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MICHIGAN — 1956

FARM LABOR REPORT

"The Commission shall take all appropriate steps to reduce and prevent unemployment; to promote the reemployment of unemployed workers throughout the State in every other way that may be feasible; and to these ends to carry on and publish the results of investigations and research studies."

Michigan Employment Security Act

Post Season

FARM LABOR REPORT

1956

Prepared by
Farm Placement Section



Employment Service Division
7310 Woodward Avenue
Detroit 2, Michigan

A

Michigan Employment Security Commission
Publication

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ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS OF THE FARM PLACEMENT SERVICE

The Farm Placement Service, Bureau of Employment Security, Department of Labor provides a uniform farm labor policy for States. It also makes possible a coordinated recruitment and movement of farm labor throughout the nation. (Each state adapts the policy to a program which meets its own requirements.)

Farm labor programs in Michigan are formulated by the Employment Service Division of the Michigan Employment Security Commission. The Farm Placement Chief plans programs and supervises the activities of a field staff. The field staff is composed of Crop Area Supervisors who plan operational activities in designated areas. They also supervise Farm Placement Specialists who provide service to employers and workers in smaller areas where there is a concentration of agricultural activity. Commission branch offices are also organized to serve farmers and workers. The map on page 2 shows Crop Area boundaries and locations of offices where service may be obtained are listed on page 3.

The chief functions of Michigan's farm placement service are recruitment of farm workers for growers and finding jobs for farm workers. Other functions are preparation of labor market and labor movement information for employers and interested agencies and organizations and assistance in developing programs to improve employer-employee relationship and community services to migrant agricultural workers. The Wagner-Peyser Act under which the Employment Service operates prohibits the disclosure of any information which identifies employers or workers.

LOCATIONS FOR FARM PLACEMENT SERVICE

CROP AREA SUPERVISORS

Area 1 369 Ninth, Benton Harbor	Area 5 700 Adams, Bay City
" 2 95 W. Webster, Muskegon	" 6 320 N. Capitol, Lansing
" 3 312 River, Manistee	" 7 142 Wayne, Pontiac
" 4 129½ E. Front, Traverse City	" U.P. 117 S. Front, Marquette

YEAR-ROUND FARM PLACEMENT REPRESENTATIVES

Adrian, 118 W. Church	Monroe, 11 W. Vine
Grand Rapids, 110 Lyon N.W.	Saginaw, 2114 N. Michigan
Hart, Bank Building	South Haven, 505 Quaker

SEASONAL FARM PLACEMENT REPRESENTATIVES

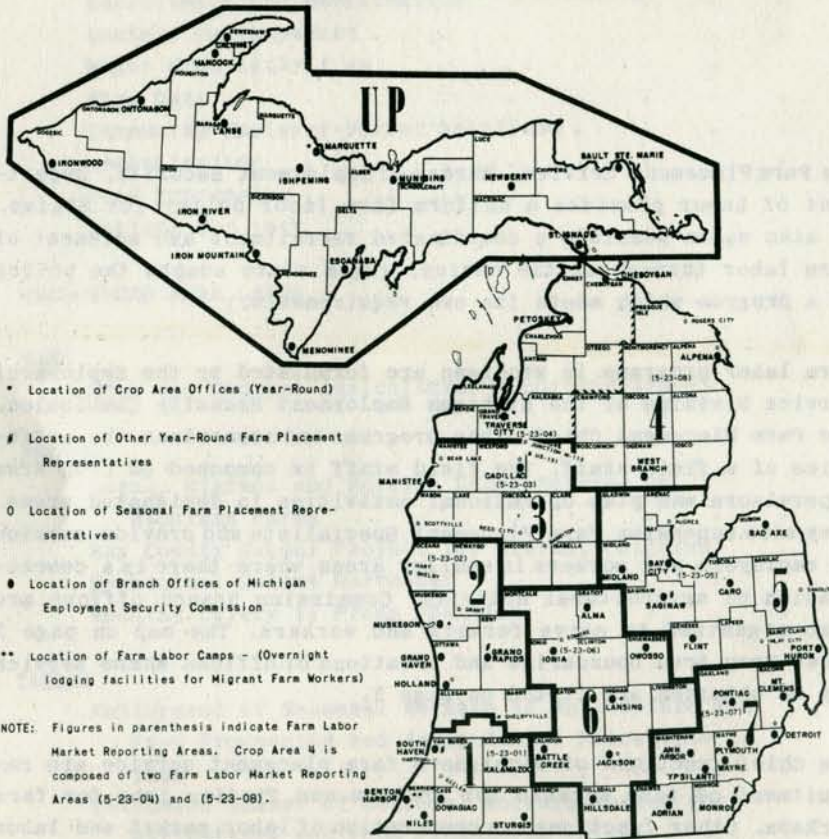
Au Gres, City Hall	Imlay City, Third Street
Alpena, 111 Water	Jackson, 227 S. Mechanic
Barryton	Junction M-113 & US-131 (Trailer)
Bear Lake (Trailer)	Keeler (Trailer)
Cadillac, 100 E. Chapin	Reed City, Courthouse
Detroit, 2770 Park Avenue	Rogers City
Edmore, City Hall	Sandusky
Grant	Scottville (County Agent's Office)
Hartford, Chamber of Commerce Bldg.	Shelby
Holland, 244 River	Shelbyville

