YOUNG WORKERS
IN THE SEASONAL FARM LABOR FORCE
MADISON AND ONEIDA COUNTIES, NEW YORK, 1951

State of New York Department of Labor

Division of Industrial Relations, Women in Industry and Minimum Wage

Division of Research and Statistics

Publication Number B-66
March 1953

STATE OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

THOMAS E. DEWEY
Governor

Edward Corsi
Industrial Commissioner

Thomas F. Moore, Jr.
First Deputy Industrial Commissioner

Edward A. Nyegaard
Deputy Industrial Commissioner

Michael J. Chiusano
Deputy Industrial Commissioner

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Assistant Industrial Commissioner
State Office Building
Albany, N. Y.

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Assistant Industrial Commissioner
221 Washington Street
Binghamton, N. Y.

George J. Young
Assistant Industrial Commissioner
State Office Building
Buffalo, N. Y.

William F. Asart
Assistant Industrial Commissioner
155 Main Street, West
Rochester, N. Y.

Frank J. Costello
Assistant Industrial Commissioner
472 South Salina Street
Syracuse, N. Y.

Frank B. Mercurio
Assistant Industrial Commissioner
500 Charlotte Street
Utica, N. Y.

Division of Research and Statistics
Department of Labor, State of New York
80 Centre Street, New York 13, N. Y.
C. A. Pearce, Director

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State of New York, Department of Labor
EDWARD CORSI
Industrial Commissioner

Division of Industrial Relations, Women in Industry and Minimum Wage
EMILY SIMS MARCONNIER
Director

Division of Research and Statistics
C. A. PEARCE
Director

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PREFACE

Every year the Department of Labor publishes a study of child labor on farms, on the basis of reports made by enforcement investigators who visit many farms each summer. These studies have reflected a steady improvement in compliance with the State's child labor laws since 1948, when the first study was made and when the Department of Labor began a regular program of enforcement to supplement its educational campaign. The 1952 report shows that only 2.9 percent of the workers employed on farms visited throughout the State were employed in violation of the child labor laws.

The Department decided to make a more intensive study of an area in which illegal child labor was relatively frequent, to try to find out the reasons for the use of children under 14 and for the failure of farm workers of 14 and 15 to obtain farm work permits. A second interest was the question whether the use of children under 14 was essential to employers of seasonal farm labor in the area. Madison and Oneida Counties, in the Utica area, were selected.

Two teams of field workers (each consisting of an investigator from the Division of Industrial Relations, Women in Industry and Minimum Wage and an economist from the Division of Research and Statistics) visited bean farms and related labor camps during July and August of 1951 and obtained information from employers, farm-worker parents, and child workers. Interviews were also held with parents of day-haul workers at their homes in town, with school officials and doctors, with recreational directors, and with directors of child-care centers.

Special thanks are due to officials of the Utica and Oneida offices of the State Employment Service, who provided both information and advice on a number of aspects of the survey.

Emily Sims Marconnier,
Director,
Division of Industrial Relations,
Women in Industry and Minimum Wage

Charles A. Pearce,
Director,
Division of Research and Statistics

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YOUNG WORKERS IN THE SEASONAL FARM LABOR FORCE
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In conjunction with the 1951 child labor enforcement program, the Department of Labor conducted an intensive field survey of snap bean pickers in the Utica area. Its purpose was to ascertain why some children were employed illegally and to determine whether or not children under 14 years of age were an essential part of the farm labor supply in this area.

The Utica area was chosen for study not because it was typical of child labor conditions in New York State, but rather because the proportion of farm employers in full compliance with the child labor laws was relatively low in this area. A second reason for choosing the Utica area was that farmers there employ both day-haul child labor from the city of Utica and children of migrant families from outside the State.

A reason why relatively few Utica area farm employers surveyed before 1951 were in full compliance with the child labor laws was that there is a heavy concentration of snap bean farms in the area; and throughout the State there is more child labor on bean farms than on most other farms, in part because snap beans are an intensive crop, requiring relatively large numbers of hand pickers per acre, and also because bean pods are easy for children to pick and picking them involves "stoop labor" that adult workers find unattractive.

The fact that the bean-picking season is a relatively long one made it possible to visit almost all the medium and large bean farms in Madison and Oneida Counties, and all the related labor camps. Two teams of field workers during July and August 1951 visited 64 bean farms and 56 labor camps. In 1951, New York was the second largest snap bean producing state in the nation, and Madison and Oneida Counties, located in the Chenango and Mohawk Valleys, have the largest commercial bean farms in the State. Bean growing in this region represents a considerable capital investment in

land, farm machinery, trucks, seed, fertilizer, pesticides, and camp housing. Although only 6 percent of the State's snap bean farms in 1949 were located in these two counties, they had 29 percent of the total bean acreage in the State. According to the 1950 Census of Agriculture, the average size of a bean farm in Madison and Oneida counties in 1949 was 68 acres; the average bean farm in the State was 14 acres. Because of the intensive nature of the crop, the demand for seasonal labor even on a small bean acreage greatly exceeds the demand for labor on a dairy farm many times its size. There were 44 bean workers on the average bean farm at the time of visit in 1951.

Extent of Employment of Children

There were 264 children under 16 years of age among a total 2,848 workers found on the 64 bean farms at the time of visit in 1951. Of the 264 child workers under 16 years, only 35 were legally employed; the remainder included 132 children between 14 and 15 years of age without a permit and 97 children under 14 years.

Seventy-five percent of the bean farms visited employed some illegal child labor. Altogether 8 percent of the total workers on bean farms were illegally employed.

Of 264 child workers under 16 years, 123 were New York State residents, 105 of whom were day-haul workers. Day-haul workers were picked up daily by bus or truck by the employer or his agent at central pick-up points, mostly in Utica and Rome. Fifteen of the 123 residents were local workers who lived near the fields and either walked to work or supplied their own transportation. Three were intrastate migrants who lived with their parents in a nearby camp.

The remainder, 141, were out-of-state migrants. Most of them were from the South; a few were from Pennsylvania. Fewer than 3 percent of these out-of-state migrant child workers were legally employed, compared with 25 percent of those who were New York State residents. Permits had been obtained by only 5 percent of the interstate migrant workers who were 14 and 15 years old, compared with 35 percent of the resident workers. About half of the interstate migrant children, compared with a fourth of the resident children, were illegally employed because they were under 14 years.

These figures on illegal employment probably are understatements. First, they do not include about 80 children who were suspected by the investigators of working illegally. Inspectors observed this number of children leaving the field or in or near the field; they could not be reported to be in violation, however, since they were not seen working.[1] Second, inasmuch as many migrant children enter the State without proof of age, the school doctors must guess their age in some cases; consequently some children may be erroneously certified for work.

