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Profile of hired farmworkers, 1992 annual averages

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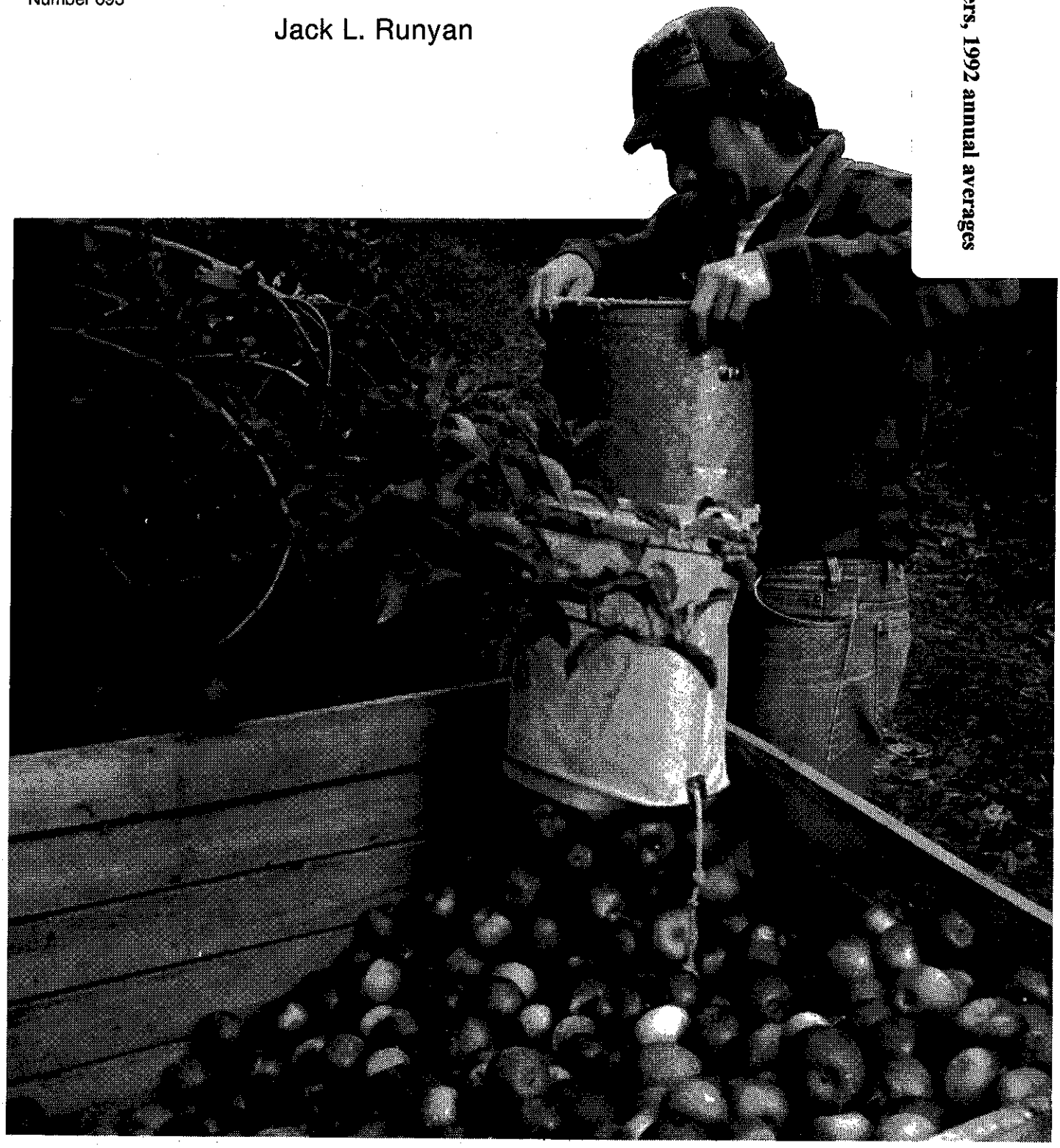
A Profile of Hired Farmworkers, 1992 Annual Averages

Jack L. Runyan



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A Profile of Hired Farmworkers, 1992 Annual Averages.
By Jack L. Runyan. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Agriculture and Rural Economy Division. Agricultural Economic Report No. 693.

Abstract

An average of 848,000 persons 15 years of age and older did hired farmwork each week in 1992. Hired farmworkers were more likely to be male, Hispanic, younger, less educated, and never married. They continued to have lower median weekly earnings ($200) than all wage and salary workers ($380), and their earnings appeared to fall farther behind all wage and salary workers between 1990 and 1992. The Pacific region (Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington) employed 26 percent of all U.S. hired farmworkers. This report examines their demographic and employment characteristics, using data from the Current Population Survey (CPS) earnings microdata file.

Keywords: Hired farmworkers, annual averages, demographic characteristics, hours worked, median weekly earnings.

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Summary

An average of 848,000 persons 15 years of age and older did hired farmwork each week in 1992. Hired farmworkers were more likely than other U.S. wage and salary workers to be male, Hispanic, younger, less educated, and never married. Almost 26 percent were employed in the Pacific region (Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington). Crop production employed about 48 percent of the hired farmworkers, livestock production employed about 43 percent, and agricultural services employed the remaining 9 percent.

More than 21 percent of the 1992 hired farm work force were employed part-time (worked less than 35 hours per week). These part-time workers were more likely to be female, white, younger, less educated, and never married, compared with full-time hired farmworkers.

The earnings of hired farmworkers continued to be well below those of all wage and salary workers and appear to have fallen farther behind other workers since 1990. Hired farmworkers' median weekly earnings remained unchanged at $200 from 1990 to 1992, while the median weekly earnings of all wage and salary workers increased from $360 to $380 during the same period. Hired farmwork was the only major occupational group where earnings stagnated between 1990 and 1992. After controlling for the effects of inflation, hired farmworker earnings actually decreased.

Definitions

Employed persons: Persons age 15 years and older who, during the survey week, did any work as paid employees, or who worked 15 hours or more as unpaid workers in a family enterprise, or who were not working but who had jobs or businesses from which they were temporarily absent because of illness, bad weather, vacation, labor-management disputes, or personal reasons, whether they were paid for the time off or were seeking other jobs.

Hired farmworkers: Employed persons who, during the survey week, did farmwork for cash wages or salary, or who did not work but who had farm jobs from which they were temporarily absent. Hired farmworkers include persons who manage farms for employers on a paid basis, supervisors of farmworkers, and farm and nursery workers.

