

CHAPTER IV

**FARM LABOR, USE OF FERTILIZER,
FARM EXPENDITURES,
AND CASH RENT**

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Chapter IV.—FARM LABOR, USE OF FERTILIZER, FARM EXPENDITURES, AND CASH RENT

Introduction.—This chapter presents statistics collected in the 1959 Census of Agriculture on farm labor; use of fertilizer and lime on farms; specified farm expenditures; and cash rent paid by tenant farm operators renting land on a cash basis. For comparative purposes, there are data from previous censuses.

Except for Alaska and Hawaii, data for 1959, 1954, and 1950 are estimates based on reports from a sample of approximately 20 percent of the farms. Some of the data for 1945 was based on a sample of approximately 5 percent of the farms. When data are estimates based on a sample of farms, a headnote for the table so indicates.

Part 1.—FARM LABOR

Estimates for farm workers for the 1959, 1954, and 1950 censuses were based on a sample of approximately 20 percent of all farms. Farm workers include farm operators, unpaid family labor, and hired workers. Hired workers comprise both regular workers (those employed for 150 or more days during the year) and seasonal workers (employed for less than 150 days during the year). Data on hired workers include the number of workers paid on a monthly, weekly, daily, hourly, and piece-rate basis; the average wage rate and average hours worked by monthly, weekly, and daily workers; and the wage rate for hourly workers.

The Specified Farm Labor Work Week.—Data on farm labor relate to the number of workers for a specified week. Satisfactory counts of farm workers for an entire year cannot be obtained because of the difficulty of obtaining accurate reports when there are large seasonal variations in the number of workers on some farms, the double counting of farm workers who move from farm to farm as seasonal work changes, and the double counting of farm operators who work as hired workers for other farm operators, and of unpaid family workers on some farms working as hired workers on other farms.

During recent censuses, the agriculture questionnaire has specified that the number of farm workers should be reported for a selected week. In 1959 and 1950, the selected week was the week prior to the census enumeration. In 1954, there were two selected weeks: (a) for 33 States, the calendar week of September 26–October 2, and (b) for the remaining 15 States, the week of October 24–30. In 1945 and 1935, the first week in January was selected and in 1940, two weeks, March 24–30, 1940, and September 24–30, 1939, were selected.

Data on farm labor for 1959 are not fully comparable with earlier censuses since they relate to different periods or seasons of the year. More persons are employed at farm jobs during the harvest season than at other periods. Moreover, the selected workweek for some censuses was a definite calendar week, and for others it varied with the date of enumeration.

During a census enumeration, the period for collection of information extends over several weeks. When the number of farm workers varies from week to week because of changes in farm operations, farm operators have difficulty recalling the number of workers employed, particularly when the week for which the information is requested was not the most recent week. Therefore, for the 1959 census, data on the number of farm workers were

For a description of the procedures used in the enumeration and in the processing of statistics, for a description of the sampling procedure, and for data showing reliability of estimates based on the sample, see the Introduction to this volume.

Presentation of Statistics.—The text, charts, maps, and summary tables are presented in this chapter in four parts: Part 1 deals with farm labor; part 2, the use of fertilizer and lime; part 3, specified farm expenditures; and part 4, cash rent. Some of the tables present data for 1959 only; other tables include comparative data for earlier censuses.

asked for the week preceding the enumeration, even though this resulted in the reporting of the number of farm workers for some of the farms for one week and other farms for another week.

Definition of Farm Labor.—The enumerator was instructed to include as farm labor—

- (a) Labor in fields, orchards, or home gardens.
- (b) The care and feeding of livestock and poultry.
- (c) Irrigation of crops.
- (d) Transportation of farm products from his farm to market by the farm operator.
- (e) Transportation of feed, fertilizer, and other supplies to the farm by the farm operator.
- (f) Care and cleaning of milk pails and separators.
- (g) Maintenance and repair of farm machinery and equipment.
- (h) Regular farm help used in constructing or repairing farm buildings and fences.
- (i) Contract farm work for which labor is hired, but for which machines and equipment are furnished by the farm operator.
- (j) Contract work done by persons supplied by a labor contractor or by cooperative organizations such as a citrus cooperative.
- (k) Planning farm work.
- (l) Keeping farm records.
- (m) Supervision of hired farm employees.
- (n) Cutting firewood, fence posts, timber, pulpwood, etc., except by persons specifically hired for this purpose.

Examples of the type of work not to be included were—

- (a) Housework.
- (b) Contract construction work.
- (c) Custom work for which equipment and operating labor are hired, such as custom combining, hay baling, etc.
- (d) Repair, installation, or construction work by persons employed specifically for such work.

For 1959, enumerators were instructed to include as hired workers, workers employed by a labor contractor, a cooperative organization, a processor, etc., to perform farm work, such as harvesting of vegetable crops, picking fruit, etc. However, a review of available data indicates that farm operators and census enumerators usually did not report such workers as hired farm workers. Farm operators do not consider such contract workers