Hours Worked

Considerable variation was reported in the daily hours of work during the snap bean harvest season. Seventeen percent of 225 children reporting said they had worked less than 4 hours, 57 percent from 4 to less than 8 hours, and 25 percent from 8 to 11 hours, on the last day of work preceding the interview. Older children worked longer hours. Only half of the children

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1. The inclusion of these children among the illegally employed would not materially affect the number of employers in violation, since all but one of them were in violation for employing children observed working at the time of the visit.

under 10 years of age worked 5 or more hours, compared with 60 percent in the age group 10 and less than 12, 62 percent in the group 12 and less than 14, and 72 percent in the group 14 and less than 16 years. Hours worked do not measure the actual time children spent in the field because some time may be spent in rest and in play. Young children usually did not work continuously throughout the day.

Unlike most nonfarm workers, seasonal farm workers do not report to work at the same time each day, or to the same location. On some days workers were employed on bean fields that were adjacent to the camp or near the city, while on the other days they were required to travel considerable distances to reach the bean fields. Most of the child workers had left home for work between 7 and 9 a.m. on their most recent day of work. Some left as early as 6 a.m., while others because of weather or crop condition left around noon. Time of returning from work ranged from 2 to 8 p.m.; the vast majority got back home or to camp between 6 and 8 p.m.

Taking into consideration both hours of work and travel time, most child workers were away from home or camp in excess of 9 hours, in some instances as many as 14 hours.

Reasons for Illegal Child Labor

The economic need of workers, the employer's fear of losing family units if children were not permitted to work, difficulties involved in obtaining farm-work permits, and lack of adequate child-care supervision at the camp were the most important of the various reasons cited by the persons interviewed why children were employed illegally.

Family units and economic need. - Many seasonal child workers on

fruit and vegetable farms, especially among migrants, work as members of family groups. Of the workers under 16 years, half did so, while the other half worked alone. Four-fifths of the child workers under 10 years of age worked as members of a family unit, compared with fewer than half of those in the 11-15 year old group. Seven-eighths of the migrant child workers, but only about a quarter of the resident child workers were part of a family group.

Employers who use family labor to harvest their crops are reluctant to prevent the children from working because they are afraid they will lose entire families to competitors. A number of employers stated that parents would quit work or refuse to come to New York if their small children were not permitted to work. One employer visited in August stated that he lost 13 families because he refused to allow children to work.

Interviews with 47 migrant parents revealed that 90 percent of them approved of their children working; about a third of the parents wanted their underage children to pick beans to supplement their own earnings. Twenty-eight percent of the parents indicated they would quit work if their underage children were not permitted to pick beans. This was particularly true of the 12-year-old and 13-year-old children, whose earning power was in some cases estimated to be about as high as that of adult workers. Parents were less insistent that their very young children, ranging from 6 to 11 years of age, be permitted to work. Generally, neither parents nor employers considered very young children to be real workers, since, it was alleged, they picked only a "handful" of beans during the day. The observations of the Department's field staff did not always confirm this view. In

some cases very young children were observed working diligently and carrying or dragging their own bushel baskets.

Some parents stated that it was safer for their youngsters to work beside them in the field than to be left alone at camp without proper supervision; in fact, more than half of the parents interviewed wanted their youngsters with them in the field where they could watch them. Some mothers would have been willing to send their children to child-care centers, if centers had been available. But even where child-care centers were available some parents either did not know about them or did not want the children to loose a day's earnings.

Investigators visited 13 parents of workers under 14 years of age who came to the field unaccompanied by any adult. Most of these parents lived in Utica and Rome; a few were housed in a farm house or labor camp. Nine of the 13 parents interviewed stated that they did not know it was illegal for a child under 14 years of age to work on a farm. More than half of the parents stated that they permitted their children to work because they needed the money for school clothes or other necessities. An extreme case of poverty was seen in Madison County. There a poverty-stricken family of 16 children, 12 of whom were under 16 years of age, constituted a labor pool for a nearby farmer. This family lived in an old frame house supplied by the farm owner. Most of the children were barefooted and ragged. In another case, a migrant mother, who at the time of the interview was found at the camp, justified the employment of her 11-year-old son because "It doesn't hurt the child and he earns his keep." Although the child stated that he was 11 years old, the mother had applied for a permit by alleging her son was 14

years of age. Several parents expressed the view that it was better for their children to earn something and enjoy the country sunshine and fresh air than to loiter on street corners in town.

A number of the families interviewed in Utiza and Rome lived in frame houses situated in clean, middle-class neighborhoods. A number, on the other hand, lived in substandard houses near a factory area or tenement district. Utica children if not sent to work, would not necessarily hang around on street corners, for Utica has excellent recreational facilities, including playgrounds, free public swimming pools, and baseball diamonds, easily accessible to most children.

Certification procedures and problems. - Illegal child labor on farms in the Utica area could have been cut by more than half if all 14-year-old and 15-year-old children illegally employed in 1951 had obtained permits. Farmwork permits are issued by the schools. In large communities such as Utica and Rome, they are issued by the City Superintendent of Schools, and in rural areas by the District Superintendent of Schools. These persons designate one or more public school officials to act as certificating officers. To secure a permit a child 14 or 15 years of age must obtain permission to work from his parent, present documentary proof of age, and a certificate of physical fitness. The certificate of physical fitness is issued by the school doctor; and must be presented to the certificating officer at the school before a permit may be issued.

Interviews with doctors and certificating officers revealed that, except in the large cities, they are not always available during the summer. Generally speaking, they can be seen only during office hours. In the City of

Utica, the school doctor and the certificating officer, who have their offices in the same building, were available from 9 to 11 a.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. In Rome, the hours for certification were from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. In small rural communities it is considered impractical to keep a doctor in readiness at the school several hours each day because of the very small demand for his services. Consequently he usually was available only in his own office during his regular office hours, typically from 1 to 3 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. daily, except Wednesday and in some cases Sunday. Often the school doctor lives near the school, but he may live in another community, as for instance when the regular doctor is on vacation and the work has to be assigned to another.

Some doctors go to the labor camps to examine migrant children in order to avoid swamping the waiting room used by their resident patients. In these cases, doctors prefer to wait until all or most of the children have arrived from the South and examine en masse, rather than to make several trips to camp. One doctor, however, who formerly examined children at a labor camp abandoned the idea because of the poor physical environment; children from that camp must travel a number of miles to his office to be examined. A number of contractors and growers, in order to save time and gas, wait until all their migrant children have arrived and have been examined by the school doctor before taking them to the school certificating officer to get farm-work permits. One contractor said that he had to haul his beans and could not spare the truck to transport the children to school to get their permits. Meanwhile the children go to the fields and are found working illegally by investigators of the Labor Department.

Another condition that discourages children from getting permits is the fact that doctors are permitted to charge nonresident children $1 to $2 for a physical examination. One doctor, to whom applicants were sent in the absence of the regular school doctor, reported charging a fee to all nonresident applicants for a certificate of physical fitness, and also to resident children who were not his regular patients. Several doctors were of the opinion that the growers should pay the fee. In the cities of Utica and Rome, school doctors are required to give free physical examinations to all applicants, resident and nonresident alike.