OTHER COMMISSION BRANCH OFFICES

Alma, City Hall	Kalamazoo, 491 W. Michigan
Ann Arbor, 11 Felch	L'Anse, 120 Broad
Bad Axe, 635 E. Huron	Menominee, 432 Tenth
Battle Creek, 53 W. Michigan	Midland, 2513 Bay City Road
Calumet, 409 Seventh	Mt. Clemens, 24 Market
Caro, 230 N. State	Munising, 120 E. Superior
Cheboygan, Court House	Newberry, Community Bldg.
Coldwater, 26 N. Clay	Niles, 107 N. Second
Dowagiac, 236 S. Front	Ontonagon, 540 River
Escanaba, 305 Ludington	Owosso, 123 S. Washington
Flint, 706 Payne	Petoskey, 208 E. Mitchell
Grand Haven, 19 N. Seventh	Plymouth, 987 South Mill St.
Hancock, American Legion Bldg.	Port Huron, 330 Quay
Hillsdale, 40 E. Bacon	St. Ignace, Municipal Bldg.
Ionia, 228½ W. Main	Sault Ste. Marie, 567 Ashmun
Iron Mountain, City Hall	Sturgis, 202 E. West
Iron River, 420 Third	Wayne, 3139 S. Wayne Road
Ironwood, 135 Aurora	West Branch, 2430 E. Houghton
Ishpeming, 108 Canda	Ypsilanti, 111 Pearl

FARM PLACEMENT OFFICES SERVING AGRICULTURE IN MICHIGAN

CROP AND FEDERAL REPORTING AREAS OF FARM PLACEMENT PROGRAM



SEASONAL FARM LABOR

SIZE AND COMPOSITION

Michigan's seasonal farm labor force in 1956 totaled 100,200 workers. It was made up of three kinds of workers: local, migrant, and foreign. (The table on page 24 shows the number and source of seasonal farm workers for each month of the year.)

Local sources supplied 29,600 workers. This was 2,400 less than a year ago. Youth predominated the local labor supply. Family groups were next in size, followed by single adults and crews.

The domestic migratory labor supply totaled 60,000. This was 5,000 fewer than in 1955. The migratory labor force was composed mainly of family groups. Organized crews were second in size, while single adults were third. Most of the migratory workers claimed either Texas, Missouri, Arkansas, Florida, or Michigan as their home state. Michigan migrants were for the most part available for only one crop activity, and few were interested in working in other states.

The foreign labor supply consisted of 11,250 adult males from Mexico and 350 from the British West Indies. This represented an increase of 2,500 workers over 1955. This increase was required to offset the fewer workers who were available from domestic sources.

RECRUITMENT AND MOBILIZATION

Migrant workers generally start to move north during April. So it is up to the Employment Service to assist them with a schedule of work before they leave home, otherwise, many man-hours of farm labor are lost when they have to hunt for jobs. In addition, farmers have to know early in the spring the conditions under which workers will be available in order to better plan for the season.

Contacts were made with processors, grower associations and local agricultural representatives to gather information about anticipated acreage and various crops that would require a large number of seasonal workers. Labor requirements were computed by crop activity in each area and compiled on a statewide basis. Labor requirements were then coordinated with information on available housing. Contacts were continued and changes made as warranted.

Favorable weather conditions for good crop growth or maturity can not be expected at all times. Plans to shift labor within and between areas in Michigan as well as bordering states to maintain full utilization of available labor and/or prevent crop losses becomes a part of the recruitment and mobilization planning.

Early in the year, it was estimated that 84,000 workers would be needed at the peak. Since a large number of workers would be available for a short period only, it was determined that 100,000 workers should be recruited to meet the requirements of the entire season of which 89,000 were to be recruited in the United States, and 12,000 to be imported from other countries.

Recruitment activities commenced with the beginning of the calendar year. Steps were taken to recruit local workers through radio and newspaper advertising. However, youth which predominated the local labor supply, were not available until summer vacation. It became necessary to start recruiting migrant labor.

Many farmers desired migrants who had previously worked for them. So, the names and home addresses of group leaders had to be obtained and included on the orders. Orders from growers were then sent to Employment Service offices in states where the specified migrant workers were known to live.

During the first three months, orders for 24,080 migrant workers were received and transmitted. Over 50% of these orders were for migrants who had previously worked for Michigan growers. The State Employment Service assisted in recruiting over 30,000 migrants and 20,000 local workers. Many of these workers were used by more than one employer. (See table on page 24 for monthly placement figures.)

