

Part 2

FARM LABOR

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PART 2. FARM LABOR

GENERAL INFORMATION

Historical Background

In the last three decades, there have been significant increases in the substitution of laborsaving machines and other capital inputs for hired farmworkers. The scarcity of farmworkers along with the rapidly increasing wage rates has speeded this substitution in recent years.

Some of these changes are indicated by the data presented in this part of chapter 4. Data for 1969 are presented for the number of regular workers on farms (i.e., hired farmworkers working 150 days or more on a particular farm) and the number of seasonal workers on farms (i.e., hired farmworkers working less than 150 days on a particular farm).

Historically, reasonably accurate farm-labor statistics have been difficult to collect, even on a weekly or monthly survey basis. Problems of definition and classification always exist. It is necessary to recognize the additional difficulties attributable to memory biases.

Other Published Data

Data collected in the 1969 Census of Agriculture for labor-related expenditures and the total number of hired workers, in

addition to those published in this volume, are located as indicated in the following table. Data for 1969 for farms by the number of hired workers are not available except in this chapter.

DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS

Definitions concerning hired farmworkers are provided in this section. For farm labor and related expenditures, definitions and concepts are presented in the production expenses part of this chapter. Chapter 1 of this volume provides information about the comparability of data for 1969 with those of earlier censuses. It also contains information concerning the procedures for collecting, processing, and classifying along with a description of factors affecting the accuracy of the data.

In the 1969 Census of Agriculture, data for the number of hired farmworkers were collected only for farms with sales of farm products of \$2,500 and over (class 1-5 farms). Questions on the number of farmworkers were not asked of the one million farmers with sales of less than \$2,500, since in the 1964 census they had accounted for less than 3 percent of the total number of hired workers working 150 days or more.

The 1969 Census of Agriculture report form for class 1-5 farms contained two inquiries relating to the number of hired workers employed to do farm or ranch work in 1969. A facsimile of the

Table 1. Other Published Data for Labor

Where found	Geographical area for which available	Period	Classification	Subjects covered
Volume I				
<u>State tables:</u>				
5.....	State.....	1969 - 1959.....	<u>All farms</u> Total farms.....	Hired labor and contract labor - farms and expenditures.
9.....	States.....	1969.....	Selected economic class groups.....	Hired labor and contract labor - farms and expenditures.
<u>Class 1-5 Farms</u>				
14.....	State.....	1969 - 1959.....	Total class 1-5 farms.....	Hired labor and contract labor - farms, expenditures and number of workers.
24.....	State.....	1969.....	Tenure of operator and type of organization.....	Hired labor and contract labor - farms, expenditures and number of workers.
25.....	State.....	1969.....	Farms by age of operator.....	Hired labor and contract labor - farms, expenditures and number of workers.
26.....	State.....	1969.....	Farms by size.....	Hired labor and contract labor - farms, expenditures and number of workers.
27.....	State.....	1969.....	Farms by economic class.....	Hired labor and contract labor - farms, expenditures and number of workers.
28.....	State.....	1969.....	Farms by type.....	Hired labor and contract labor - farms, expenditures and number of workers.
29.....	State.....	1969.....	Farms by type and economic class.....	Hired labor and contract labor - farms, expenditures and number of workers.
30.....	State.....	1969.....	Large-scale farms by type.....	Hired labor and contract labor - farms, expenditures and number of workers.
<u>County tables:</u>				
5.....	County and State.....	1969 - 1964.....	<u>All farms</u> Total farms.....	Hired labor and contract labor - farms and expenditures.
14.....	County and State.....	1969 - 1964.....	<u>Class 1-5 Farms</u> Total class 1-5 farms.....	Hired labor and contract labor - farms, expenditures, and number of workers.
<u>Volume II:</u>				
Chapter 3.....	United States.....	1969.....	<u>Class 1-5 Farms</u> Farms by tenure and type of organization.....	Hired labor and contract labor - farms, and expenditures and number of workers.
Chapter 7.....	United States.....	1969.....	Farms by economic class.....	Hired labor and contract labor - farms and expenditures and number of workers.
Chapter 8.....	United States.....	1969.....	Farms by type.....	Hired labor and contract labor - farms and expenditures and number of workers.

Facsimile of Section 32, 69-A1

Section 32 – Were any HIRED WORKERS employed to do farm or ranch work on this place in 1969? (Do not include employees of labor contractors who performed customwork for you. See Leaflet, section 32.)

Yes – Complete this section

No –
Go to
Section 33

1. Of the hired workers, how many worked –

- a. 150 days or more on this place?
- b. Less than 150 days on this place?