If more resident children could be prevailed upon to obtain permits before schools closed for the summer, many objections regarding the red tape involved in getting a permit would be removed. It would also ease the workload of doctors and certificating officers during the summer. Of 117 farm-work permits issued in the City of Utica up to August 13, 1951, only 20 had been issued in June (before school closed); 64 were issued in July; and 33 between August 1 and 13. Similarly, in the City of Rome, the next largest source of resident child labor in the area, only 4 out of 65 permits issued prior to August 17, 1951 had been issued before school closed. The other 61 were issued during the summer and in most cases after the employers had been warned that they could not employ children without a permit. Timely certification of resident children would avoid unnecessary travel and the loss of one or two day's earnings later in the summer. One reason why so many resident children neglect to get a permit, according to school officials, is that they are undecided what kind of work to do during vacation.

The problem of certificating out-of-state migrants is different from

that of resident children. Resident children can get their permits while school is still in session and while both school doctors and certificating officers are readily available, but out-of-state migrants do not have this opportunity. Moreover, most labor camps that house migrants are distant from schools and doctors, and many migrants and the crew leaders on whom they depend for transportation do not know where to go to find the doctor or the certificating officer. Often crew leaders are ignorant of the law, are indifferent, or do not readily find the time to see to it that their child workers are properly certified. Certification problems are avoided when the initiative is taken by the grower who lives in the area, knows the law, and is familiar with the certification methods and procedures.

Another difficulty involved in the certification of migrant children for farm-work permits is that a substantial number lack documentary proof of age. In such cases the school doctors have to guess the children's age and may certify some of them erroneously. One doctor felt that certification of children could be improved if migrants brought their school records as evidence of age.

Problem of care of migrant children in camps. - Another factor associated with illegal child labor was the lack of adequate provision for the care of migrant children. The Sanitary Code, administered by the State Department of Health, provides that all camps with ten or more occupants in which children under 16 years of age live is to be under the care and supervision of at least one "responsible" and "competent" adult. In some cases it was difficult to determine who, if anyone, was responsible for the supervision of the children. The person in charge was not always responsible or competent. For

example, in a few instances, mothers who were physically unable to work in the field had the responsibility of child care. In other cases, girls under 14 years of age told the investigator that they were entrusted with the care and supervision of the smaller children. Sometimes the responsible persons were the wives of crew leaders; typically they were busy with housework and gave only nominal supervision. Because their camp lacked adequate child-care supervision, some working mothers paid an older person to remain at the camp to take care of the children. For this service the charge ranged from 50 to 75 cents per child per day.

Whether or not there was responsible supervision, the typical camp was a drab place for children, because it lacked toys and play equipment and because of the lack of interest in the children's need for stimulating activity.

The poor physical and social environment of some camps, coupled with the lack of adequate child-care facilities, led many parents to take their children with them to the bean fields. Having reached the fields, children who did not work with their parents whiled away the time as best as they could. Trucks with benches and canvas tops used to transport migrants from the camps to the fields were the most popular place to congregate because of the protection from the sun that they offered. In view of the conditions observed in some camps, one cannot well question the judgment of parents that children are better off being in the fields — even doing some picking — than they would be staying in the camps without the parents' surveillance.

<u>New York State migrant child-care program</u>. - The New York State Migrant Child-Care Centers Program was established to safeguard young children and provide them with wholesome recreation and meals and so relieve working mothers of

the necessity of looking after their children. Pioneer work in this field of child care for migrant children was done by the Home Missions Council in Cortland County in 1931. Funds for support of their centers came from private donations. By 1942 there were six centers in operation in the State. This number increased to 20 in 1943, when federal funds were made available by the Lanhan Act. When federal aid was withdrawn in 1946, the New York State Legislature appropriated funds for continuance of the program. Since it was illegal for the Home Mission Council, a religious agency, to administer state funds, sponsorship of the program was transferred to the New York State Federation of Growers' and Processors' Association, Inc. This organization entered into contracts with the State Youth Commission, which administered the State funds until 1950, when the Legislature transferred this responsibility to the Department of Agriculture and Markets. In March 1952 the Legislature made the child-care program permanent.

Child-care centers for the benefit of children from infancy up to 14 years of age are provided where there are at least 15 children (not necessarily all from the same camp or grower) and the growers agree to pay 20 percent of the operating costs. Parents paid $1.50 per child per week for the first child and $1.00 a week for each additional child from the same family.

Centers operate daily, except Sunday. Children are picked up early in the morning before their parents leave for the fields and are returned after the parents have come home; the exact hours vary according to the harvest and weather. Staff members accompany the bus driver to look after the children. Each center is under the care of a director, assistant director, and group leaders who are chosen for the job because of their special knowledge and

interest in children. Each center provides a program of indoor and outdoor play activities which is geared largely to the needs of the younger children. In addition, children get breakfast, if necessary, and other meals. Each of the younger children is provided with a cot.

This program has not been widely enough adopted to be an important factor in taking young children out of the field. There were 500 children from 26 camps who attended child-care centers in the State in 1951. There were a total of 282 camps with about 2,600 migrant children under 14 years of age, of which 53 camps were big enough to contain 15 or more children. By and large, only the very young children have been sent to the center; of the 500 children enrolled in the 10 child-care centers operated in the State in 1951, nearly three-fourths were under 6 years of age; an additional fifth ranged from 6 to 9 years. The remainder consisted of 29 children between 10 and 13 years of age of whom 11 attended a center only one day during the 1951 season.

Pilot summer school for migrants. - The first summer school for migrant children in the State, and one of the few in the country, was opened in Hamilton, on July 1, 1951 under the sponsorship of the Utica Area Migrant Committee and the Division of the Home Missions of the National Council of Churches. The sponsors hoped that this experimental school would demonstrate that migrant children could catch up in their schooling, while preventing their illegal employment. Its 1951 operations were hailed as a success by local school officials and by representatives of the State Education Department.

The school had an enrollment of 21 children between 6 and 13 years

and was staffed by three professional teachers. There was little absenteeism even though attendance was voluntary. The children who lived at the Poolville Camp, six miles from the school, were provided free bus transportation by the camp owner. One of the teachers accompanied the children to the camp after school and stayed to supervise them if the parents had not returned.

At the school, instruction was given in (among other things) letter writing, arithmetic and making out money orders and checks, and cleanliness. Each child received books and pencils; lunch, milk, and juice; and soap and a health kit. He paid 10 cents a day. The First Baptist Church in Hamilton gave the use of its immaculate kindergarten for school rooms. Church organizations donated clothing, food, and fruit juices. The State Education Department supplied textbooks, playgrounds, and advice.

Age for age, southern migrants who were interviewed in Oneida and Madison Counties during the summer of 1951 were several grades behind New York resident children. In a group of 68 out-of-state migrant children 14 years of age, only 37 had completed 6 years or more of school. In a group of 88 New York resident children in the same age group, also on farms during that summer, there were 80 who had completed 6 or more school years.

