



**The Hired Farm
Working Force of**

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THE HIRED FARM WORKING FORCE OF 1958*

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SUMMARY

In 1958, about 4.2 million persons did farm work for wages at some time during the year. This was the largest number reported in this series for any of the last six years. Of every 100 persons who reported farm wage work, 45 worked less than 25 days for farm wages.

Over three-quarters of those who worked at least 25 days at farm wage work were males, and more than half were under 35 years of age. Yearly earnings from farm wage work averaged \$766 in 1958 for those in the group who did 25 days or more of such work.^{1/} The average worker in this category was employed for 128 days and earned \$6 per day at farm wage work. Earnings from nonfarm jobs increased annual average wage earnings to \$961 in 1958.

There were about 750,000 persons who worked at least 150 days at farm jobs for wages in 1958. This group comprised less than a fifth of the total hired farm working force in 1958. Earnings from farm wage work varied with the region of the U. S. in which the worker was living in February 1958. In general, farm workers in the South earned the least from farm wage work, and farm workers living in the West earned the most. Those persons living in Standard Metropolitan Areas averaged higher farm wage earnings than those living outside these areas.

The 1.9 million persons who did less than 25 days of farm wage work in 1958 averaged 11 days at such work for which they received an average of \$73. Nonfarm earnings increased their average annual wage earnings to \$421. Almost 60 percent of these very short-term workers in 1958 were out of the labor force or were unemployed in February 1959.

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^{1/} Farm wage earnings reported in this survey are cash earnings only, and do not include the value of perquisites which are often received by hired farm workers.

INTRODUCTION

This publication is the latest in a series of annual reports on the hired farm working force. In each year since 1945, with the exception of 1953 and 1955, information has been obtained on the number, characteristics, and earnings of persons who did any farm work for wages at any time during the year. The information is obtained for the Agricultural Marketing Service by the Bureau of the Census in conjunction with one of the monthly Current Population Surveys.

The data for this report were collected in the February 1959 Current Population Survey. Owing mainly to differences in definitions, the estimates based on these special surveys differ in several important respects from the estimates published elsewhere by the Agricultural Marketing Service and from other estimates made by the Bureau of the Census. This report supplies information on all persons 14 years of age and over who reported any farm wage work in 1958 and who were in the civilian noninstitutional population in February 1959. Children under 14 years of age were excluded from the survey, as were those who did farm wage work in 1958 but died, left the country, entered military service, or were otherwise removed from the civilian noninstitutional population of the continental U. S. by February 1959.

The information obtained on farm wage workers in the 1959 survey was obtained from five supplementary questions to the February 1959 Current Population Survey schedule. The special questions, which are reproduced in the Appendix, covered days worked at farm and nonfarm jobs and the cash earnings received from each type of work. These questions, asked of all those who reported any farm wage work at any time during 1958, combined with information obtained on the regular Current Population Survey schedule, provide the basis for the information presented in this report.

To evaluate properly this information, it should be remembered that 1958 was a year in which an economic recession had a marked effect on employment.

SOURCE AND COMPARABILITY OF DATA

Source of data. The data upon which this report is based were obtained for the Agricultural Marketing Service by the Bureau of the Census in the Current Population Survey [CPS] conducted in February 1959. Similar surveys have been conducted in all but two years (1953 and 1955) since 1945. Although changes have been made in the sample design and in some of the concepts used in the CPS, the data are sufficiently comparable to supply a continuous series.^{2/}

^{2/} For a discussion of the changes which have been made in the conduct and design of the CPS since 1942, see: Current Population Reports. "Concepts and Methods Used in the Current Employment and Unemployment Statistics Prepared by the Bureau of the Census." Series P-23, No. 5, May 9, 1958.

The supplementary questions, which are reproduced on page 29 were asked all persons in the sample who were 14 years of age and over and in the civilian noninstitutional population in February 1959.

As in all sample surveys, the estimates are subject to sampling variability. Small figures, and minor differences between estimates or in year-to-year changes must be interpreted with this fact in mind.^{3/} In addition to sampling variability, errors in response or interviewer bias must also be considered.

Comparability with other related data. The data published in this report are not comparable with those published elsewhere by the Agricultural Marketing Service ^{4/} and other estimates made by the Bureau of the Census.^{5/}

Information contained in the monthly Farm Labor reports published by AMS is obtained from mailed questionnaires returned by about 20,000 to 25,000 farm operators each month. Data are obtained monthly on the number of hired farm workers and quarterly on wages paid to hired workers for the last full calendar week ending at least one day before the last day of the month. Any person, regardless of age, who did at least one hour or more of farm work for wages is reported as a hired farm worker by the operator of the farm on which he was employed.

In the Monthly Report on the Labor Force published by the Department of Labor, information is obtained from interviews of a national sample of about 35,000 households. Data are obtained on the work experience of each member of the household 14 years of age and over for the week containing the 12th of the month. If a person did any farm work for wages during that week, he is reported as a hired farm worker, unless he held another job for a longer period of time during the week. Some nonfarm occupations performed on the farm are considered to be wage and salary work in agriculture.

Thus, estimates in the monthly Farm Labor report are based on an establishment approach, while the CPS estimates are based on a household approach. The Farm Labor series includes persons of any age who did at least one hour of farm wage work, while the CPS includes only persons 14 years of age or older whose longest job during the week was in agriculture. The CPS provides an unduplicated estimate of the number of wage and salary workers in agriculture, but the Farm Labor series reports the same person more than once if he worked on more than one farm during the reference week. Differences in the timing of the two surveys may result in different estimates due to weather

^{3/} The Bureau of the Census provides estimates of standard errors in the Monthly Report on the Labor Force. Series P-57. After June 30, 1959, see: Monthly Report on the Labor Force. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor.

