

are employed only part-time even though they may be on a monthly, weekly, or other pay basis. These part-time workers account, in part, for the variations in the average number of hours worked and in the average wage rates for each basis of payment. In some cases, children or elderly persons are paid small wages in addition to board and keep and therefore were reported to the Census enumerator as hired workers. Some workers, in addition to cash wages, may receive a share of the farm products. For example, a worker on a dairy farm may receive a cash wage and a share of the milk sales.

The average cash wage per month, week, day, and hour, and the average number of hours worked for each basis of payment represent averages per worker. To obtain these averages, the average hours and average wage rates for each farm were multiplied by the number of workers in each basis-of-payment group. The accumulated totals of these products were then divided up by the total workers in the corresponding group.

For the United States, the average cash wage rate per person was \$162 for workers paid by the month, \$38 for workers paid by the week, \$5.13 for those paid by the day, and \$0.88 for those paid by the hour. The wage rates are in addition to any perquisites furnished the workers. By regions, the cash wage rates were highest in the West and lowest in the South. The State reporting the lowest average monthly wage rate was Alabama with \$105, and the State reporting the highest average rate was California, with \$265.

The average length of time farm workers in the various basis-of-payment groups were expected to work to earn the above rates of pay was, for the United States as a whole, 231 hours per month for those paid by the month, 51 hours per week for those paid by the week, and 8.8 hours per day for those paid by the day. Workers paid by the month and by the week in the North were expected to work longer hours than workers for the same basis of payment in the South.

A classification was made, within each basis-of-payment group, of the number of farms reporting by specified rates of pay. Thus, for farms which reported workers paid on a monthly basis, the distribution shows the number of farms on which workers received less than \$25 per month, the number of farms on which workers received \$25 to \$34 per month, etc. For those farms, with 2 or more workers in a given basis-of-payment group, the average wage determined the wage group in which the farm was counted.

Farm workers worked fewer hours and were paid a higher cash wage in 1954 than in 1950. For farms reporting workers paid on a monthly basis, cash wages of \$215 and over were reported for 13.2 percent in 1954 as compared with only 2.8 percent in 1950. For farms reporting workers paid on a weekly basis, cash wages of \$50 and over per week were reported for 20.4 percent in 1954 as compared with 4.9 percent in 1950. For farms reporting workers paid on a daily basis, cash wages of \$8 and over were reported for 18.6 percent in 1954 as compared with 4.0 percent in 1950. For farms reporting workers paid on an hourly basis, cash wages of \$1 and over per hour were reported for 54.3 percent in 1954 as compared with 18.3 percent in 1950.

Workers receiving cash wages on a monthly basis worked, on an average, 8 hours per month less in 1954 than in 1950 and received, on the average, \$44 more per month. Workers receiving cash wages on a weekly basis worked one hour per week less in 1954 than in 1950 and received, on the average, \$10 more per week. Daily workers worked approximately ½ hour less per day and received \$1.47 more per day. Hourly workers received an average of 21 cents more per hour in 1954 than in 1950.

Farm labor force, 1820 to 1954.—The growing efficiency of agriculture is indicated by the declining percentage of the labor force engaged in agricultural pursuits. In 1820, the farm labor force accounted for 71.8 percent of persons employed in all occupations. The percentage decline was gradual as improved farming techniques and equipment were invented and placed in general use. Improved types of the scythe and grain cradle gave way to horse drawn mowing machines; the fanning mill for cleaning of grain gave way to threshing machines; steel hoes gave way to shovel cultivators and the steel walking plow, and application of steam and gasoline engines to portable uses in agriculture permitted the agricultural worker to further increase his output. By 1910, farm mechanization had advanced to a point where the number of persons engaged in agriculture began decreasing even though the general population was growing. The agricultural labor force amounted to 31 percent of the total labor force in that year.

The achievement of farm workers was remarkable during World War II when a declining number of agricultural workers continued to provide food supplies for a growing population, expanding armed forces and the population of other countries overseas. This achievement is all the more remarkable in view of the changing composition of the farm working force

AVERAGE WAGE RATES FOR HIRED WORKERS ON FARMS, BY BASIS OF PAYMENT, FOR THE UNITED STATES AND REGIONS: 1954 AND 1950