Need for Child Labor in Snap Bean Harvesting

An examination of the extent and nature of the need for children for harvesting snap beans in Oneida and Madison counties must proceed from an understanding of the harvest labor market in these counties during the period beans are picked.

The heavy concentration on snap bean production in this area helps to

simplify this task of understanding. Following the harvest of a small acreage of peas during the latter part of June and early July, there is no other commercial crop during July and August whose harvest demands seasonal workers in significant quantities. Hence the harvest labor market for seasonal workers for present purposes can be discussed in terms of the demand and supply of labor for snap bean harvesting.

Several stages or types of demand for harvest labor may be distinguished. First is the aggregate demand, which tends to reflect the total acreage of snap beans planted. The magnitude of this demand can be anticipated several months before the harvest season starts. Second is the short-term demand, which is based on anticipated crop and labor supply conditions during the following few weeks. Third is the immediate, day-in and day-out demand; with respect to this demand weather conditions play the dominant role.

Aggregate demand for harvest labor. - Each year in late winter or early spring the State Employment Service estimates the number of workers who will be needed during the season. These estimates, which are reported on form E.S. 222 by the local farm placement official, give the estimated requirements for each week of the season. For each week also is given the estimated requirements for out-of-state workers. The remainder indicates the number that must come from local sources.

The unavailability of industrial labor and the absence of an adequate local supply of seasonal labor for this type of harvesting work requires that arrangements be made for bringing in workers from outside the State. Persons customarily attached to industrial employment usually won't take work as bean pickers, because of the onerous character of the labor, requiring as it does

continuous stooping or work on knees, because of the much lower level of wages, and the intermittent opportunity for employment. The unemployment insurance office cannot refer unemployed workers drawing insurance benefits to bean picking jobs. Although growers have from time to time objected to this policy of nonreferral, they much prefer migrant workers who are accustomed to the work and for this reason, they believe are more productive and dependable. Local sources of seasonal labor while potentially significant have not made a major contribution. In Oneida county these sources in large part have been confined to women of first generation immigrant families, young persons, former migrant workers who have settled in Utica, and a small number of marginal workers of various kinds. In Madison county, few workers are available from local sources.

The major task of the Employment Service therefore has been to assure an adequate supply of migrant workers. In recent years these have come almost exclusively from Florida. The recruiting occurs late in winter and early spring, much before any planting occurs. The Service proceeds on the basis of specific requests for migrant labor made by the various employers in the area. Growers figure their needs in the light of planned acreage and past experience with labor requirements. The Employment Service role in recruiting migrant workers is facilitated by the existence of emigrant registration laws in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and other southern states, which require payment of a license fee in each county in which labor is recruited for transportation out of the state. This license fee, which is $1,500 in Florida, $1,000 in Georgia, and $5,000 in Alabama, virtually prohibits private recruitment of migrant workers other than through the Employment Service.[1]

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1. For example, the Florida statute requires a $1,500 annual license fee in each county in which emigrants are solicited. Failure to obtain a license constitutes a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than $500 or more than $5,000 or by imprisonment of not less than four months.

These laws do not, however, prevent direct contacts of New York growers with southern crew leaders, because the Employment Service clears individual growers for such contacts.

Farm placement officials in the Utica office estimated that in 1951 the Employment Service played an active recruiting role for somewhat over half the Oneida county growers depending on southern crews and in the remaining cases acted principally to confirm understandings between growers and crew leaders and help the crew leaders to fill in their summer work itineraries. The Florida employment service arranged a schedule of contacts with crew leaders for farm placement official representatives of the New York Service, who in early spring spent several weeks lining up crew leaders and making other arrangements designed to have them in New York when it was anticipated they would be needed. It was estimated that about 90 percent of the crew leaders coming to New York had had previous contact with the Employment Service.

Subsequently, the farm placement official endeavors to keep track of the crews as they move up through the harvests of the Eastern Seaboard and makes arrangements to replace crews that either decide not to leave Florida, disintegrate, or are diverted to other employments on the way North. General employment conditions, particularly opportunities in the construction industry, affect the supply of migrant workers. The Employment Service will not carry on recruiting activities in southern labor markets where there is a shortage.

Short-term demand for harvest labor. - Short-term circumstances of individual plantings dominate the demand for labor as the harvest season approaches and during the season. The aggregate demand has been fixed by the acreage that has been planted. The aggregate supply of labor in large part

has been determined by earlier recruitment efforts in the South. With the harvest period at hand, the timing of the maturing process and the movements of the individual migrant crews become critical.

Growers normally stagger planting dates, so as to even out the harvesting period and the need for labor. Camp facilities for housing labor and limits on labor availability make desirable as much staggering of plantings as weather, market, and competitive circumstances permit. The maturing of bean crops, however, does not necessarily follow the same sequence as the planting, and calculations of labor needs may be thrown off by weather developments. The degree of the weather's warmth, as well as the length of the growing period, is a highly significant determinant of the maturing process. These two factors together with moisture conditions are the critical growing conditions. As the season progresses it may all at once become apparent to a grower that the crop is coming along much faster than he had anticipated and that his crew of migrants will not be adequate; or he may find that his crop will not be ready for picking for a week or so later than expected and that he will have an idle crew on his hands.

Weather sometimes has a catastrophic role. An example was the flood condition during the middle to latter part of July in the Oriskany flats outside Utica. An estimated 1,700 acres of growing beans were washed out. This materially lessened the acuteness of the need for labor in the area during the peak of the bean harvest in August.

The mobility of migrant crews during the harvest season may significantly affect the calculations and demands of individual growers. The failure of crews to arrive when expected, or to arrive at all, has an obvious impact

on the individual grower. A need is created which must be met from other sources. Once a crew has arrived, the grower makes every effort to keep the crew for the duration of the harvest need. In this he is not always successful. Despite "gentlemen's agreements," there was some pirating through offers of higher wage rates. Lack of opportunity for work and unsatisfactory housing, as well as offers of higher wages, also may induce individual members of a crew to pick up and move to another grower. While its importance in individual cases cannot be minimized, there is little evidence that shifting of crews during the season significantly interfered with the harvest.

It was in connection with short-term fluctuations in needs for migrant labor that the local employment service farm placement officials played one of their most significant roles during the season. They maintained a regular schedule of visits to growers for the purpose of checking on the arrival of crews and on the adequacy of the crews for harvesting needs. Where a continuing need for additional workers was indicated, the local placement official endeavored to obtain the release of a crew from another area of the state or to get a crew up from the South. Meeting needs for additional crews from outside the area was a difficult task, not always successful, especially in the Utica area which does not offer extensive opportunities for harvest employment after the first killing frost, which usually occurs the last part of September. Perhaps more successful on the whole was the arrangement for loans of crews from growers temporarily having no beans ready for harvesting. Some lending of crews goes on without Employment Service participation, the placement official concentrating on those needs that growers haven't been able to work out directly.