Annual average number of hired farmworkers: The average number of hired farmworkers employed per week during 1992.

Racial/ethnic group: Refers to division of the population into three mutually exclusive groups--white, Hispanic, and black and other. "Hispanic" includes all persons whose origin or descent was Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Hispanic persons. "White" refers to white persons other than those of Hispanic origin. "Black and other" includes blacks and other groups such as Indians, Chinese, Japanese, and others not of Hispanic origin.

Education: Refers to the highest degree or diploma received.

Full-time workers: Persons who usually work 35 hours or more per week. Persons working less than 35 hours per week are considered part-time.

Median weekly earnings: The value that divides the earnings distribution into two equal parts, one part having earnings above the median and the other part having earnings below the median. "Earnings" refers to the weekly earnings the farmworker usually earns at a farmwork job, before deductions, and includes any overtime pay or commissions.

Industry: Hired farmworkers were classified according to the industry of the establishment in which they worked.

Crop production: Establishments primarily engaged in the production of crops, plants, vines, and trees (excluding forestry operations).

Livestock production: Establishments primarily engaged in the keeping, grazing, or feeding of livestock.

Agricultural services: Establishments primarily engaged in performing farm labor and management services, soil preparation services, and animal and crop services, for others on a contract or fee basis.

A Profile of Hired Farmworkers, 1992 Annual Averages

Jack L. Runyan

Introduction

Although hired farmworkers constitute only a small proportion of U.S. wage and salary workers, they contribute necessary labor during the critical agricultural production periods. Despite their importance, hired farmworkers continue to be one of the most economically disadvantaged occupational groups in the United States, experiencing low wages, seasonal employment, weak attachment to the labor force, and limited employment opportunities (Oliveira, 1992, and U.S. Department of Labor, 1991). The problems faced by hired farmworkers have received increasing attention from Congress in recent years. In 1990, 1991, and 1992, the U.S. House of Representatives held hearings on a broad range of concerns relating to the living and working conditions of hired farmworkers. Testimony presented at the hearings cited the need for accurate, comprehensive data on farmworkers to assess their socioeconomic status and to determine how best to improve their situation (Delfico, 1991). Despite the increased attention to farmworker issues, data on the characteristics of hired farmworkers are limited (see "Data Sources" box).

This report uses data from the Current Population Survey (CPS) earnings microdata file (see "About the Data" box) to examine hired farmworkers, their demographic and employment characteristics, and their geographic distribution. The information is based on 12 months of data, with each month representing the number of persons who did hired farmwork during a 1-week period. Annual averages were computed by summing the weekly estimates for each month and dividing by 12. The annual average represents the average number of people employed at hired farmwork per week, and does not measure the total number of persons employed at hired farmwork during the year.[1]

[1]For example, if each month a different worker works on a farm, the total number of workers who worked on that farm during the year is 12, while the average number of workers employed during the year is 1.

Hired Farmworker Characteristics

An average of over 104 million persons age 15 and older were employed per week at wage and salary jobs in the United States in 1992. Of these, 848,000 persons did hired farmwork, that is, farmwork for cash wages or salary (table 1). Hired farmworkers include persons who manage farms for employers on a paid basis, supervisors of farmworkers, and farm and nursery workers. This group also includes those hired directly by the farmer, as well as those employed by farm labor contractors.

Hired farmworkers tend to be younger and less educated than other employed persons and are more likely to be male, Hispanic, and never married (table 1). Demographic information on hired farmworkers from 1990 to 1992 is presented in appendix table 1.

Gender

About 84 percent of the hired farmworkers in 1992 were male, compared with 52 percent of all wage and salary workers (table 1). These percentages have been consistent in recent years (appendix table 1).

Racial/Ethnic Group

The racial/ethnic structure of hired farmworkers differs from that of all wage and salary workers. One of the notable features of the hired farm work force is the large proportion of Hispanic workers. The hired farm work force in 1992 was about 60 percent white, 30 percent Hispanic, and 10 percent black and other (table 1). In comparison, the U.S. wage and salary work force was about 78 percent white, 8 percent Hispanic, and 14 percent black and other.

Age

Hired farmworkers are younger than all wage and salary workers. More than half (57 percent) of the hired farmworkers were under 35 years of age and about 28 percent were less than 25 years of age. In comparison, 45 percent of all wage and salary workers were

Data Sources

Currently, only three published sources of national-level data are routinely used to describe the demographic and employment characteristics of hired farmworkers, each with limitations restricting its usefulness. One source is the Current Population Survey microdata earnings file used in this report and described in detail in the "About the Data" box. The others include:

- **The Decennial Census of Population:** The census collects detailed demographic and employment information based on the respondents' chief job during the reference week. However, the census is conducted only once every 10 years, and the reference week is usually the last week of March, generally a slack period for farmwork. As a result, the census fails to collect information on many of the Nation's farmworkers not working on farms when the data were collected (Whitener, 1984).

- **The National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS):** The NAWS, commissioned by the U.S. Departmet of Labor in response to the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, was first conducted in 1988. The survey provides detailed information on the characteristics and work patterns of workers performing seasonal agricultural services (SAS) (U.S. Department of Labor, 1991). Although SAS work includes most work on crop farms, all livestock work is excluded. In addition, the published data do not provide estimates on the number of farmworkers or their geographic distribution.

Table 1--Demographic characteristics of hired farmworkers and all wage and salary workers, 1992

Characteristics	Annual averages			
	Hired farmworkers		All wage and salary workers	
	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent
Total	848	100.0	104,054	100.0
Sex:				
Male	711	83.8	54,317	52.2
Female	137	16.2	49,737	47.8
Racial/ethnic group:				
White	506	59.7	81,032	77.9
Hispanic	260	30.7	8,356	8.0
Black and other	82	9.6	14,666	14.1
Age (years):				
Less than 20	122	14.5	5,626	5.4
20-24	113	13.3	11,785	11.3
25-34	246	29.0	29,870	28.7
35-44	175	20.6	27,525	26.5
45-54	96	11.3	17,834	17.1
55 and older	96	11.3	11,628	11.0
Median age	33		36	
Marital status:				
Married	454	53.5	60,714	58.3
Widowed, divorced, or separated	86	8.9	14,925	14.3
Never married	308	36.4	28,252	27.2
Schooling completed:[1]				
0-4 years	119	14.1	892	0.9
5-8 years	135	16.0	3,166	3.0
9-11 years	229	27.0	10,525	10.1
12 years	228	26.9	36,431	35.0
13 years or more	136	16.0	53,040	51.0

[1]Educational attainment levels, beginning January 1992, were revised to reflect degrees or diplomas received rather than years of school completed.

under 35 years of age and 17 percent were under 25 years of age.