^{4/} See, for example: Farm Labor, Agricultural Marketing Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture. January 9, 1959.

^{5/} See, for example: U. S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports, "Work Experience of the Population in 1958," Series P-50, No. 91. June 30, 1959. After June 30, 1959 this information is contained in Monthly Report on the Labor Force, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor.

conditions and the highly seasonal nature of labor requirements in agriculture. The Farm Labor series also excludes from farm wage work nonfarm occupations which may be performed on the farm enterprise.

SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF THE HIRED FARM WORKING FORCE

An estimated 4.2 million different persons worked on U. S. farms for wages at some time during 1958 (table 1). This was a 6 percent increase over the number reported in 1957, and the highest employment level reported in this series for any of the last six years. The increase in the total number of workers was about equally distributed between those who did less than 25 days of farm wage work and those who did 25 days or more of farm wage work during the year. For both groups of workers, males accounted for most of the increase in the number of workers.

About 2.3 million different persons, 55 percent of all hired workers, did 25 days or more of farm wage work during the year. The remainder were in the hired farm working force for no more than the equivalent of 4 six-day weeks during the year. Since these two groups of workers differ in other characteristics as well as in the degree of attachment to the hired farm labor force, they are discussed separately in this report. Information in

Table 1. - Farm wage workers who did any farm wage work during the year, by sex, United States, selected years, 1945-58

Year	All farm wage workers			Workers with 25 days or more of farm wage work during the year			Workers with less than 25 days of farm wage work during the year		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.
1945	3,212	2,375	837	1,965	1,576	389	1,247	799	448
1946	2,770	2,120	650	1,953	1,584	369	817	536	281
1947	3,394	2,587	807	2,215	1,864	351	1,179	723	456
1948	3,752	2,820	932	2,502	2,036	466	1,250	784	466
1949	4,140	3,021	1,119	2,510	2,001	509	1,630	1,020	610
1950	4,342	3,221	1,121	---	---	---	---	---	---
1951	3,274	2,392	882	2,156	1,718	438	1,118	674	444
1952	2,980	2,218	762	1,972	1,558	414	1,008	660	348
1954	3,009	2,237	772	1,908	1,544	364	1,101	693	408
1956	3,575	2,525	1,050	2,078	1,553	525	1,497	972	525
1957	3,962	2,765	1,197	2,200	1,673	527	1,762	1,092	670
1958	4,212	2,987	1,225	2,319	1,788	531	1,893	1,199	694

the following section refers only to those persons who worked on farms for wages for at least 25 days during the years specified.^{6/}

PERSONS WHO DID 25 DAYS OR MORE OF FARM WAGE WORK

Tables 2 through 4 contain information on the demographic characteristics and work experience of farm wage workers with 25 days or more of such work in 1958, together with comparable data from earlier surveys.

Since 1956, males have comprised about three-quarters of workers in this category, and the proportion of males in the hired farm working force (77 percent) was about the same in 1958 as in the two earlier years.

Table 3 shows that the proportion of both males and females in four broad age groups has remained about the same since 1952. About a fifth of both males and females were 14 to 17 years of age; about equal proportions (4 out of 10) were in the age groups 18-34 and 35-64; and a very small proportion was 65 and over. The median age of male workers was about 31 and about 32 for females.

About 750,000 persons (one-third of all those reporting 25 days or more of farm wage work) worked for 150 days or more at farm wage work during 1958, and 1.6 million worked less than the equivalent of six full months in 1958 (table 4). This group of workers comprised less than a fifth (18 percent) of the total hired farm working force.

EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS OF HIRED FARM WORKERS

At farm work. Workers with at least 25 days of farm wage work in 1958 averaged 128 days of farm wage work and earned an average of \$766 at such work during the year (table 5). Since 1947 the average number of days worked has ranged between 125 and 156, and the average annual earnings from farm wage work have been between \$550 and \$800. Average daily earnings from farm wage work have increased during this period; from about \$4 per day in 1947 to about \$6 per day in the last three years.

In 1958, as in other years, males worked more days and earned more per day at farm jobs than did females. Males averaged 147 days at farm wage work and earned an average of \$6.30 per day, compared to an average of 63 days at farm wage work and average daily earnings of \$3.80 for females. Average daily earnings for males increased substantially from 1947 to 1958, while they remained about the same throughout this period for females.

It should be pointed out that the earnings reported here are cash earnings only, and do not include the value of perquisites which are received by many farm wage workers.

^{6/} Comparable information on the groups with less than 25 days of farm wage work during the year is presented on pages 23 to 27.