One general problem throughout the State in adjusting seasonal labor supply to demand is referred to in the 1951 Report of New York State Interdepartmental Committee on Farm and Food Processing Labor (p. 9):

"In many cases where a grower was short of workers, additional crews were refused because either the employer or the currently employed crew leader would not accept another leader in the camp or field. Under these conditions difficulty was encountered in supplying a satisfactory labor force, and any crop loss that may have occurred was caused by this failure to use available crews rather than by an actual labor shortage."

Immediate demands for harvest labor. - To be distinguished from the short-term, week-in and week-out fluctuations just described are immediate, day-in-and-day-out fluctuations in demand for labor. An understanding of the nature of this demand is essential to any appraisal of the adequacy of the harvest labor supply.

The most careful planner and forecaster may miss by a day or two the exact time when a bean crop is best suited for picking. An unusually hot spell may quickly ripen a crop. Moist and hot weather may ripen a field overnight. A wet spell may force delay in picking, making it mandatory - if not already too late - the day the weather clears. Furthermore, elements of the weather may conspire to defeat a well-laid plan of crop staggering and bring to maturity at the same time fields that were sown days apart. Thus urgent needs for labor arise almost without warning.

This fact coupled with the desire to get harvested as rapidly as possible a field that is ready for picking explains an outstanding characteristic of bean harvest labor demand. The grower has almost everything to gain

and nothing to lose by pushing to the utmost the picking of a field that is ready. Delay will expose him to the risk of bad weather, which may prevent further picking and result in the loss or impair the value of the rest of the field. Even with fair weather the maturing process goes on, over-ripening and lessening the quality of the crop. Under many circumstances, moreover, the farmer is likely to profit from higher or premium prices by rushing the picking and getting the produce to market as soon as possible.

These risks the bean grower will if possible avoid. The way he avoids them is by concentrating as large a force of labor in a field ready for picking as he can, short of congestion. Each additional worker helps reduce the risk of bad weather and unfavorable market developments. Thus from a business standpoint the farmer desires a substantial supply of labor available, ready to get a crop picked in the fastest possible time. The absence of such a supply signifies an inadequate labor force in the farmer's viewpoint.

The prevailing system of piece rates facilitates and strengthens this procedure. Since a worker is paid only for what he picks, it is a matter of indifference to the farmer whether he has some relatively inefficient workers in his force, so long as they can make some contribution to the harvest and not cause trouble. The workers have no incentive to slow-down the rate of picking and spread it out over a longer period, as they might if paid on a per-hour or per-diem basis.

It is in meeting the daily fluctuations in demand and supply that the bean harvest market in this area is least well-organized. Field investigators found within the area of a mile or two, growers who wanted workers and crews that were looking for work. On several occasions growers, who were about

to send their crews from the field back to camp because the picking had been completed, asked field investigators whether the crews couldn't be used by someone else for the remainder of the day. The local Employment Service office is aware of the need for better organization of the daily market for migrant workers and is working towards the end of enlisting the confidence and willingness of the growers to report the availability of and need for crews.

Local labor. - As has been indicated previously, migrant workers from the South form the bulk of bean harvest labor in the Madison-Oneida area. Day-haul labor supplements the migrant work force in Oneida County, as will be discussed below. There is virtually no day-haul supply in Madison County.

There is little evidence that day-haul is used to meet short-term and daily shortages of labor on farms that rely primarily on migrant laborers. A farm is apt to be either "migrant" or "day-haul." There are exceptions to this, however, in which day-haul workers have been recruited to help a regular migrant force meet peak needs.

The Employment Service in this area has not organized the day-haul market to serve this need. No day-haul workers are placed through the employment service in Madison County and virtually none in Oneida County. Officials skilled in recruiting day-haul workers in other areas of the State met with difficulty when they used the same techniques in Utica. One reason local officials gave for this was the existence of a long-established contractor, or padrone, system. First generation immigrant groups, who in the past have been the bulk of the day-haul supply, tend to rely on the padrones, who keep

in touch with them the year-round. The same tends to be true of the negro day-haul group, which has become increasingly important in recent years. Day-haul tends to be limited to these two group. Typically, the padrones offer a door-to-door pick-up service for the first group, while the second group gathers at certain places where trucks and busses wait for them.

Need for child labor. - With the foregoing summary of the character of labor demand and supply, specific consideration now may be given to the question whether or not children are an essential part of the supply of labor for the bean harvest in the Utica area.

In this connection it would be desirable to have a comparison in quantitative terms of demand and supply of bean harvest labor. Unfortunately, available data have serious limitations for this purpose. This problem is discussed in the appendix.

What part of the aggregate supply was represented by children illegally employed?

About 4 percent of the labor found on farms visited in the Utica area were under 14 years of age. Another 7 percent were 14-and 15-year old children who were illegally employed because they did not have farm-work permits. We may disregard these 14-and 15-year olds without permits in our present calculations, since their illegal status can be removed by arranging for them to obtain permits. The four percent - children under 14 - are another matter: Compliance with the terms of the labor law means their removal from the seasonal farm labor force.

These children are not fully productive workers, according to the testimony of growers interviewed. Assuming that they are from one-half to

three-fourths as productive as the average adult worker, we conclude that they actually represent only from 2 to 3 percent of the total labor force.

About one-third of parents of children found illegally employed stated that they would not work in the fields if their children were not permitted to work. Absolute exclusion of children under 14 from picking might, therefore, eliminate another 1 to 2 percent of the labor force, represented by these parents. In all, then, 3 to 4 percent of the labor force might be affected.

These data afford questionable basis for a conclusion that children under 14 are an essential part of the seasonal farm labor supply. It is well, however, to consider whether or not there are ways of replacing this element of the labor force or otherwise expanding it.

There are at least three ways in which the effective supply of labor might be increase. First, additional workers might be attracted to the fields. A critical question with respect to the interstate migrant labor supply is whether it is desirable as a matter of social policy to increase the numbers coming into the State. Assuming this is not an objection, the principle question is whether a large supply could be obtained by offering greater inducements, either in the form of higher wages or better living conditions.

The standard wage rate per bushel of beans has remained unchanged since 1942. Industrial wages generally have doubled over the same period. The present 50-cent rate is 10 cents higher than the former rate, which prevailed for over 20 years, since the early 1920's. The fact that the wage rate has remained unchanged over so long a period when industrial wages bounded ahead rapidly indicates the separation of the industrial and seasonal farm

labor markets. It suggests also that there has been no acute shortage of seasonal farm labor. The supply of migrant labor depends on opportunities in the South for work in nonindustrial pursuits, especially in construction, as well as in agriculture. An abundance of such opportunities for work tends to reduce the number of workers who join the seasonal migration to the North. The bulk of the migrant supply evidently has not been affected by fluctuations in work opportunities outside seasonal crops. It may be questioned whether an increase in wage rate would appreciably affect the aggregate supply of migrants. But it might well swing the balance for a minority of them.