Marital Status

The percentages of hired farmworkers and all wage and salary workers who had never been married were 36 and 27 percent, respectively (table 1). More than half of each group of workers was married.

Education

Slightly over 30 percent of the hired farmworkers had completed less than 9 years of education, compared with 4 percent of all wage and salary workers. At the other end of the education scale, 16 percent of the hired farmworkers had some college education, but over 50 percent of all wage and salary workers had attended college.[2]

[2]The education levels of hired farmworkers age 25 years and older (an age when most people have completed their schooling) were similar to those of all hired farmworkers. For example, 54 percent of hired farmworkers age 25 and older had not completed high school versus 57 percent of all hired farmworkers.

About the Data

Current Population Survey: The Current Population Survey (CPS), conducted by the Bureau of the Census, collects information on the demographic, social, and economic characteristics of the employed, unemployed, and persons not in the labor force. It is the primary source of monthly estimates of total employment and unemployment in the United States. The CPS is based on a probability sample of households, designed to represent the U.S. civilian noninstitutional population. (Participation in the survey is voluntary, and there are no penalties for not answering any questions.)

Each month, about 57,000 households are sampled with coverage in all 50 States and the District of Columbia. Once a household is selected for interview, it is interviewed for 4 consecutive months, dropped from the survey for 8 months, then interviewed for a final 4 months. Part of the sample is changed monthly. This survey design provides for about three-quarters of the selected households to be interviewed the following month, and about half to be interviewed the next year. In this way, the Census Bureau can obtain monthly and annual comparisons with minimal inconvenience to any one household. During each monthly visit, trained enumerators complete a questionnaire for each household member age 15 and older. Questions are asked about the household member's labor force activity during the survey week, that is, the week containing the 12th day of the month. Information obtained from this sample of households is expanded to provide national-level estimates.

CPS earnings microdata file: Each month, workers in about one-quarter of the CPS households (those in either their fourth or eighth month in the sample) are asked additional questions on weekly hours worked and earnings. The 1992 CPS earnings microdata file used in this report consists of all records from the monthly quarter-samples of CPS households that were subject to having these questions asked about the hours worked and earnings made during 1992. The data file contained information on almost 491,000 persons, including over 1,600 who were employed as hired farmworkers. Data comparisons in the text are based on data significant at the 95-percent confidence level or higher.

Limitations: The CPS classifies employed persons according to the job at which they worked the greatest number of hours during the survey week. As a result, hired farmworkers who spent more time during the survey week at their nonfarm job rather than their farm job would not be included in the count of hired farmworkers.

The CPS may also undercount Hispanics in the hired farm workforce. Because the CPS is based on a survey of households, it may undercount farmworkers living in unconventional living quarters. Other studies suggest that Hispanic farmworkers may be more likely to live in nonstandard housing units (Oliveira, 1992; MaKay, 1993). In addition, undocumented foreign farmworkers may avoid survey enumerators due to their illegal status.

Years of schooling completed by hired farmworkers varied significantly by racial/ethnic group (table 2). About 11 percent of the white hired farmworkers had completed only the eighth grade, but about 25 percent of the black and other, and more than 68 percent of the Hispanic hired farmworkers had completed only the eighth grade. Thirty-nine percent of Hispanic hired farmworkers had less than 5 years of education, a statistic often used to measure illiteracy, compared with 2 percent for white and 9 percent for black and other hired farmworkers.

Table 2–Years of education completed by hired farmworkers, by racial/ethnic group, 1992

Years of schooling completed	Annual averages		
	White	Hispanic	Black and other
	Thousands		
Total	506	260	82
	Percent		
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
0-4	2.0	39.2	8.6
5-8	9.2	29.2	16.3
9-11	29.0	20.3	36.3
12	35.3	8.6	33.1
13 or more	24.5	2.7	5.7

Note: Educational attainment levels, beginning January 1992, were revised to reflect degrees or diplomas received rather than years of school completed.

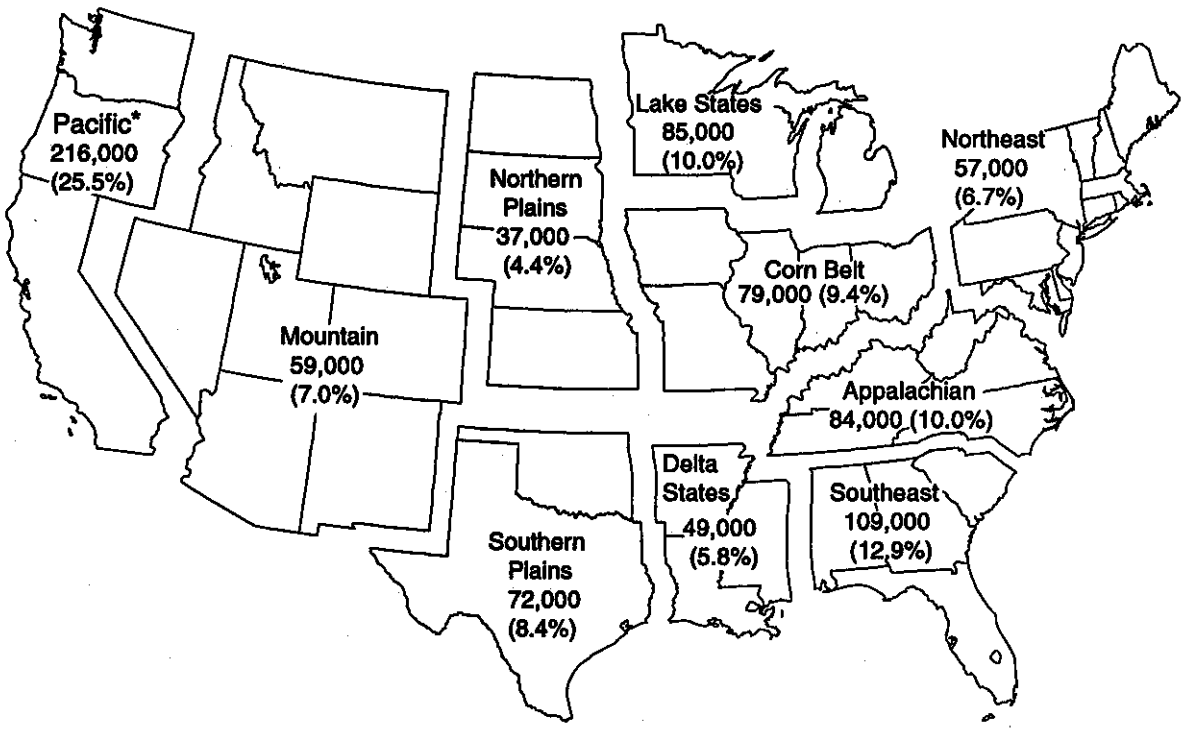
Geographic Distribution of Hired Farmworkers