Table 2. - Distribution of farm wage workers who did 25 days or more of farm wage work during the year, by sex, United States, selected years, 1945-58

Sex	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1951	1952	1954	1956	1957	1958
	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.
Total	1,965	1,953	2,215	2,502	2,510	2,156	1,972	1,908	2,078	2,200	2,319
Male	1,576	1,584	1,864	2,036	2,001	1,718	1,558	1,544	1,553	1,673	1,788
Female	389	369	351	466	509	438	414	364	525	527	531

Percentage distribution

	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Male	80	81	84	81	80	80	79	81	75	76	77
Female	20	19	16	19	20	20	21	19	25	24	23

Table 3. - Percentage distribution of male and female workers who did 25 days or more of farm wage work, by age groups, United States, selected years, 1952-58

Age	Male					Female				
	1952	1954	1957	1958	1958	1952	1954	1956	1957	1958
	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
14-17 years	17	14	17	18	18	18	19	18	21	21
18-34	42	41	39	39	39	37	44	39	32	35
35-64	37	41	39	39	39	44	36	41	45	41
65 and over	4	4	5	4	4	1	1	2	2	3

Table 4. - Distribution of farm wage workers who did 25 days or more of farm wage work, by duration of farm wage work during year, United States, selected years, 1945-58

Days of farm wage work	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1951	1952	1954	1956	1957	1958
	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.
Total	1,965	1,953	2,215	2,502	2,510	2,156	1,972	1,908	2,078	2,200	2,319
Less than 150 days	1,164	1,089	1,182	1,501	1,543	1,304	1,252	1,074	1,329	1,545	1,563
150 days and over	801	864	1,033	1,001	967	852	720	834	749	655	756
Percentage distribution											
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Less than 150 days	59	56	53	60	61	60	63	56	64	70	67
150 days and over	41	44	47	40	39	40	37	44	36	30	33

A detailed breakdown of farm wage employment and earnings in 1958 is shown in table 6, where information is presented for both male and female workers with different amounts of farm wage work experience in 1958.

The farm wage work experience of males is quite different from that of females. About 2 out of 5 males with at least 25 days of farm wage work worked 150 days or more for farm wages in 1958, but less than 5 percent of the females worked as many as 150 days. There was little difference in the average daily earnings of males with varying amounts of farm wage work. Those males who worked 150-249 days earned about the same per day from farm employment as the shorter- or longer-term workers.

The full-time male farm wage workers--those who worked 250 days or more at farm wage work--worked an average of 309 days, the equivalent of 51 six-day weeks, during 1958 and earned an average of \$1,932 at farm wage work. Included in this period were probably a number of weeks in which the average hours worked were rather low, due to weather and the seasonal nature of labor requirements.

These data show the important labor contribution made by full-time workers. Only about 11 percent of the 4.2 million hired farm workers worked 250 days or more at farm wage work in 1958, but they accounted for almost half of all the days spent at farm wage work. Less than 1 in 5 of all workers did at least 150 days of farm wage work in 1958, but this group accounted for about 62 percent of the total days of farm wage work in 1958. It should be noted that this is not a measure of full man-days of farm wage work, but only of the days on which some hired farm work was done.

The distribution of earnings from farm wage work shown in table 7 indicates that the pattern of earnings from farm wage work has remained relatively stable from 1952 to 1958. Six out of 10 workers earned less than \$600 in farm wages in 1958. The great majority (86 percent) of females earned less than \$400, and about half (52 percent) of the males earned less than \$600 from farm wage work in 1958.

The cash earnings of farm wage workers are influenced by a number of factors which affect wage rates and the amount of time worked. These factors include the type of work performed, the relative importance of perquisites, and the nature of the local farm labor market. Other factors associated with differential farm wage rates are the region of the country in which the work is performed and the availability of nonfarm employment opportunities. 7/

Information obtained in the February 1959 Current Population Survey permits an analysis of the differences in earnings of farm wage workers in various regions of the U. S. and in areas which differ in the availability of nonfarm jobs. Table 8 gives information on days at farm wage work and earnings from such work for persons living in four regions of the U. S. 8/

7/ For a recent study of wage differentials, see: Maitland, Sheridan T. and Fisher, Dorothy Anne, Area Variations in the Wages of Agricultural Labor in the United States. U. S. Department of Agriculture, Technical Bulletin No. 1177, March 1958.

8/ Persons were classified by their residence in February 1959, and some of them had undoubtedly worked in other regions of the U. S. in 1958.

Table 5. - Average days worked and wages earned at farm and nonfarm wage work by farm workers who did 25 days or more of farm wage work, by sex, United States, selected years, 1947-58

Year and sex	Farm and nonfarm:			Farm			Nonfarm		
	Days worked	Wages earned	Days worked	Wages earned			Days worked	Wages earned	
				Per year	Per day 1/ worked	Dollars		Per year	Per day 1/ worked
	Number	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Dollars	
1947									
Total	183	734	156	596	3.80	27	138	5.05	
Male	198	803	170	648	3.80	28	155	5.50	
Female	106	362	85	319	3.75	21	43	2.05	
1949									
Total	166	702	140	557	3.95	26	145	5.65	
Male	183	810	157	643	4.10	26	167	6.40	
Female	98	280	74	219	2.95	24	61	2.55	
1951									
Total	174	879	146	683	4.70	28	196	7.00	
Male	197	1,035	165	797	4.85	32	238	7.55	
Female	84	268	70	238	3.40	14	30	2.10	
1952									
Total	162	908	132	684	5.15	30	224	7.45	
Male	187	1,078	152	804	5.30	35	274	7.75	
Female	67	264	57	232	4.05	10	32	3.15	
1954									
Total	168	981	142	799	5.65	26	182	7.10	
Male	185	1,124	158	916	5.80	27	208	7.70	
Female	96	380	76	307	4.05	20	73	3.70	
1956									
Total	159	989	136	799	5.85	23	190	8.30	
Male	184	1,215	157	974	6.20	27	241	9.05	
Female	86	320	74	279	3.75	12	41	3.35	
1957									
Total	144	892	125	738	5.90	19	154	7.95	
Male	165	1,087	143	896	6.25	22	191	8.55	
Female	78	275	68	240	3.50	10	35	3.60	
1958									
Total	150	961	128	766	6.00	22	195	8.80	
Male	171	1,160	147	923	6.30	24	237	9.75	
Female	78	291	63	238	3.80	15	53	3.55	

1/ Rounded to the nearest 5 cents. Farm wage earnings are cash only and do not include the value of perquisites received by many farm workers.