The same considerations probably hold for housing conditions and facilities in the migrant camps. Great improvements in housing conditions in some camps have taken place during the past several years. Some improvement in the standard of housing found in other places probably would prove to be an inducement to some migrants who otherwise would remain in the South or go elsewhere.

High school children 14 years of age and over are a large potential source of labor for bean harvesting in Oneida county. A joint study by the New York State Department of Labor and the Bureau of Guidance of the State Department of Education showed that of a total of 3,441 high school students 14-17 years of age in the cities of Utica and Rome alone, 41 percent, or 1,395, reported that they had done no work during the summer of 1951. A total of 464 or 14 percent, had done some farm work. Forty-six percent did nonfarm work only. (See Tables 1-3, below.)

Of those who did some farm work during the summer of 1951, 42 percent reported that they had worked on farms fewer than 30 days. As many as 34 percent worked 50 days and over.

Here, then, is a large potential source of additional labor. The unattractiveness of the work and the low regard in which it is held in the community have been important deterrents to the greater utilization of this potential source. Grower preference for migrant labor has been another deterrent. The low wage rate and its failure to advance during a period of great wage advances in other occupations has been a third obstacle.

This potential labor force overshadows the number of children under 14 who have been employed. Only a slight increase in the utilization of these 14-17-year-olds would yield an equivalent to under-14-year-olds who have been employed to pick snap beans.

Community action to give this type of work greater status in the minds of high school students, coupled with efforts to channelize recruitment and placement through the Employment Service, probably would be required in any program of greater utilization of this source. Another way in which the effective supply of labor might be augmented is through the more efficient utilization of the labor already available. Better and more extensive cooperation by employers with the Employment Service in daily exchange of information on labor availability and labor need and greater flexibility among employers in making available and utilizing idle crews under temporary arrangements is one way. Another possibility is a lessening of the fluctuation in the demand for labor through development and application to snap beans of the heat-unit system of crop planning and forecasting. Finally, the prospect that much bean harvesting can be substantially mechanized promises in time to reduce very substantially the need for harvest labor.[1]

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1. A mechanical bean picker is now fairly well developed. Its efficient use awaits among other things the development of a variety of beans that matures its pods fairly uniformly so that the plant may be picked mechanically with one picking.

TABLE 1. SUMMER WORK PERFORMED BY STUDENTS IN UTICA, 1951, BY AGE GROUP

Type of summer work	Total	Under 14 years	14 or 15 years	16 or 17 years
	Number of students			
Total	4,449	1,991	1,555	903
No summer work, total	2,124	1,046	761	317
Nonfarm work only	1,789	678	580	531
Farm work only, total	311	150	128	33
On home farm	35	19	13	3
On other farm	247	114	104	29
On both home and other farm	5	2	3	-
Not reported	24	15	8	1
Combination farm and nonfarm work, total	225	117	86	22
Farm work on home farm plus nonfarm work	37	18	13	6
Farm work on other farm plus nonfarm work	170	90	65	15
Farm work on both home farm and other farm plus nonfarm work	6	3	3	-
Not reported	12	6	5	1
	Percent of students			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
No summer work, total	47.7	52.5	48.9	35.1
Nonfarm work only	40.2	34.1	37.3	58.8
Farm work only, total	7.0	7.5	8.2	3.6
On home farm	0.8	1.0	0.8	0.3
On other farm	5.6	5.6	6.7	3.2
On both home and other farm	0.1	0.1	0.2	-
Not reported	0.5	0.8	0.5	0.1
Combination farm and nonfarm work, total	5.1	5.9	5.6	2.5
Farm work on home farm plus nonfarm work	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.7
Farm work on other farm plus nonfarm work	3.9	4.5	4.3	1.7
Farm work on both home farm and other farm plus nonfarm work	0.1	0.2	0.2	-
Not reported	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.1

TABLE 2. SUMMER WORK PERFORMED BY STUDENTS IN ROME, 1951, BY AGE GROUP

Type of summer work	Total	Under 14 years	14 or 15 years	16 or 17 years
	Number of students			
Total	1,800	817	627	356
No summer work, total	657	340	218	99
Nonfarm work only	754	283	259	212
Farm work only, total	226	113	87	26
On home farm	64	35	19	10
On other farm	154	74	66	14
On both home and other farm	6	2	2	2
Not reported	2	2	-	-
Combination farm and nonfarm work, total	163	81	63	19
Farm work on home farm plus nonfarm work	31	16	10	5
Farm work on other farm plus nonfarm work	121	58	52	11
Farm work on both home farm and other farm plus nonfarm work	8	4	1	3
Not reported	3	3	-	-
	Percent of students			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
No summer work	36.5	41.6	34.8	27.8
Nonfarm work only	41.9	34.6	41.3	59.6
Farm work only, total	12.6	13.8	13.9	7.3
On home farm	3.6	4.3	3.0	2.8
On other farm	8.6	9.1	10.6	3.9
On both home farm and other farm	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.6
Not reported	0.1	0.2	-	-
Combination farm and nonfarm work, total	9.0	10.0	10.0	5.3
Farm work on home farm plus nonfarm work	1.7	2.0	1.6	1.4
Farm work on other farm plus nonfarm work	6.7	7.1	8.2	3.1
Farm work on both home farm and other farm plus nonfarm work	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.8
Not reported	0.2	0.4	-	-

TABLE 3. DAYS SPENT ON SUMMER FARM WORK BY STUDENT WORKERS IN UTICA AND ROME, 1951, BY AGE GROUP

Number of days spent at summer farm work	Percent of students			
	Total	Under 14 years	14 or 15 years	16 or 17 years
Utica				
Total reporting	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under 10 days	16.4	22.5	10.9	7.8
10 and under 20 days	19.7	20.9	19.2	15.7
20 and under 30 days	13.1	13.1	13.5	11.8
30 and under 40 days	12.5	11.5	13.5	13.7
40 and under 50 days	9.4	7.4	11.9	9.8
50 and under 60 days	7.6	8.6	7.2	3.9
60 days and over	21.3	16.0	23.8	37.3
Rome				
Total reporting	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under 10 days	16.4	22.2	8.8	17.1
10 and under 20 days	14.4	12.3	15.5	19.5
20 and under 30 days	16.1	17.5	14.0	17.1
30 and under 40 days	13.2	11.7	14.7	14.6
40 and under 50 days	8.6	9.4	8.8	4.9
50 and under 60 days	9.5	7.6	11.0	12.2
60 days and over	21.8	19.3	27.2	14.6

HIGHLIGHTS

An intensive study was undertaken of farms in Madison and Oneida Counties using child labor at harvest time, after it was noted that, because of the large amount of snap bean acreage, this area's child labor law compliance-ratio was noticeably lower than the general State level. In the course of this study, investigators of the New York State Department of Labor found that three-fourths of the 64 snap bean farms visited during the 1951 harvest season were employing one or more children illegally. Illegal child labor made up 8 percent of the 2,848 workers on these farms. Of 264 children under 16 years of age who were found working, only 35 were legally employed. The illegals included 132 children 14 and 15 years of age working without a permit, and 97 who were under 14 years.