The demand for workers varies by type of crop and livestock activity, length of growing and harvesting season in the region, the extent of mechanization, and the scale of production. As a result, the number of hired farmworkers varied significantly among the 10 farm production regions. The Pacific region had the greatest number of workers (216,000), accounting for 26 percent of average annual farm employment in 1992. Four of the 10 farm production regions (Appalachian, Lake States, Pacific, and Southeast) accounted for over 58 percent of all hired farmworkers in 1992 (fig. 1). The Northern Plains contained the smallest number of workers at 4 percent.

The racial/ethnic distribution of hired farmworkers also varied widely across farm production regions

Figure 1

Average annual employment of hired farmworkers by farm production region, 1992



*Includes Alaska and Hawaii.

(table 3). Hispanic workers accounted for a large percentage of the workers in three of the regions: Pacific (72 percent), Southern Plains (47 percent), and Mountain (37 percent). The largest concentration of black and other workers was in the Southeast (24 percent). The majority of the workers in most of the 10 regions were white.

Almost half of annual average farm employment was in crop production. More than a third (35 percent) of the crop production workers were located in the Pacific region. The Southeast region (16 percent) was the only other region with more than 10 percent of crop production farmworkers. About 43 percent of hired farmworkers were involved in livestock production. These workers were concentrated in the Appalachian region (20 percent), Southeast (18 percent), and the Lake States (17 percent).

Table 3--Racial/ethnic distribution of hired farmworkers by farm production region, 1992

Farm production region	Annual averages			
	Total	White	Hispanic	Black and other
	Percent			
Northeast	100.0	85.4	3.6	11.0
Appalachian	100.0	74.4	5.2	20.5
Southeast	100.0	45.8	30.3	23.9
Lake States	100.0	97.0	2.3	.5
Corn Belt	100.0	92.7	5.9	1.4
Delta States	100.0	--	--	--
Northern Plains	100.0	--	--	--
Southern Plains	100.0	48.7	47.4	2.9
Mountain	100.0	60.2	36.9	2.9
Pacific	100.0	25.3	72.4	2.2

-- = Percentages not shown where base is less than 50,000.

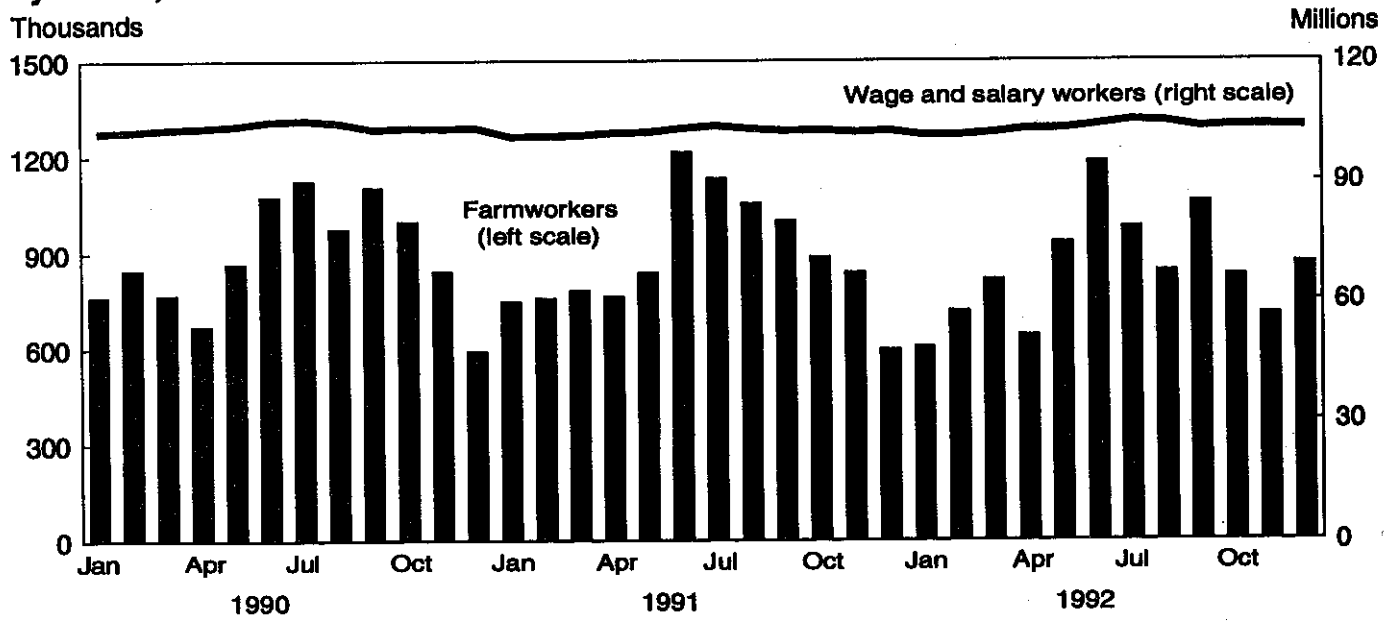
Seasonality of Hired Farm Employment

Uneven seasonal employment patterns of hired farmworkers affect their earnings. As shown in figure 2, the variations in farm employment that occur during the year are much greater than those occurring for all wage and salary workers. The number of hired farmworkers employed per month in 1992 ranged from 600,000 in January to almost 1.2 million in June. Total wage and salary employment was more stable from month to month.