Table 6. - Average days worked and wages earned at farm and nonfarm wage work for farm wage workers who did 25 days or more of farm wage work, by sex of worker and duration of farm wage work, United States, 1958

Sex of worker and duration of farm wage work	Farm and nonfarm			Farm			Nonfarm			
	Number of farm wage workers	Wages earned		Days worked	Wages earned		Days worked	Wages earned		
		Number	Per year		Per day 1/ worked	Number		Per year	Per day 1/ worked	Number
	Thousands	Dollars	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars
Total	2,319	961	6.40	128	766	6.00	22	195	8.80	
25 - 149 days	1,563	605	6.60	64	361	5.70	28	244	8.70	
150 - 249	304	1,303	6.25	188	1,129	6.00	19	174	9.00	
250 and over	452	1,964	6.30	308	1,925	6.25	4	39	10.00	
Male	1,788	1,160	6.80	147	923	6.30	24	237	9.75	
25 - 149 days	1,056	765	7.60	66	430	6.45	34	335	9.80	
150 - 249	283	1,346	6.40	190	1,163	6.10	20	183	9.35	
250 and over	449	1,971	6.30	309	1,932	6.25	4	39	10.00	
Female	531	291	3.75	63	238	3.80	15	53	3.55	
25 - 149 days	507	272	3.75	58	218	3.80	15	54	3.55	
150 and over	24	2/								

1/ Rounded to the nearest 5 cents. Farm wage earnings are cash only and do not include the value of perquisites received by many farm workers.

2/ Days worked and wages earned not shown for fewer than 90,000 persons.

Average daily earnings from farm wage work were highest in the West and lowest in the South. For the U. S. and for the South, average daily earnings were lower for nonwhites than for whites.

The data in table 8 also reflect the differences in agriculture among regions. For example, in the Northeast workers averaged 190 days of farm wage work compared to 115 days for workers in the South. This is probably related to the presence in the Northeast of a comparatively large number of farms which require intensive cultivation or year-round labor, e.g., truck farms and dairy farms. The fact that cash earnings for whites in the Northeast are lower probably means that perquisites are a more important part of the total return to labor for the more fully employed farm wage worker in the Northeast than they are for workers employed less regularly.

In areas where nonfarm employment opportunities are relatively more available, cash earnings from farm wage work are generally higher. This is true because nonfarm wage rates are usually higher than farm wage rates and because farm wages would be more nearly competitive with nonfarm wages in areas where nonfarm jobs are readily available.

The metropolitan character of an area is a rough measure of the relative availability of nonfarm jobs. Information on whether workers were living inside or outside a Standard Metropolitan Area in February 1959 was obtained in this survey.^{9/} A comparison of earnings for workers living inside and outside Standard Metropolitan Areas [SMA] is presented in table 9. A distinction is made between workers who were household heads, who would be most likely to be full-time workers, and other members of the household.

As in the case of residence within a particular region, this information relates to the residence of the worker as of February 1959 and some of the workers undoubtedly worked in other areas of the country in 1958. It should also be noted that since Standard Metropolitan Areas are located in all regions of the country, this comparison may also reflect regional differences.

Less than a fifth of those persons with 25 days or more of farm wage work in 1958 were living within an SMA in February 1959 indicating the greater availability of farm jobs outside SMA's. For the total group of workers the number of days of farm wage work was about the same, but average daily farm earnings were almost \$1 higher for persons living inside an SMA than for those living outside.

^{9/} A Standard Metropolitan Area is a county or group of contiguous counties containing at least one city of 50,000 inhabitants or more, and including surrounding contiguous counties that are essentially metropolitan in character and socially and economically integrated with the central city. Nonagricultural workers must constitute at least two-thirds of the total number of employed persons in contiguous counties. For a more complete definition, see: 1950 Census of Population, Vol. II, Part 1, page 27.

Table 8. - Average days worked and wages earned at farm and nonfarm wage work, for workers who did 25 days or more of farm wage work, by region, color and sex of worker, United States, 1958

Region, color and sex of worker	Farm and nonfarm			Farm			Nonfarm		
	Number of workers	Wages earned : Per day 1/ worked :	Days worked :	Wages earned : Per year :	Days worked :	Wages earned : Per day 1/ worked :	Days worked :	Wages earned : Per year :	Days worked :
	Thousands	Dollars	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Dollars
Total	2,319	961	6.40	150	766	6.00	22	195	8.80
White	1,552	1,162	7.20	136	909	6.70	25	253	10.00
Male	1,321	1,309	7.40	149	1,023	6.85	28	286	10.35
Female	231	320	4.55	58	255	4.35	12	65	5.55
Nonwhite	767	554	4.35	111	477	4.30	16	77	4.80
Male	467	737	4.75	140	640	4.55	15	97	6.55
Female	300	269	3.20	66	225	3.40	18	44	2.55
Northeast	187	1,306	6.20	190	1,111	5.85	21	195	9.35
White	176	1,338	6.20	193	1,132	5.85	22	206	9.50
Nonwhite	11 2/								
North Central	434	1,107	6.95	126	805	6.40	34	302	9.00
White	418	1,134	7.00	128	822	6.40	34	312	9.10
Nonwhite	16 2/								
South	1,262	665	5.05	115	565	4.95	17	100	5.90
White	585	854	6.20	119	715	6.00	18	139	7.50
Nonwhite	677	503	4.00	111	436	3.95	16	67	4.25
West	436	1,523	9.15	139	1,161	8.30	27	362	13.65
White	373	1,593	9.35	142	1,204	8.45	28	389	14.05
Nonwhite	63 2/								

1/ Rounded to the nearest 5 cents. Farm wage earnings are cash only and do not include the value of perquisites received by many farm workers.