Number of workers	
a.	600
b.	601

Facsimile of Section 32, Leaflet Guide

SECTION 32 HIRED WORKERS

Do not include workers who did only construction work or other work not related to the production of crops or livestock. Do not include employees of a labor contractor, cooperative, processor, or dealer who performed contract work on this place. Report all other hired workers, including members of your family if they were paid wages, who did farm or ranch work on this place. Report each person only once even though he may have worked several different times during the year.

two inquiries which appeared on the report form (69-A1) is shown below.

The Leaflet Guide, which accompanied the A1 report form, contained general or qualifying instructions pertaining to the reporting of workers. All instructions were of a general nature and any unusual situations pertaining to what was to be counted as farmwork or to the counting or classifying of farmworkers on any individual farm were left to the judgment of the person completing the report form. The instructions which were shown in the Leaflet Guide are reproduced above.

Comparable data from the 1964 census are available for hired workers who worked 150 days or more during the calendar year. No data were collected for workers who worked less than 150 days in 1964. Data for 1969 and 1964, which are presented in this chapter, are not fully comparable with farm-labor data from 1959 and prior censuses.

In 1969, no data were collected in the census of agriculture pertaining to unpaid family labor such as were collected in 1964 and prior censuses.

The total number of hired farmworkers is not available from the 1969 Census of Agriculture. Presumably, the data for hired workers working 150 days and over contains little, if any, duplication in the reporting of workers; however, in the data for those working less than 150 days, there can be and is considerable duplication in the count of seasonal workers. A seasonal hired worker may have worked several days or more on numerous farms during the year. As each census report represents the operation of an individual farm, each operator should have reported the worker in his census report, thereby resulting in a duplication in the count of seasonal workers (working less than 150 days). Although there should be essentially no duplication in the count of those working 150 days or more (regular workers), some of them could also have been reported as seasonal workers on other farms. It should be pointed out that data for hired farmworkers from the census of agriculture exclude contract farmworkers. These are individuals employed by a labor contractor, cooperative, processor, etc., to perform contract work on farms. A significant proportion of the migratory labor force would be included in the classification of contract farmworkers.

The census does not include counts of farmworkers who did customwork or machine hire, or who perform other types of agricultural services on the farm during the year. As agriculture has become more specialized and more technical in recent years, there has been an expanding need for and the use of agricultural services performed by others. Farm labor shortages in many areas and rapidly increasing machinery and equipment costs have added to the use of off-farm agricultural services.

Data from a survey of firms furnishing agricultural services to farms indicated that, in 1969, there were 110,000 paid employees working 150 days or more and 313,000 working less than 150 days. Additional labor data by types of services provided to farms can be found in Volume III, Agricultural Services, 1969 Census of Agriculture.

Data for the total number of paid and unpaid farm laborers are available from the 1970 decennial Census of Population. Counts of the total number of paid and unpaid farm laborers are also available from a statistical series, "The Hired Farm Working Force," published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, based on estimates from the Current Population Survey. According to "United States Summary of General Social and Economic Characteristics—PC (1) C1" of the 1970 Census of Population, there were 954,000 employed farm laborers, 16 years and over as of April 1970. In comparison, data from "The Hired Farm Working Force" indicated there were 2,571,000 persons doing some farmwork for cash wages in 1969 of which 490,000 worked 150 days or more. Totals from the 1969 Census of Agriculture show 654,000 hired persons working 150 days or more and 5,125,000 working less than 150 days. A monthly farm-labor statistical series is also published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture under the title "Farm Labor." These data are based on estimates from the reports given by a sample of farm operators. The estimates in this series show an average of 1,153,000 hired farm laborers employed in 1969.

CHANGES IN THE NUMBERS OF HIRED FARM WORKERS

Hired Workers

The number of farms reporting an expenditure for hired labor provides a count of farms using any hired workers during the

year. In 1969, 1,069,000 farms or about 62 percent of the class 1-5 farms reported some expenditures for hired labor. As can be seen from the table below, almost four times as many farms reported seasonal workers as regular workers. The data indicate that 142,000 farms had both regular and seasonal workers, 106,000 farms had regular workers only, and 821,000 had seasonal workers only.

The shortage of farm laborers and the increasing use of labor-saving machinery has resulted in a decrease in the use of regular workers and an increasing reliance on seasonal hired workers as the main source of additional labor on farms.

Farms Reporting Farm Labor, 1969

	Expenditure for hired labor	Regular hired workers	Seasonal hired workers	Both regular and seasonal workers
Total	1,069,095	247,642	963,294	141,841
Class 1	191,208	114,136	150,512	73,440
Class 2	242,912	69,932	211,150	38,170
Class 3	246,649	36,812	228,428	18,591
Class 4	204,513	15,593	195,889	6,969
Class 5	183,813	11,169	177,315	4,671

Regular Hired Farm Workers

Regular hired farmworkers (i.e., hired farmworkers working 150 days or more) on farms with farm sales of \$2,500 and over totaled 654 thousand in 1969. Approximately 248 thousand farms reported regular workers. This was a decrease from the 866 thousand regular workers and 335 thousand farms which were reported in 1964. In 1969, regular hired workers were heavily concentrated in California, Florida, and Texas. These States accounted for 31 percent of the total.