The peak months of employment for hired farmworkers varied by farm production region due largely to variations in weather and cropping patterns among the regions. June was the peak employment month in 1992 in the Appalachian and Southeast regions. The peak employment months in the other regions were May in the Northeast, July in the Lake States and Corn Belt, April in the Delta, August in the Northern Plains, December in the Southern Plains, March and

Figure 2

Average number of hired farmworkers and all wage and salary workers, by month, 1990-92



Source: Current Population Survey, earnings microdata file.

October in the Mountain region, and September in the Pacific region.

Hired farmworker employment levels per month also varied by establishment type (fig. 3). June was the peak employment month in crop production, while October was the peak employment month in livestock production. Agricultural service employment peaked twice, in June and September.[3]

Part-Time and Full-Time Hired Farmworkers

About 21 percent of hired farmworkers usually worked part-time (less than 35 hours per week) during the weeks they were employed, compared with 19 percent for all wage and salary workers. Part-time hired farmworkers were more likely to be female, white, younger, never married, and less educated than full-time hired farmworkers (table 4).[4] Twenty-eight percent of the part-time workers were female, compared with 13 percent of the full-time workers. White workers made up 78 percent of the part-time workers but 55 percent of the full-time hired farmworkers. Only 31 percent of part-time workers had high school diplomas or more education, compared with 46 percent of the full-time workers.

Fifty percent of the part-time hired farmworkers were employed in livestock production, 43 percent were employed in crop production, and 7 percent were employed in agricultural services. Full-time farmworkers were more likely to be employed in crop production (50 percent) and less likely to be employed in livestock production (41 percent) than part-time workers.

The Lake States region accounted for the largest proportion of the part-time hired farmworkers employed in 1992 (17 percent). Consequently, part-time employees constituted a larger proportion of this region's hired farm work force (37 percent) than in any of the regions. The smallest proportion (2 percent) of part-time hired farmworkers was in the Delta region.

Median Weekly Earnings

The median weekly earnings of hired farmworkers were considerably lower than for all wage and salary workers. Hired farmworkers received median weekly

[3]Agricultural service firms are establishments primarily engaged in performing farm labor and management services for others on a contract or fee basis. These services cover a wide range of activities such as forestry, meat packing, and farm labor (soil preparation services and animal and crop services). Other published data suggest that the CPS earnings microdata file may undercount the number of crop and agricultural service workers (see Oliveira, 1992).

[4]Part-time and full-time distinctions do not imply seasonality, since the data do not measure the number of weeks worked during the year.

Figure 3
Hired farmworkers employed by month and by establishment type, 1992

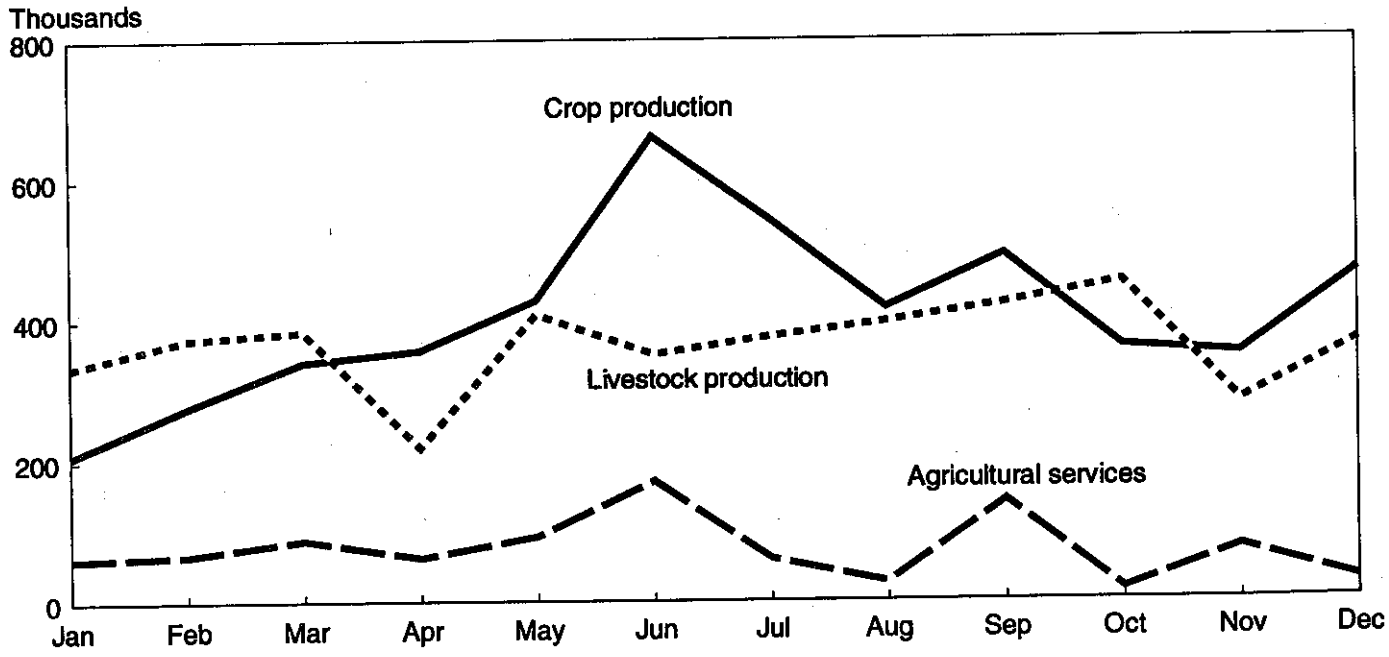


Table 4--Characteristics of part-time and full-time farmworkers, 1992

Characteristic	Part-time: Less than 35 hours per week		Full-time: 35 and more hours per week	
	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent
Total	179	100	669	100
Sex:				
Male	129	71.9	582	87.0
Female	50	28.1	87	13.0
Racial/ethnic:				
White	140	78.3	366	54.7
Hispanic	27	15.3	233	34.8
Black & other	12	6.4	70	10.5
Age (years):				
Less than 20	78	43.3	45	6.8
20-24	17	9.6	96	14.3
25-34	32	17.8	214	32.0
35-44	16	9.0	158	23.7
45-54	11	6.4	85	12.6
55 and over	25	13.9	71	10.6
Median age	23		34	
Marital status:				
Married	52	29.1	401	60.0
Widowed, divorced, or separated	20	11.4	66	9.8
Never married	107	59.5	202	30.2
Schooling completed:				
0-4 years	4	2.4	31	4.6
5-8 years	39	21.5	181	27.1
9-11 years	81	45.2	148	22.2
12 years	31	17.4	197	29.4
13 years or more	24	13.5	112	16.7
Establishment type:				
Crop production	77	43.1	332	49.6
Livestock production	89	49.9	275	41.1
Agricultural services	13	7.0	62	9.3
Median hours worked per week	20		40	
Median weekly earnings	$90		$240	

earnings of $200, about 52 percent of the $380 per week received by all wage and salary workers (table 5).[5] Also, the wage gap appears to have widened since 1990 when hired farmworkers received median weekly earnings that were 56 percent of that of other workers. Figure 4 shows that hired farmworkers ranked near the bottom of 13 major occupational groups with only private household service workers earning less in 1992. Hired farmwork was the only major occupational group that did not experience an increase in median earnings between 1990 and 1992, and when earnings are adjusted for the effects of inflation, hired farmworker earnings actually decreased. (See appendix table 2 for historical data on farmworker earnings.)