2/ Days worked and wages earned not shown for fewer than 90,000 persons.

Table 9. - Average days worked and wages earned at farm and nonfarm wage work by farm workers who did 25 days or more of farm wage work, by household status, and residence within or outside Standard Metropolitan Areas, 1958

Household status and SMA residence	Number of workers			Farm and nonfarm			Farm			Nonfarm		
	No.	DoI.	DoI.	Days worked	Per year	Per day 1/ worked	Days worked	Per year	Per day 1/ worked	Days worked	Per year	Per day 1/ worked
	Thou.	DoI.	DoI.	No.	DoI.	DoI.	No.	DoI.	DoI.	No.	DoI.	DoI.
Total	2,319	961	6.40	150	961	6.40	128	766	6.00	22	195	8.80
Living within SMA in February 1959	398	1,171	7.45	157	1,171	7.45	129	877	6.80	28	294	10.40
Living outside SMA in February 1959	1,921	917	6.20	148	917	6.20	127	743	5.85	21	174	8.35
Heads of household	1,037	1,473	7.75	190	1,473	7.75	162	1,176	7.25	28	297	10.55
Living within SMA in February 1959	176	1,902	8.70	218	1,902	8.70	180	1,482	8.25	38	420	10.95
Living outside SMA in February 1959	861	1,385	7.50	184	1,385	7.50	158	1,113	7.00	26	272	10.45
Other members of household	1,282	547	4.70	117	547	4.70	100	435	4.35	17	112	6.45
Living within SMA in February 1959	222	594	5.45	109	594	5.45	89	399	4.50	20	195	9.60
Living outside SMA in February 1959	1,060	538	4.55	119	538	4.55	102	443	4.35	17	95	5.65

1/ Rounded to the nearest 5 cents.

Household heads residing inside an SMA averaged 180 days of farm wage work in 1958, and earned an average of \$8.25 per day, compared to 158 days of farm wage work and average daily earnings of \$7 for household heads living outside an SMA.

For other members of the household, primarily housewives and children, differences in average daily earnings were much less than for household heads. Other members of households located in SMA's averaged about two weeks less farm work than those residing outside SMA's.

The great majority (85 percent) of farm wage workers with 25 days or more at farm wage work lived in rural areas (table 10). About half of this group of workers lived on farms and about a third were rural nonfarm residents. About 15 percent of farm wage workers lived in areas classified as urban in 1959. A somewhat higher proportion of nonwhites than whites, 58 percent compared to 47 percent, lived in rural farm areas in February 1959.

It has been pointed out that many farm wage workers with 25 days or more of farm wage work are in the farm labor force only briefly during the year. Most of these short-term workers are housewives and students. Persons in the student group would be expected to work fewer days and to receive lower earnings than persons in age groups where participation in the labor force is more regular. Table 11 presents data on the average farm and nonfarm wage earnings for three broad age groups. On the average, persons aged 14-17 worked fewer days and earned less per day than either of the other two age groups. For example, males aged 14-17 worked an average of 81 days at farm wage work and earned an average of \$3.85 per day, compared to an average for males aged 18-64 of 163 days at farm wage work and average daily earnings of \$6.60. In the two younger age groups, the earnings for females were below those of males. It is clear that persons 18 and over were more regularly employed at farm wage work and earned higher daily wages than younger persons. The younger members of the hired farm working force probably worked fewer hours per day and may also have been paid at lower wage rates than older workers. In addition, the less experienced workers would earn less from farm work paid on a piece-rate basis than would the more experienced, and probably older, workers.

At nonfarm work. Thus far, the discussion has been limited to earnings from farm wage employment for workers with 25 days or more of farm wage work. In this section, data are presented on the nonfarm earnings of this group of workers.

The fact that relatively large numbers of persons who do farm wage work for a short time during the year derive comparatively low total cash earnings from such work suggests that nonfarm employment may be an important source of cash income. However, about 2.9 million farm wage workers had no nonfarm wage earnings in 1958 (table 12). Only about 3 out of 10 of those with 25 days or more of farm wage work also had nonfarm wage earnings. These persons earned an average of \$8.80 per day from nonfarm employment. Total yearly earnings from nonfarm wage work averaged \$730 for this group (table 13).

Table 10. - Percentage distribution and median income of farm wage workers with 25 days or more of farm wage work, by residence, sex and color of worker, United States, 1958

Residence, sex and color of worker	Number of workers	Percentage distribution of workers	Median earnings from farm and non-farm wage work
	<u>Thousands</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Dollars</u>
Total	2,319	100	551
Rural farm	1,176	51	571
Male	929	40	789
White	638	27	937
Nonwhite	291	13	625
Female	247	11	195
White	95	4	191
Nonwhite	152	7	198
Rural nonfarm	785	34	560
Male	603	26	770
White	464	20	864
Nonwhite	139	6	538
Female	182	8	189
White	91	4	204
Nonwhite	91	4	182
Urban	358	15	494
Male	256	11	742
White	219	9	723
Nonwhite	37 <u>1/</u>	2	---
Female	102	4	282
White	45 <u>1/</u>	2	---
Nonwhite	57 <u>I/</u>	2	---

1/ Earnings not shown for fewer than 90,000 persons.