Only 123 of the 264 child workers were New York State residents living in or near Utica and Rome. Three of these 123 New York State children lived in camps with their parents; the rest were day haul workers who commuted daily in a bus or truck belonging to the employer. The remaining 141 child workers came from other states -- most of them from Florida, a few from Pennsylvania. Fewer than 3 percent of the out-of-state migrant children were legally employed, compared with 25 percent of the New York State children.

Economic need, lack of adequate provision for child care at camps, growers' fear of labor shortage and crop loss, and difficulties experienced by children in getting permits were some of the main factors associated with illegal child labor.

To comply fully with the child labor law would mean obtaining permits for the children of 14 and 15 who have none (these constitute more than half of the illegals) and would mean doing without the services of children under 14 and of some of their parents. Doing without the second group would mean a reduction in labor supply of not more than 3 or 4 percent.

In making up this relatively small loss, employers have a large potential supply of high school students 14 or more years old in Utica and Rome who do not work during the summer.

The Appendix contains estimates of labor supply and demand and a measure of utilization of labor in snap bean harvesting in this area.

APPENDIX

Measuring Labor Supply and Demand in Snap Bean Harvesting in Madison and Oneida Counties, 1951

This appendix presents estimates of labor supply and demand for and utilization of labor in snap bean harvesting in Madison and Oneida Counties. The estimates are highly tentative because of the inadequacy of much of the data on which they are based. Making the estimates illustrates the difficulty of precisely estimating labor supply and demand for seasonal crops in local areas.

Estimate of Demand

If one knows the volume of production of a crop in a certain year and knows the number of manhours it takes to pick a bushel or other unit of the crop, one can estimate the demand for harvesting labor by multiplying one by the other.[1] On this basis, it may be estimated that 1,264,400 manhours were required to pick the 1951 snap bean crop in Madison and Oneida Counties.

As to the production factor, it is estimated roughly that 1,580,000 bushels of snap beans were harvested in the two counties in 1951.

As to the labor-productivity factor, a study by the U.S. Bureau of Agricultural Economics relating to New York State as a whole and also local estimates made in 1951 indicate that it takes about 0.8 of an hour to pick a bushel of snap beans.

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1. An alternative method is to multiply the number of acres harvested by the number of manhours required to harvest one acre.

Either method produces an estimate of labor demand that is based on bushels or acres actually harvested and so does not include the demand related to those acres (if any) that are left unharvested because there is a shortage of labor. In the case of the bean crop in Madison and Oneida Counties, to be sure, whatever data are available indicate that, except for the possible omission of some second and third pickings, almost all the matured crop was harvested in 1951. (Besides labor shortages, reasons for failure to harvest planted acres may be weather conditions, a low market price when the crop reaches maturity, and transportation and storage difficulties.)

Limitations of the Data

1. Production.- The production estimate was made by taking 145 bushels of beans, the estimate of the State's 1951 yield per acre for fresh market made by the State Department of Agriculture and Markets, and multiplying it by 10,900 acres, the estimate of the number of acres of beans harvested in Madison and Oneida Counties in 1951.

The yield figure is an Upstate-as-a-whole estimate, which is unlikely to represent the yield in the two counties exactly; but it is the closest available approximation. The figure, moreover, is yield for fresh market. The figure for processing was 120 bushels per acre. The higher yield figure was used here.

Figures on acres of beans harvested are available on a county-by-county basis only in the Census of Agriculture. The 1950 Census gives such figures for the year 1949: 154 farms in Madison and Oneida Counties reported 10,465 acres of snap beans harvested in that year.

Since some bean farmers of Madison and Oneida Counties may have property in more than one county, there may be an element of inexactness in the Census' county figures, and for this reason the two counties are combined in presenting estimates of labor demand and supply in this Appendix.

The completeness of the Census coverage has been questioned. Accordingly, in making the computations, the Census acreage figure was adjusted on the basis of an assumed understatement of about 15 percent.

An Upstate figure for bean acreage harvested is available for each year, since the change from the Census year of 1949 is estimated by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets by sampling reports collected on a state-federal basis. The samples are generally too restricted to yield

accurate figures for an area as small as a county. However, the estimate of State-wide change, plus the indications given by the sample of deviations from the State trend in Madison and Oneida Counties, made it possible to estimate roughly the bean-harvest acreage for 1951 in those two counties.

2. Labor productivity.- Any figure on the number of manhours generally needed to harvest one bushel or one crop will represent only roughly the labor productivity of the year to which it is being applied. Weather variations are important: beans will grow more thickly in one year than in another, so that they are easier to pick and fewer manhours per bushel are called for; and the weather at picking time may also affect ease of picking. The skill and morale of the workers available may also vary from year to year. These and other factors affect the amount of labor per bushel or per acre that will be needed to bring in the harvest.

The main manhours-per-bushel figure available for this study of snap bean harvesting is one based on State-wide data not broken down by county or area. The State-wide figure is unlikely to apply exactly to the situation in a particular area like Madison and Oneida Counties. All the factors that make one year different from another also operate to make one area different from another.

The manhours-per-bushel just referred to derives from a study made by the U.S. Bureau of Agricultural Economics in 1943. Their report, "Labor Requirements for Crops and Livestock," gives (p.8) the following data for the harvesting of beans in New York State. (An average is added here; in computing it, beans for canning were given double the weight of beans for fresh market. In 1950, New York State raised 24,400 acres of beans for processing and 14,500 for fresh market.)

	Fresh market	Canning	Average
Per-acre manhour requirements	95	80	86
Yield per acre (av.1930-39)	118 bu.	107 bu.	111 bu.
Per-bushel manhour requirements	.805	.748	.775

In using these 1943 figures to make computations as to labor requirements in more recent years, it is preferable to employ the per-bushel figure (rounded off to 0.8 manhours per bushel or 8 manhours to pick ten bushels), rather than the per-acre figure. The per bushel figure has not been made obsolete by mechanization, for there has been little or no change in methods of picking. In contrast, the per-acre productivity figure seems to have been made obsolete by the rise in the average yield per acre; it rose from 111 bushels in 1930-39 to 145 bushels in 1951.

This 1943 State-wide figure of 8 hours for 10 bushels may be applied with some confidence to the area and the year being studied, despite the theoretical drawback to doing this, for it checks with local estimates, made in Madison and Oneida Counties in 1951, that an average picker takes approximately 8 hours to pick ten bushels of snap beans.

Estimate of Supply

If one knows the number of workers available for work each week of the season and knows the number of hours that they customarily worked in a week, one can estimate the supply of harvesting labor by multiplying one by the other. On this basis, it may be estimated that 1,598,000 manhours were available to pick the 1951 snap bean crop in Madison and Oneida Counties.