Weekly earnings of hired farmworkers vary by their demographic characteristics including gender, racial/ethnic group, age, and education (table 6).[6] The median weekly earnings of males ($220) was significantly greater than of females ($175). White farmworkers ($225) had higher median weekly earnings than Hispanic ($200) and black and other hired farmworkers ($190). Workers 35 to 44 years of age and 45 to 54 years of age ($250) had higher median weekly earnings than the other age groups. Workers who had completed high school ($240) and those who had completed some college ($275) had higher

[5]Data on earnings refer to the usual earnings received from the worker's farmwork job, before deductions, and includes any overtime pay or commissions.

[6]Weekly earnings may vary among different groups because of differences in hours worked and/or hourly wage. In general, groups with higher weekly earnings (for example, males) worked more hours than groups with lower weekly earnings (for example, females).

Table 5--Hours worked per week and weekly earnings of hired farmworkers and all wage and salary workers, 1992

Characteristic	Annual averages: Hired farmworkers	Annual averages: All wage and salary workers
	Thousands	
Total	848	104,054
	Percent	
Hours worked per week:		
1-19	8.1	6.4
20-34	13.0	12.7
35-44	40.4	63.0
45-54	20.3	12.7
55 or more	18.2	5.2
	Hours	
Median hours worked	40	40
	Percent	
Weekly earnings:		
Less than $100	12.0	6.5
$100-$199	30.5	12.5
$200-$299	30.8	17.2
$300-$399	15.0	15.1
$400-$499	5.5	12.9
$500-$599	3.3	9.5
$600 or more	2.8	26.4
	Dollars	
Median earnings	200	380

weekly earnings than workers with lower education levels.

Part-time hired farmworkers had both lower median weekly hours and earnings than full-time hired farmworkers. Their median hours (20 hours) were 50 percent of those for full-time workers (40 hours) and their median earnings ($90) were about 38 percent of full-time hired farmworkers' median earnings ($240) (table 4).

Median weekly earnings of hired farmworkers did not vary significantly by farm industry. However, the region of the country where farmworkers worked did have a large effect. Median weekly earnings ranged from a high of $220 in the Northeast, Mountain, and Pacific regions to a low of $180 in the Appalachian region (table 6).

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Figure 4
Median weekly earnings of wage and salary workers by occupation, 1992

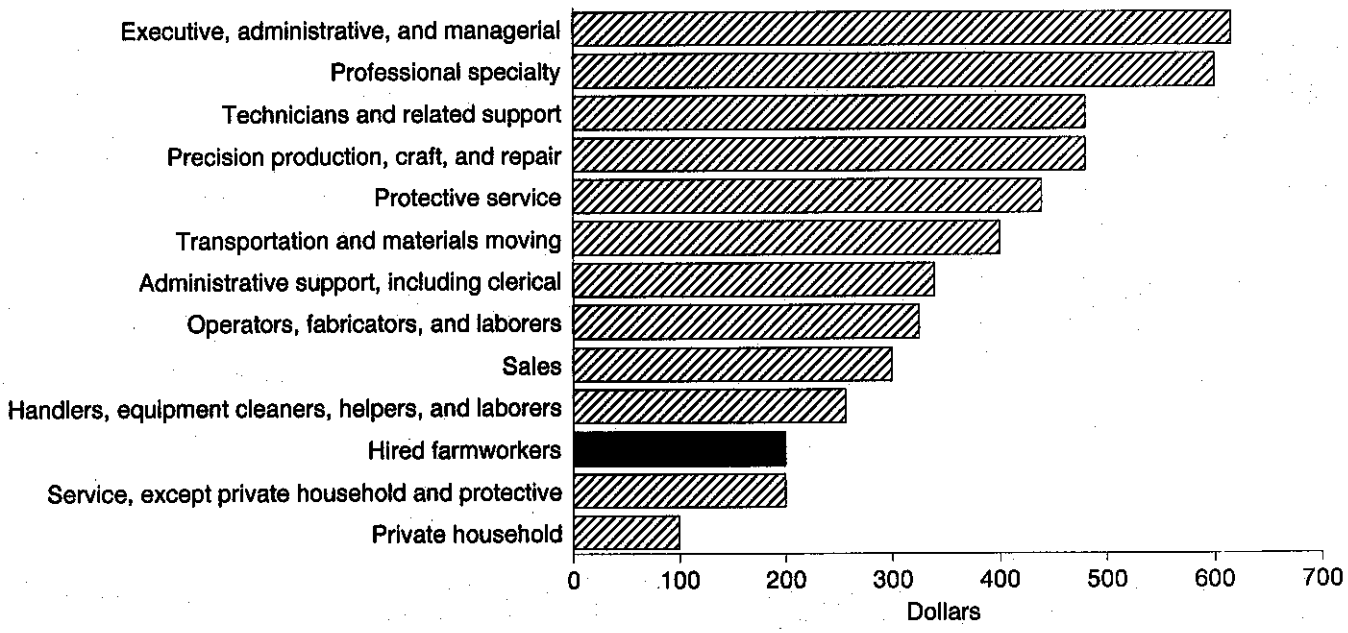

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Table 6--Median weekly earnings of hired farmworkers by demographic and employment characteristics, 1992

Characteristic	Annual averages: Hired farmworkers	Annual averages: Median weekly earnings	Characteristic	Annual averages: Hired farmworkers	Annual averages: Median weekly earnings
	Thousands	Dollars		Thousands	Dollars
All hired farmworkers	848	205	Industry:		
Sex:			Crop production	409	200
			Livestock production	364	220
Male	711	220	Agricultural services	75	200
Female	137	175			
Racial/ethnic group:			Farm production region:		
White	506	225	Northeast	57	220
Hispanic	260	200	Lake States	85	200
Black and other	82	190	Corn Belt	79	200
			Northern Plains	37	--
Age (years):			Appalachian	84	180
Less than 20	122	100	Southeast	109	212
20-24	112	200	Delta States	49	--
25-34	246	235	Southern Plains	72	200
35-44	174	250	Mountain	59	220
45-54	96	250	Pacific	216	220
55 and older	96	200			
Schooling completed:					
0-4 years	119	200			
5-8 years	135	200			
9-11 years	229	175			
12 years	228	240			
13 years or more	136	275			

-- = Median not shown where base is less than 50,000.