Table 11. - Average days worked and average earnings at farm and nonfarm wage work for workers with 25 days or more of farm wage work, by specified age groups and sex, 1958

Age and sex	Farm and nonfarm wage work				Farm wage work			
	Number of workers	Average days worked	Average earnings		Average days worked	Average earnings		
			Per year	Per day $\frac{1}{\text{worked}}$		Per year	Per day $\frac{1}{\text{worked}}$	
	Thousands	Number	Dollars	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Dollars	
14-17 years								
Total	436	82	306	3.70	74	270	3.65	
Male	326	91	355	3.90	81	311	3.85	
Female	110	56	161	2.85	53	149	2.80	
18-64 years								
Total	1,789	168	1,135	6.75	141	893	6.30	
Male	1,385	192	1,369	7.15	163	1,076	6.60	
Female	404	84	332	3.95	66	266	4.05	
65 years and over								
Total	94	123	685	5.60	114	663	5.80	
Male	77 $\frac{2}{\text{}}$							
Female	17 $\frac{2}{\text{}}$							

1/ Rounded to the nearest 5 cents. Farm wage earnings are cash only and do not include the value of perquisites received by many farm workers.

2/ Days worked and wages earned not shown for fewer than 90,000 persons.

Table 12. - Farm wage workers who had no nonfarm wage work, United States, selected years, 1949-58

Year	Number of persons who did farm wage work only		
	Total	25 days or more	Less than 25 days
	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands
1949	2,886	1,795	1,091
1951	2,410	1,596	814
1952	---	1,403	---
1954	2,145	1,404	741
1956	2,544	1,549	995
1957	2,947	1,693	1,254
1958	2,918	1,701	1,217

Table 13. - Average days worked and wages earned at nonfarm wage work by farm wage workers who did any nonfarm wage work by duration of farm wage work, United States, selected years, 1949-58

Year	Farm wage workers who did any non-farm wage work			Persons with 25 days or more of farm wage work who did any non-farm wage work ^{2/}			Persons with less than 25 days of farm wage work who did any nonfarm wage work		
	Wages earned			Wages earned			Wages earned		
	Days worked	Per year	Per day ^{1/} worked	Days worked	Per year	Per day ^{1/} worked	Days worked	Per year	Per day ^{1/} worked
	Number	Dollars	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Dollars
1949	91	538	5.90	86	487	5.65	98	606	6.20
1951	104	766	7.35	108	754	7.00	98	787	8.05
1954	100	712	7.15	97	691	7.10	103	742	7.15
1956	94	811	8.65	90	747	8.30	97	877	9.00
1957	94	859	9.15	84	668	7.95	104	1,050	10.15
1958	96	858	8.90	83	730	8.80	108	974	9.00

^{1/} Rounded to the nearest 5 cents. Farm wage earnings are cash only and do not include the value of perquisites received by many farm workers.

^{2/} Data in this table agree with those in table 6 only on average daily non-farm earnings. Since table 6 refers to all farm wage workers who did 25 days or more of farm wage work, whereas this table refers only to those who did non-farm work, average days of nonfarm work and average annual nonfarm earnings are higher in this table than in table 6.

Data in table 5 show that for males average daily earnings from both farm and nonfarm wage work have increased since 1947, but that the increase in nonfarm earnings has been greater than that from farm jobs. For females, average daily farm earnings remained about the same in 1958 as they were in 1947, while their nonfarm average daily earnings increased during the period. Roughly a fifth of the total average annual cash earnings in 1958 were from nonfarm employment.

The average full-time male farm wage worker (250 days or more of hired farm work) was employed at farm wage work for all but 4 of the 313 days worked during the year (table 6). Males who worked less than 150 days derived a much greater proportion of their annual cash earnings from nonfarm wage work than those more regularly employed. Nonfarm earnings per day were over twice as great for males as for females. The same regional differences observed in farm wage earnings were characteristic of nonfarm earnings (table 8). Average nonfarm daily earnings were highest in the West and lowest in the South. In general, nonwhites and females earned less at nonfarm jobs than did whites and males. Nonfarm earnings of workers living in SMA's were considerably greater than those residing outside of SMA's (table 9). Household heads living in an SMA worked an average of 38 days at nonfarm jobs and increased their total earnings by the \$420 earned at nonfarm employment. This is another indication of the greater availability of nonfarm employment in metropolitan areas.

The distribution of total cash earnings from both farm and nonfarm employment in 1958 is shown in table 14. In 1958, the median earnings were about \$778 for males and about \$208 for females. Little change in the distribution of total earnings occurred during the period 1952-1958.

As indicated earlier in this report, many farm wage workers are in the farm labor force only briefly during the year. The degree of attachment to the hired farm working force can be evaluated by examining two items of information obtained in the survey--employment status of the worker in February 1959 and the occupation in which the worker was employed for the longest time during 1958.

In table 15, information on employment status at the time of the survey is presented for the years 1956, 1957, and 1958. Since all three surveys were conducted in one of the winter months, persons who were employed as hired farm workers at that time probably are mostly regular or full-time farm wage workers. Those out of the labor force at that time are primarily housewives, students, and semi-retired persons who make up a large proportion of the seasonal workers in agriculture.