The number of hours available per man in the average week depends on the number of workable days per week and the number of hours customarily worked in a day. As to the number of workers available for work, the information as to migratory workers is relatively good, but the amount of local and

day-haul labor available had to be estimated on the assumption that it bore a certain relation to the amount of migratory labor available.

The estimates of available labor supply, week by week, for the 1951 harvesting season, and the steps in the estimating process, are shown in the adjacent table. The content of the successive columns, the sources of the figures, and certain assumptions they involve, are as follows:

Column A: The "number of migrant workers in camps" are as given by the ES 223 reports of the New York State Employment Service's farm placement representatives. From the ES 223 figure for September in Oneida County were deducted 200 estimated to have been engaged in picking sweet corn. From June 22 through July 6, it was estimated that an average of 125 of the migrants reported picked peas.

ESTIMATED SUPPLY OF LABOR FOR SNAP BEAN HARVESTING
MADISON AND ONEIDA COUNTIES, 1951

Week ending	Number of migrant workers in camps	Number of workable days per week	Hours per day	Total hours per week	Total manhours of migrant labor	Total manhours of local and day-haul labor
	A	B	C	D	E	F
6-29	650	4.5	8.0	36.0	23,400	
7-6	1,125	3.5	8.0	28.0	31,500	
7-13	1,695	5.0	8.0	40.0	67,800	17,400
7-20	2,722	5.0	8.0	40.0	108,900	24,000
7-27	3,082	6.5	8.0	52.0	160,300	34,600
8-3	3,200	4.0	8.0	32.0	102,400	22,300
8-10	3,273	6.0	8.0	48.0	157,100	37,000
8-17	2,945	5.0	8.0	40.0	117,800	25,500
8-24	2,836	4.0	8.0	32.0	90,800	20,600
8-31	2,665	6.0	8.0	48.0	127,900	30,000
9-7	1,984	4.5	8.0	36.0	71,400	12,400
9-14	1,871	5.5	8.0	44.0	82,300	15,200
9-21	1,768	6.5	8.0	52.0	91,900	17,900
9-28	1,641	6.5	8.0	52.0	85,300	17,900
Total					1,318,800	274,800

Column B: The "number of workable days per week" are 6.5 days minus rainy days. On the basis of data from a 1952 survey by the New York State Department of Labor it was estimated that about half the migrants work on Sundays if work was available. Consequently a 6.5 day potential workweek was assumed. From this figure was substracted the number of days that were not workable because of bad weather. In the absence of actual data on days that were not worked for this reason, Weather Bureau records were consulted. The rainy days in any particular week were subtracted from the normal 6.5 days. This resulted in an average workweek of approximately 5 days for the season.

Column C: The figure on "hours per day" is a general average for this type of work (8.4 hours), which is here attributed to every week in the season alike. It was based on the reports of New York State Department of Labor investigators who inquired about the usual and maximum number of hours worked per day in 1951.

Column D: The "total hours per week" is "workable days" (Column B) times "hours per day" (Column C).

Column E: "Total manhours of migrant labor" is "migrant workers in camps" (Column A) times "hours per week" (Column D).

Column F: The "manhours of local and day-haul labor" refers to Oneida County alone; the number in Madison County was considered negligible. The number of local and day-haul manhours available was taken to be 40 percent of the migrant manhours available, during July and August, and 30 percent during September. From June 22 through July 6, no estimate for local and day-haul labor was included, since the bean crop did not begin to mature until the week beginning July 7.

Limitations of the Data

Column A: The number of migrants as reported by the Employment Service may not be complete, since there are camps on the New York State Department of Health list of camps that are not on the Employment Service list, and vice versa. This is a difficult point to determine exactly, since the same camp may be on both lists but under two different names. The Employment Service data may underestimate the number of migrants in camp by as much as 10-20 percent. No adjustment was made for this possibility.

The number of persons in camp (over 14 years of age) is not necessarily the number of workers available, since some migrants may not want to work on a particular day because they are sick, have hangovers, have laundry to do, or have other personal reasons for not working. A 1952 study of the New York State Department of Labor indicated that between 7 and 10 percent of the migrants did not work on an average day because of these personal and miscellaneous reasons. Estimates from certain local sources place this figure as high as 20 percent. No adjustment was made for this factor.

Column B: The adjustment for rainy days was based on the assumption that one could not work on any day on which more than 0.1 of an inch of rain fell during working hours. If rain fell only in the morning or afternoon, or a heavy rain (at least 0.4 of an inch) occurred during the night, only half the day was considered not workable. On these assumptions, 18.5 days were deducted from working time during the 1951 season, which was unusually wet. If the less stringent criterion of 0.2 of an inch of rain had been used, about one-quarter of these 18.5 days might have been considered workable.

Column C: Usual hours of work per day reported to New York State Department of Labor investigators in 1951 varied from 6 to 10.5 hours, with an average

Margin of Supply over Demand

The number of manhours needed to pick the 1951 harvest of snap beans in Madison and Oneida Counties was estimated above at 1,264,400. Available to supply this need were 1,598,000 manhours of seasonal farm labor — approximately five hours for every four that were needed for the actual picking of the crop.

In terms of number of people needed, there was not the surplus that these manhours seem to show. As was pointed out in the text of this report, harvesting is irregular, with peak periods, and its ups and downs are not wholly predictable. As a result, seasonal farm labor spends part of its time merely waiting for a crop to mature. This may be true even where planting is carefully staggered in such a way as to promise a steady harvest.

While the figures indicate a manhour margin, they do not necessarily mean that at growers' peak periods, all demands for labor were met. The figures are, however, an indication of the extent to which workers available for harvesting were underutilized, that is, failed to obtain full employment.

of 8.4 hours. This was reduced for the purpose of present calculations to an even 8 hours. The question about hours was asked by the investigators at the time of their regular visit to the farm, which was at the height of the harvest in some cases and at a slack period in other cases. This difference may well account for some of the variation in hours reported. No way was available to adjust average hours by week and so the average of the usual hours worked was imputed to every week for which a labor supply estimate was made. Because the 1951 season was especially rainy, so that work had to be stepped up on dry days, the probability exists that more hours may have been utilized at certain times than are estimated to have been available, particularly at the seasonal peak of harvesting. Where maximum hours were worked in emergencies, the figure used here (8 hours) may be an understatement of more than 10 percent for some weeks, since maximum hours reported to Department of Labor investigators varied from 7 to 13, with an average of 9.4.

Column F: The estimate of local and day-haul time used is based on a 1951 Department of Labor study, which indicated that in Oneida County there were on the average 60 percent as many day-haul and local workers in the fields as there were interstate migrants. Since the number of migrants in the field is less than the number in camp, and day-haul workers (who have to travel longer distances to their work) may work a somewhat shorter workday and are less apt to work weekends, it was estimated that their available time was 40 percent of the migrant available time in Oneida County during July and August, and only 30 percent in September, when children under 16 have to go to school. These estimates are at best only rough approximations.

It is believed that underestimating errors offset overestimating errors to a considerable extent and that on the whole the estimates err on the conservative side.

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