Appendix table 1--Demographic characteristics of hired farmworkers and all wage and salary workers, 1990-92

Annual averages

Characteristic	Hired farmworkers						All wage and salary workers					
	1990	1991	1992	1990	1991	1992	1990	1991	1992	1990	1991	1992
	Thousands			Percent			Thousands			Percent		
Total workers	886	884	848	100	100	100	104,351	103,166	104,054	100	100	100
Sex:												
Male	735	728	711	82.9	82.4	83.8	55,043	54,128	54,317	52.7	52.5	52.2
Female	151	156	137	17.1	17.6	16.2	49,308	49,038	49,737	47.3	47.5	47.8
Racial/ethnic group:												
White	540	533	506	61.0	60.3	59.7	81,695	80,522	81,032	78.3	78.1	77.9
Hispanic	260	251	260	29.4	28.3	30.7	8,197	8,207	8,356	7.9	8.0	8.0
Black and other	85	100	82	9.6	11.4	9.6	14,459	14,437	14,666	13.9	14.0	14.1
Age (years):												
Less than 20	144	128	122	16.2	14.4	14.5	6,571	5,886	5,626	6.3	5.7	5.4
20-24	135	114	113	15.3	13.0	13.3	12,212	11,834	11,785	11.7	11.5	11.3
25-34	251	256	246	28.4	28.9	29.0	30,972	30,106	29,870	29.7	29.2	28.7
35-44	170	180	175	19.2	20.3	20.6	26,411	27,056	27,525	25.3	26.2	26.5
45-54	90	95	96	10.2	10.8	11.3	16,558	16,863	17,834	15.9	16.3	17.1
55 and over	95	111	96	10.7	12.6	11.3	11,628	11,421	11,414	11.1	11.1	11.0
Median age	31	32	33	--	--	--	35	36	36	--	--	--
Marital status:												
Married	472	472	454	53.3	53.4	53.5	60,706	60,360	60,174	58.2	58.5	58.3
Widowed, divorced, or separated	79	99	86	8.9	11.2	10.1	14,925	14,178	15,088	14.3	14.3	15.4
Never married	335	313	308	37.8	35.4	36.4	28,720	28,087	28,252	27.5	27.2	27.2
School completed:[1]												
0-4 years	98	81	119	11.1	11.5	14.1	1,031	956	892	1.0	0.9	0.9
5-8 years	191	187	135	21.6	21.2	16.0	4,141	3,844	3,166	4.0	3.7	3.0
9-11 years	202	200	229	22.8	22.6	27.0	11,222	10,561	10,525	10.8	10.2	10.1
12 years	278	274	228	31.4	31.0	26.9	41,166	40,385	36,431	39.4	39.2	35.0
13 years or more	116	122	136	13.1	13.7	16.0	46,792	47,410	53,040	44.8	46.0	51.0

-- = Not applicable.

[1]Educational attainment levels, beginning January 1992, were revised to reflect degrees or diplomas received rather than years of school completed.

Appendix table 2--Distribution of weekly earnings of hired farmworkers and all wage and salary workers, 1990-92

Weekly earnings	Hired farmworkers						All wage and salary workers					
	1990	1991	1992	1990	1991	1992	1990	1991	1992	1990	1991	1992
	Thousands			Percent			Thousands			Percent		
Total workers	886	884	848	100	100	100	104,351	103,166	104,054	100	100	100
Less than $100	126	111	102	14.2	12.6	12.0	7,628	7,066	6,762	7.3	6.8	6.5
$100 - $199	251	234	259	28.4	26.5	30.5	13,911	13,121	12,996	13.3	12.8	12.5
$200 - $299	295	301	261	33.4	34.0	30.8	19,109	18,250	17,871	18.4	17.7	17.2
$300 - $399	118	145	127	13.4	16.4	15.0	16,195	15,867	15,695	15.5	15.4	15.0
$400 - $499	46	48	47	5.2	5.4	5.5	13,453	13,080	13,389	12.9	12.7	12.9
$500 - $599	23	24	28	2.4	2.7	3.3	9,924	10,159	9,890	9.5	9.8	9.5
$600 +	27	21	24	3.0	2.4	2.8	24,131	25,623	27,451	23.1	24.8	26.4
Median weekly earnings	$200	$210	$200	--	--	--	$360	$370	$380	--	--	--

-- = Not applicable.

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Economic Research Service

SUMMARY OF REPORT #AIB-681

Many U.S. Farm Landlords Are Women

November 1993

Contact: Ann Vandeman 202/219-0405

Women who own and lease out farmland form a large proportion of farm landlords, yet their role in the farmland leasing market has been largely unexamined. Forty percent of private (that is, noncorporate and nonpublic) agricultural landlords are women, and they control 40 percent of the privately held land rented out.

Women Farm Landlords in the United States, a recent report from USDA's Economic Research Service, examines the extent of women's involvement in agricultural leasing, the characteristics of women landlords, and their participation in management decisions on their leased land. The report is based on the 1988 Agricultural Economics and Land Ownership Survey (AELOS), a follow-on to the 1987 Census of Agriculture, and the latest data available.

Since 1900, the percentage of agricultural land that is leased has consistently exceeded 30 percent. Leasing was previously viewed as a step toward full ownership. Since 1940, the importance of part ownership, combining owned and rented land in a farm operation, has increased. Farm operators use leasing to expand or contract the farm operation, to conserve limited capital for financing farm operations, to enhance management flexibility, and to reduce risk.

The continuing exodus from farming that began after the Depression has led to the aging of the farm population, as those leaving are not replaced by younger farm operators. And, because women often outlive their husbands, the number of women owning and leasing out farmland has been increasing.