Of those persons who had worked at least 25 days at farm wage work in 1958, about a third were out of the labor force in February 1959 and one out of 10 was unemployed. About 40 percent were employed in agriculture, mainly as hired workers; the remaining fifth were distributed in various types of nonagricultural jobs.

Table 14. - Percentage distribution of farm wage workers who did 25 days or more of farm wage work by wages earned at farm and nonfarm wage work, by sex, United States, selected years, 1952-58

	All workers						Male						Female					
	1952	1954	1956	1957	1958	1952	1954	1956	1957	1958	1952	1954	1956	1957	1958			
Farm and nonfarm cash earnings																		
	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.			
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100			
Under \$100	7	6	8	12	8	5	4	5	8	5	18	13	19	22	17			
100 - 199	17	12	14	16	14	11	8	10	11	9	38	28	29	31	31			
200 - 399	17	18	19	19	19	13	14	15	17	16	28	34	30	29	30			
400 - 599	8	9	10	11	12	9	10	9	12	12	12	17	18	14	19			
600 - 999	16	14	12	12	15	18	15	14	13	18	12	17	18	14	19			
1,000 - 1,399	11	11	11	8	9	14	12	13	10	11	3	6	2	2	1			
1,400 - 1,999	11	12	10	8	9	14	15	13	10	11	1	1	1	1	1			
2,000 and over	13	18	16	14	14	16	22	21	19	18	--	1	1	1	1			

Table 15. - Percentage distribution of persons doing farm wage work in 1956, 1957, and 1958 showing duration of farm wage work during the year by employment status at time of survey 1/

Employment status at time of survey <u>1/</u>	Persons doing less than 25 days of farm wage work			Persons doing 25 days or more of farm wage work		
	1956	1957	1958	1956	1957	1958
	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Employed in agriculture	27	26	20	48	40	39
Wage and salary workers	5	3	3	42	32	32
Self-employed workers	20	20	14	5	7	6
Unpaid family workers	2	3	3	1	1	1
Employed in nonagricultural industries	22	16	22	16	14	18
Manufacturing	4	4	3	4	2	1
Forestry, fishing, mining or construction	3	2	2	2	2	3
Transportation, communication and other public utilities	1	2	3	2	2	4
Trade	6	3	5	3	4	4
Private households	4	3	5	2	2	3
Other	4	2	4	3	2	3
Unemployed	5	8	7	7	11	10
Not in the labor force	46	50	51	29	35	33
Keeping house	18	20	19	13	11	11
Attending school	23	24	26	11	15	13
Other	5	6	6	5	9	9

1/ The survey of the 1956 hired farm working force was taken in December 1956 and the surveys of 1957 and 1958 hired farm working force were taken in February of the following years.

The majority of household heads who did 25 days or more of farm wage work in 1958 were employed in agriculture in February 1959, either as hired workers (about four out of 10) or as farm operators (one in 10). (Table 16.) More than a fifth were in nonagricultural industries and about a quarter were either unemployed or out of the labor force. The majority (57 percent) of other members of the household were either unemployed or out of the labor force, and about a fourth were employed as hired workers in agriculture.

An additional indication of the degree of attachment of the hired farm worker to the farm labor force is supplied by information on the occupation in which the person spent the longest time during 1958.

As shown earlier (p. 16), only about 3 out of 10 persons with at least 25 days of farm wage work in 1958 had any nonfarm wage employment during the year. The great majority (82 percent) of this group were employed in farm occupations for a longer time during the year than in any other occupation (table 17). About 7 out of 10 males and 8 out of 10 females reported farm wage work as their primary occupation in 1958; and one out of 10 males reported either self-employment as a farm operator or employment as a farm manager as their primary occupation. Thus, in 1958, a substantial number of farm wage workers either were employed only as hired farm workers or reported some farm occupation as their primary job.

PERSONS WHO DID LESS THAN 25 DAYS OF FARM WAGE WORK

About 1.9 million persons worked less than 25 days at farm wage work during 1958. This is the largest number ever reported in this category in this series. These short-term workers in 1958 averaged 11 days of farm wage work and earned an average of \$73 at such work during the year (table 18). The average number of days they worked at both farm and nonfarm jobs was only 50. The average of their yearly earnings from both types of employment was \$421. About one in six of these short-term workers was a farm operator who did farm wage work for a few days during the year.

Of particular interest is the high average daily earnings at farm wage work reported by household heads. Contrary to the experience of other members of the household and to that of persons reporting 25 days or more of farm wage work, these very short-term workers earned more per day at farm wage work than at nonfarm jobs, even in Standard Metropolitan Areas where nonfarm wages are generally higher than farm wages. One explanation of this finding may be that a large proportion of the farm work reported was custom work. Rates for custom work include the hire of machines as well as the wages of the operator; hence such rates are considerably higher than those of most farm wage rates.

Information on the employment status of this group of short-term workers showed that almost 6 out of 10 (58 percent) were unemployed or out of the labor force in February 1959 (table 15). About half of those out of the labor force were attending school in February 1959. A fifth of all short-term workers were employed in agriculture, but only 3 percent were holding jobs as hired farm workers.

