS will collect data from more than 12,000 agricultural operations, which are selected from among the nation's 2.1 million farms. During the last two weeks of July, October, January and April, selected farm operators can respond by one of the following methods:

- Telephone – Computer-assisted telephone interviewing (or CATI) is the primary method.
- Mail – Participants fill out and mail back the questionnaire that was mailed to them.
- Internet – Secure, online reporting is the timeliest, most cost-effective option.
- Personal interviews – Respondents can request an interview with a NASS representative.

HOW IS THE INFORMATION USED?

NASS will compile, analyze and publish the information in the *Farm Labor* report.

The agricultural industry relies on NASS labor estimates to help make sound business decisions. The data are used by federal, state and local government agencies, educational institutions, farm organizations and private sector employers of farm labor. Some uses of the data include:

- Data from the Agricultural Labor Survey are used to establish minimum wage rates for domestic and foreign agricultural workers and assist legislators in determining labor policies.
- Farm Labor survey data are used jointly by the USDA and the Department of Labor to estimate the demand for, and availability of, seasonal agricultural labor.
- Agencies responsible for administering farm labor recruitment and placement programs use employment statistics in their planning and evaluation.

The information provided by survey respondents is confidential by law. NASS safeguards the privacy of all responses and publishes data only in aggregate form, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified.

All reports are available through the NASS web site: www.nass.usda.gov. For more information on NASS surveys and reports, call the NASS Agricultural Statistics Hotline at (800) 727-9540.