The areas with the highest percentage of land leased out by women landlords are the traditional farming areas of the Midwest and the Plains. In the West South Central region, including Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas, women own 46 percent of all leased acres. In the New England region, including Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, women landlords own only 22 percent of all leased out farmland.

Female landlords are older and less involved in farming than male and joint ownership (usually a husband and a wife) landlords, but women landlords depend more on farming and farm rent for their income. The average age for female landlords is 66 years, and 64 years for males. Thirty-four percent of women, compared with 31 percent of both men and joint ownership landlords depend on farming and farm rent for more than a fourth of their income.

Most farm landlords lease out their land on a cash basis. But, women and joint ownership landlords are more likely than men landlords to share lease their land. Thirty-one percent of female landlords lease their land under share or cash/share arrangements, compared with 27 percent of male landlords.

Individual/family and partnership landlords, by gender, 1988

Women constitute the largest group of U.S. agricultural landlords and own an equal share of all leased U.S. farmland

Gender	Landlord	Share of U.S. farmland leased
	Percent	
Women	40	40
Men	31	31
Joint	29	29

To Order This Report...

The information presented here is excerpted from ***Women Farm Landlords in the United States,*** AIB-681, by Denise Rogers and Ann Vandeman. The cost is $7.50.

To order, dial **1-800-999-6779** (toll free in the United States and Canada) and ask for the report by title.

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U.S. Department of Agriculture
Economic Research Service

SUMMARY OF REPORT #AER-685

Farm Business and Household Characteristics Vary by County Type

May 1994

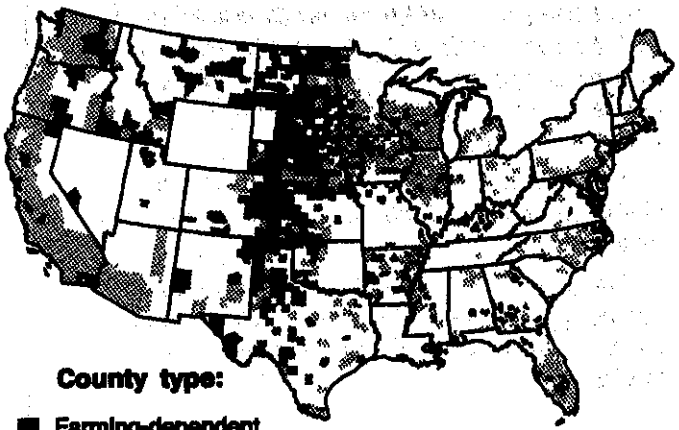
Contact: Robert A. Hoppe 202/219-0807

Fewer and fewer counties depend heavily on farming for their income. But, agriculture has not disappeared from the great majority of counties that are no longer farming-dependent. In many counties, farming is still significant, though it does not provide a large share of local income.

Farming Operations and Households in Farming Areas: A Closer Look, a recent report from USDA's Economic Research Service, examines farm businesses and farm operator households in three groups of counties based on each county's share of earnings from farming and the size of its local farm sector:

- Farming-dependent counties, where at least 20 percent of local earnings came from farming;
- Major farming counties, where less than 20 percent of local earnings came from farming, but farms ranked in the top fifth of U.S. counties in total farm earnings received; and
- Residual counties, the remainder of U.S. counties.

Farming areas of the United States



Studying the characteristics of these county groups and the characteristics of farm operator households in the groups indicates four major implications:

- **Farm operator households have an interest in the nonfarm economy**, because they depend heavily on off-farm income, regardless of county group.
- **Farm-related economic development strategies may be most relevant in farming-dependent counties.** For other areas, the effects of the local economy on farming may be more important.
- **Farm commodity programs have limited potential to affect farm households** when most operator household income comes from off-farm sources.
- **Strengthening local nonfarm economies through development programs may be an alternative to using commodity programs** to increase farm operator household income.

To Order This Report...

The information presented here is excerpted from ***Farming Operations and Households in Farming Areas: A Closer Look,*** AER-685, by Robert A. Hoppe. The cost is $9.00.

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SUMMARY OF REPORT AIB-690

New USDA Report Details Status of U.S. Farm Sector

March 1994

Contact: Judith Z. Kalbacher 202-219-0527

Structural and Financial Characteristics of U.S. Farms, 1990: 15th Annual Family Farm Report to Congress, introduces a new reporting format that will provide annual data on the major structural and financial characteristics of the farm sector as portrayed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Costs and Returns Survey (FCRS). Annual farm structural data are not available from any other national data source. Estimates from the 1990 survey, the base year for the new data series, indicate that about 1.8 million farms operated 1 billion acres of land in the contiguous United States during the year. The average acreage operated was 588 acres per reporting farm and gross farm sales averaged $63,200.

The variables presented in this report were selected to provide a comprehensive overview of the organization, resource base, and financial situation of the Nation's farm sector. These variables fall into three basic categories: farm structure, land base and use, and farm financial and economic well-being. Selected data on farm operator households are also included to provide a sense of the importance of farming to operator households.

Farm structure variables measure the number and distribution of farms by several classifications, such as acreage, value of production, form of organization, type of farm, and operator characteristics. The FCRS data provide the following snapshots of the U.S. farm sector:

- Farm size measures show a concentration of farms in the smaller acreage and sales classes. Farms of less than 500 acres account for slightly more than 80 percent of farms surveyed, but slightly less than 20 percent of the farmland. About 60 percent of farms reported gross farm sales of less than $20,000 in 1990; these small farms account for only 4 percent of farm sales.
- The individual owner business organization and the full ownership land tenure arrangement make up the largest proportion of farms. Average acreage and average sales data indicate that farms operated by individuals and full owners were smaller than farms operated under other forms of business organization and tenure arrangements.
- Beef-hog-sheep operations are the most common production specialty, followed by cash grain operations. The two most common farm types operated the largest shares of farmland and, along with dairy operations, produced the bulk of gross farm sales.
- Measured by average acreage operated, operators with less than a high school education and operators primarily employed in occupations other than farming generally had the smallest farms. No significant differences were found in average acreage operated by age group.

To Order This Report...

The information presented here is excerpted from ***Structural and Financial Characteristics of U.S. Farms, 1990: 15th Annual Family Farm Report to Congress,*** AIB-690, by Judith Z. Kalbacher, Susan E. Bentley, and Donn A. Reimund. The cost is $12.00.

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