Table 16. - Percentage distribution of persons doing farm wage work, by duration of farm wage work, heads of household, other members of the household, and employment status in February 1959

Heads of household, other members of the household and employment status in February 1959	Total	Persons doing 25 days or more of farm wage work	Persons doing less than 25 days of farm wage work
	Percent	Percent	Percent
Heads of household	100	100	100
Employed in agriculture	49	54	41
Wage and salary workers	28	43	3
Self-employed workers	21	11	38
Employed in nonagricultural industries	25	22	31
Manufacturing	3	2	4
Forestry, fishing, mining, or construction	4	4	5
Transportation, communication and other public utilities	6	6	7
Trade	5	4	6
Private households	3	2	3
Other	4	4	6
Unemployed	9	9	9
Not in the labor force	17	15	19
Keeping house	5	4	6
Attending school	12	11	13
Other			
Other members of the household	100	100	100
Employed in agriculture	18	27	9
Wage and salary workers	13	24	3
Self-employed workers	2	1	2
Unpaid family workers	3	2	4
Employed in nonagricultural industries	16	16	17
Manufacturing	2	1	2
Forestry, fishing, mining, or construction	1	2	1
Transportation, communication and other public utilities	2	3	1
Trade	4	4	4
Private households	5	4	6
Other	2	2	3
Unemployed	9	10	7
Not in the labor force	57	47	67
Keeping house	21	17	25
Attending school	30	23	38
Other	6	7	4

Table 17. - Percentage distribution of farm wage workers, by sex of worker, duration of farm wage work, and longest job held in 1958

Duration of farm wage work and longest job held in 1958	Total	Male	Female
	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Total	100	100	100
Farmers and farm managers	12	16	1
Craftsmen, foremen and kindred workers	2	3	1
Operatives and kindred workers	7	8	6
Farm laborers and foremen	64	60	75
Laborers, except farm and mine	6	8	1
Service workers	6	2	15
Sales, clerical and kindred workers	1	1	1
All other occupations	2	2	1
25 days or more of farm wage work	100	100	100
Farmers and farm managers	8	10	1
Craftsmen, foremen and kindred workers	2	2	--
Operatives and kindred workers	6	6	4
Farm laborers and foremen	74	72	81
Laborers, except farm and mine	4	6	1
Service workers	4	1	11
Sales, clerical and kindred workers	1	1	1
All other occupations	1	2	1
Less than 25 days of farm wage work	100	100	100
Farmers and farm managers	16	24	2
Craftsmen, foremen and kindred workers	4	5	7
Operatives and kindred workers	9	10	7
Farm laborers and foremen	52	41	71
Laborers, except farm and mine	7	11	1
Service workers	8	3	17
Sales, clerical and kindred workers	2	3	1
All other occupations	2	3	1

Table 18. - Average days worked and wages earned at farm and nonfarm wage work by farm workers who did less than 25 days of farm wage work, by household status, and residence within or outside of Standard Metropolitan Areas, 1958

Household status and SMA residence	Farm and nonfarm				Farm				Nonfarm						
	Number of workers	Days worked		Wages earned		No. worked	Days worked		Wages earned		No. worked	Days worked		Wages earned	
		Thou.	No.	Per year	Per day 1/2 worked		Per year	Per day 1/2 worked	Per year	Per day 1/2 worked		Per year	Per day 1/2 worked	Per year	Per day 1/2 worked
Total	1,893	50	421	8.55	11	73	6.95	39	348	9.00					
Living within SMA in February 1959	308	62	629	10.00	10	80	7.70	52	549	10.45					
Living outside SMA in February 1959	1,585	47	380	8.15	11	72	6.80	36	308	8.55					
Heads of household	634	79	905	11.55	10	121	12.65	69	784	11.35					
Living within SMA in February 1959	95	107	1,436	13.35	8	150	18.05	99	1,286	12.95					
Living outside SMA in February 1959	539	74	811	11.05	10	116	11.80	64	695	10.95					
Other members of household	1,259	34	177	5.15	11	49	4.45	23	128	5.45					
Living within SMA in February 1959	212	42	267	6.25	11	49	4.30	31	218	6.90					
Living outside SMA in February 1959	1,047	33	158	4.85	11	49	4.50	22	109	5.00					

1/ Rounded to the nearest 5 cents. Farm wage earnings are cash only and do not include the value of perquisites received by many farm workers.

Four out of 10 household heads with less than 25 days of farm wage work were employed in agriculture, but almost all of these were self-employed farm operators, not farm wage workers (table 16). Two-thirds of the household were out of the labor force in February 1959, most of these enrolled in school. Only 9 percent were employed in agriculture, and 3 percent were employed as hired farm workers.

About a fourth of the males who did farm wage work for less than 25 days during 1958 reported self-employment as a farm operator or employment as a farm manager as their longest job held (primary occupation) during 1958. About 4 out of 10 males and 7 out of 10 females worked longer as hired farm workers in 1958 than at any other job, even though they were employed as farm wage workers for less than 25 days during the year.

A comparison of the age-sex distribution of the very short-term farm wage workers with that of those who worked at least 25 days in 1958 is presented in table 19.

The median age for the four groups of workers is comparatively low ranging from 32 for females with 25 days or more of farm wage work to 24 for the very short-term male workers. A third of the latter group was under 18 years of age, and a large proportion of this group was probably composed of students who worked on farms during vacation periods.

Table 19. - Percentage distribution of farm wage workers by duration of farm wage work, sex and age, United States, 1958

Age	Days of farm wage work					
	25 days or more			Less than 25 days		
	Male	Female		Male	Female	
Total (000)	1,788	531		1,199	694	
(Pct.)	100	100		100	100	
14 - 15 years	7	9		17	13	
16 - 17	11	12		16	12	
18 - 19	10	7		10	6	
20 - 24	12	7		8	10	
25 - 34	17	21		13	17	
35 - 44	15	17		11	21	
45 - 54	13	16		11	14	
55 - 64	11	8		8	5	
65 and over	4	3		6	2	