The decrease between 1964 and 1969 in the number of regular workers was more significant for farms with higher levels of farm sales. For example, class 1 farms, which in total increased by about 80 thousand in the 5-year period, showed an increase of 13 thousand in the number of farms reporting regular

Regular Hired Workers by Class of Farm, 1969 and 1964

	1969		1964		Increase or decrease from 1964	
	Farms reporting	Workers	Farms reporting	Workers	Farms reporting	Workers
Total ..	247,642	654,370	334,591	866,000	-86,949	-211,630
Class 1 ..	114,136	473,204	101,063	514,915	+13,073	-41,711
Class 2 ..	69,932	102,193	97,914	168,265	-27,982	-66,072
Class 3 ..	36,812	46,896	81,201	114,895	-44,389	-67,999
Class 4 ..	15,593	18,487	38,844	49,617	-23,251	-31,130
Class 5 ..	11,169	13,590	15,569	18,308	-4,400	-4,718

workers, but at the same time showed a decrease of about 42 thousand workers. The average number of regular workers for class 1 farms decreased from 5.1 workers to 4.1 workers from 1964 to 1969. It should be noted, however, that changes in the price levels of agricultural products has resulted in the movement of many farms that were stable in productivity and labor requirements to a higher value-of-sales class between 1964 and 1969.

The proportion of class 1-5 farms reporting an expenditure for hired labor or hired workers has shown a substantial decrease between 1964 and 1969. These decreases are apparent in each of the five class groups shown in the table below.

Proportion of Farms Reporting Farm Labor, 1969 and 1964

	Expenditure for farm labor		Regular workers		Seasonal workers, 1969
	1969	1964	1969	1964	
Total	61.7	66.3	14.3	18.4	55.6
Class 1	86.3	92.4	51.5	71.2	67.9
Class 2	73.4	82.5	21.1	37.7	63.8
Class 3	62.4	70.1	9.3	17.4	57.8
Class 4	52.4	60.9	4.0	7.7	50.2
Class 5	46.5	50.6	2.8	3.5	44.9

In 1969, over three-fifths of the class 1-5 farms reporting regular hired workers had only one regular worker. Only one of every 12 farms had five or more regular hired workers. Although the number of class 1-5 farms reporting regular hired workers had decreased by one-fourth, the distribution of farms by the number of regular hired workers has changed only slightly between 1964 and 1969. The distribution of farms by the number of regular hired workers for 1969 and 1964 is shown below.

Distribution of Farms by Number of Regular Hired Workers, 1969 and 1964

	Farms reporting		Percent distribution	
	1969	1964	1969	1964
Total	247,642	334,591	100.0	100.0
1 hired worker	150,517	195,940	60.8	58.6
2 hired workers	48,500	68,341	19.6	20.4
3 or 4 hired workers	28,316	40,919	11.4	12.2
5 to 9 hired workers	12,584	19,007	5.1	5.7
10 hired workers or more ..	7,725	10,384	3.1	3.1

There are significant differences by the types of farm in the distribution of farms by the number of regular hired workers. Dairy-farms and livestock farms other than poultry and dairy farms, which represent 48 percent of all class 1-5 farms, employ about 30 percent of all regular hired farm workers.

Although these two types of farm groups employ a large number of workers, about two-thirds of these farms employ only one worker. An average of 1.7 regular hired workers per farm for other livestock farms is the lowest of any farm type. Vegetable farms, with 8.9 workers per farm is the highest. About one-third of the vegetable farms with regular workers report five or more workers. The distribution of regular workers by type of farm is shown below.

Percent Distribution of Type of Farm by Number of Regular Hired Workers, 1969

Type of Farm	Total	Number of Regular Hired Workers				10 workers or more
		1 worker	2 to 4 workers	5 to 9 workers	10 workers or more	
Total	100.0	60.8	31.0	5.1	3.1	
Cash-grain	100.0	67.3	28.6	3.1	0.9	
Tobacco	100.0	59.5	35.6	3.7	1.2	
Cotton	100.0	49.5	38.2	8.3	4.0	
Other field crop	100.0	48.3	37.9	8.3	5.4	
Vegetable	100.0	30.5	37.0	15.3	17.2	
Fruit and nut	100.0	45.8	36.0	9.7	8.5	
Poultry	100.0	51.5	36.0	7.3	5.2	
Dairy	100.0	64.8	30.7	3.4	1.1	
Livestock other than poultry and dairy	100.0	71.6	25.0	2.4	1.0	
Livestock ranches	100.0	59.2	32.0	5.8	2.9	
General	100.0	57.6	34.0	5.7	2.7	
Miscellaneous	100.0	39.6	34.4	12.3	13.8	

Seasonal Workers

Seasonal farmworkers (i.e., hired farmworkers working less than 150 days) on class 1-5 farms totaled 5.1 million in 1969. The workers were reported on 963 thousand farms or on 55.6 percent of all class 1-5 farms. Of these farms, 821 thousand reported only seasonal workers.

