



# Agricultural Labor Survey

United States Department of Agriculture

National Agricultural Statistics Service

October 2012

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts the Agricultural Labor Survey twice yearly, in October and April. The survey collects information on the number of hired farm workers, average hours worked and average wage rates by type of worker. NASS will publish the results of the survey conducted in October in the *Farm Labor* report to be issued November 15, 2012.

## HOW DOES NASS COLLECT THE DATA?

NASS conducts the Agricultural Labor Survey in every state except Alaska. In October, NASS will mail the survey to more than 12,000 agricultural operations, asking them to provide information for two one-week periods: July 8-14, 2012, and October 7-13, 2012. The survey asks the operators to provide information on how many farm workers they hired, the number of hours worked, and the wages paid during each of those weeks.

Producers who receive the survey may respond in either of the following ways:

- **Online** – Secure, online reporting is the most timely, cost-effective option. The cover letter includes instructions for this easy option.
- **By mail** – Producers fill out the survey and return it in the envelope provided.

A NASS representative will contact producers who do not respond to conduct a telephone or personal interview.

## WHO USES THE DATA?

The agricultural community relies on NASS labor estimates to help make sound business decisions. Federal, state and local government agencies, educational institutions, farm organizations, and private sector employers all use these data. For example:

- The Department of Labor uses the results of this survey in establishing minimum wage rates for agricultural workers and assisting legislators in determining labor policies.
- USDA and the Department of Labor use the data to estimate the demand for, and availability of, seasonal agricultural workers.
- Agencies responsible for administering farm labor recruitment and placement programs use the 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](http://www.nass.usda.gov). For more information on NASS surveys and reports, call the NASS Agricultural Statistics Hotline at (800) 727-9540.