There are substantial duplications of workers reported in this classification. Farmworkers who worked in specialized operations such as fruit picking, vegetable harvesting, etc., would have been reported many times in the census. Some workers in the seasonal classification may have worked as little as 1 day on a particular farm, while others worked as much as 149 days. Thus the figures for workers estimated by the USDA are shown for comparison.

States with large acreages of vegetables, fruits, tobacco, and other such crops with high labor requirements account for a large proportion of the seasonal workers reported in the census. California, North Carolina, and Texas were the three States having the largest number of seasonal workers. These three States account for about one-fourth of the total number of seasonal hired workers.

The percentage distribution of farms reporting seasonal workers by the number of workers reported is generally similar to the

distribution for regular workers. About 41 percent of the farms reported only one seasonal worker and only 12.4 percent reported 10 workers or more. Data in the table below indicate the distribution of seasonal workers among the classes of farms.

Percent Distribution of Class of Farm by Number of Seasonal Workers, 1969

	Total	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1 worker	40.7	27.7	38.4	42.2	44.5	48.3
2 workers	15.5	16.7	16.4	15.4	14.5	14.7
3 or 4 workers	17.2	18.7	18.1	17.0	16.4	16.1
5 to 9 workers	14.2	15.8	14.6	13.9	13.9	12.9
10 to 14 workers	5.7	7.2	5.7	5.6	5.7	4.7
15 to 19 workers	2.2	3.2	2.3	2.3	2.2	1.5
20 to 29 workers	2.3	4.0	2.4	2.1	1.8	1.2
30 to 39 workers	0.8	1.8	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.4
40 to 49 workers	0.4	1.1	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.1
50 workers and over	1.0	3.8	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.2

In analyzing these data, it should be recognized that the number of seasonal workers is not a satisfactory measure of the man-days of labor contributed by these workers. Many farms with 50 seasonal workers or more may have actually used less man-days of labor than other farms with less than 5 seasonal workers, or in extreme cases less than some farms with one regular hired worker.

Farms reporting any seasonal workers in 1969 averaged approximately 5.3 seasonal hired workers. The proportion of farms reporting seasonal hired workers and the average number of seasonal workers reported were greater on farms in the larger value-of-sales groups. For each class group, a greater proportion of farms reported seasonal workers than reported regular workers.

According to data from the table below, almost 68 percent of the class 1 farms reported seasonal workers; whereas, less than 45 percent of the class 5 farms reported seasonal workers. The average number of seasonal workers per farm varied from 11.2 workers for class 1 farms to 3.5 workers for class 5 farms.

Seasonal Workers by Class of Farm, 1969

	Farms reporting		Seasonal workers	
	Number	Percent of all farms	Number	Average per farm reporting
Total	963,294	55.6	5,125,604	5.3
Class 1	150,512	67.9	1,687,085	11.2
Class 2	211,150	63.8	1,046,417	5.0
Class 3	228,428	57.8	995,265	4.4
Class 4	195,889	50.2	785,018	4.0
Class 5	177,315	44.9	611,819	3.5

As generally expected a higher proportion of tobacco, fruit and nut, and vegetable farms reported seasonal hired workers than other types of farms. Mostly due to the high labor requirements for harvesting, vegetable and fruit and nut farms had the highest average number of seasonal workers per farm. Of the livestock

ranches, less than one-half reported seasonal workers. Cash-grain farms and livestock farms other than poultry and dairy, with an average of 3.1 workers per farm, reported the lowest average number per farm.

Seasonal Workers by Type of Farm, 1969

	Farms reporting		Seasonal workers	
	Number	Percent of all farms	Number	Average per farm reporting
Total	963,294	55.6	5,125,604	5.3
Type of Farm				
Cash-grain	187,755	50.8	580,642	3.1
Tobacco	70,639	78.6	609,219	8.6
Cotton	25,642	63.3	156,415	6.1
Other field crops	21,109	67.6	221,933	10.5
Vegetable	13,642	69.4	372,017	27.3
Fruit and nut	38,586	71.8	913,938	23.7
Poultry	28,181	49.0	146,822	5.2
Dairy	143,056	54.8	473,425	3.3
Livestock other than poultry and dairy	300,326	52.8	942,870	3.1
Livestock ranches	38,313	48.1	128,456	3.4
General	74,862	59.2	405,605	5.4
Miscellaneous	21,183	58.2	174,262	8.2