LOCAL, MIGRANT AND FOREIGN LABOR WORKING ON MICHIGAN FARMS



*Local Workers From Saginaw
in a Bean Field*



Migrants from Texas Harvesting Strawberries



*Foreign Workers Harvesting
Pickling Cucumbers*



In spite of careful planning, problems arose which made it necessary to deviate from planned action. Some of the more serious problems follow:

1. Early reports on results of recruitment effort received from labor supply areas indicated that 8% of the workers previously employed by Michigan farmers would not be available in 1956. The reduction appeared to be evenly spread among the several areas and activities.

However, a survey in the Traverse City area, revealed that the previously employed groups ordered for pickle, snap bean, strawberry, cherry and other tree fruit harvest activities, totaled 3,456 workers of which only 2,126 workers accepted job offers and reported for work. This represented a reduction of thirty-eight percent of formerly employed migrants. The largest portion of this reduction effected the cherry harvest activity.

2. Most harvest activities were paid for on a piece-rated basis. Poor yield of asparagus, strawberry, cherry, pickling cucumber, or tomato crop in some fields caused many workers to quit. Many of the dissatisfied workers did not return to an Employment Service office and it was not possible to locate them. A large number of them left Michigan. Much of the time lost by these workers could have resulted in productive employment if they had visited the nearest Employment Service branch office. Also, it would have eased labor shortages experienced during the season.

3. Over 1,000 growers did not have a sufficient amount of suitable housing and were unable to obtain enough local workers to meet their needs. (This was partly due to migrant groups having a high percentage of non-workers.) To remedy this situation, it was necessary to keep in touch with nearby migrant groups and send them to these growers whenever they could be spared by operators of farms on which they were living.

4. The cost of importing Mexican Nationals (contract, transportation both ways, subsistence enroute, liability insurance and a Spanish-speaking supervisor) increased the labor cost as much as 30¢ for each hour worked by the Mexican. To reduce this cost, some employers tried to pay the minimum wage listed on the contract rather than the higher rate which prevailed in the area for the specific activity on which the Mexicans were employed. Some

growers loaned foreign workers for a fee to other employers when they could spare them. Neither situation was in compliance with the contract or provisions of Public Law 78, and corrective action had to be taken.

5. The productivity of an adapted worker was generally as much as that of two new and inexperienced workers. This also added to the problem of balancing labor supply and demand and increased labor turnover.

6. Complaints that some crew leaders obtained money under false pretense by failing to keep commitments after receiving advance monies were made by some growers.

7. Growers from bordering states carried on active recruiting in Michigan while the State was experiencing labor shortages. Some recruiters offered special and appealing concessions to group leaders at the expense of the workers. A few of the group leaders who accepted these offers of work had Michigan commitments which they failed to keep.

It appears that the program of educating employers and workers on good employment practices needs to be emphasized and continued.

MONTHLY DEVELOPMENTS

Although the 1955 harvesting ended in November, some part time farm activities continued into the spring of 1956. Seasonal labor requirements increased with planting and transplanting of crops and asparagus harvest in April and ended with the harvesting of late crops in November. The following paragraphs reflect the monthly situation during this period.

April: Migrant labor, the main source for Michigan's agriculture at this time of the season, arrived in fewer numbers than a year ago. However, cold weather delayed planting during the first half of the month and continued cold weather coupled with rain hinder-

ed both planting and growth during the last half of the month. Available labor was used mainly to clean up fields and orchards.

May: Migrant labor continued to arrive in reduced numbers. Labor shortages developed in such activities as planting and weeding vegetables and harvesting asparagus. However, continued cold weather curtailed shortages by delaying some activities from three to four weeks.

June: The end of the strawberry harvest in southern states released a great number of migrants. School vacations sharply expanded the local labor supply. However, the total labor from these sources was nearly 7,000 less than had been anticipated earlier in the year. It appeared that acute labor shortages would develop for strawberry harvest during the latter part of June. Plans were made for the certification of foreign labor. Certifications, however were withheld until the situation required action. At the start of the peak strawberry harvest of late varieties in the Benton Harbor area a stem-end rot developed. This reduced labor needs in the largest strawberry growing area and shortened the harvest period by two weeks. We were able to transfer workers to northern strawberry growing areas in time to prevent crop losses. Only a few foreign workers were required in isolated spots for strawberry harvesting but over 3,300 were needed for sugar beet blocking and thinning.

July: Labor supply and demand was in balance during the first half of the month. Shortages were anticipated for the latter half of the month when cherry, pickle, snap bean and blueberry harvests overlapped to create peak labor requirements. Plans were made to use foreign workers should the need arise. In spite of careful planning temporary shortages did develop in cherry and snap bean harvests. Two reasons appear to have caused shortages in the cherry harvest. First, the crop was only about 70% of the 1955 yield and the wage rate offered was the same, thus reducing earning possibilities. Some cherry growers did not have suitable housing. In the bean harvest the lack of suitable housing caused labor shortages to develop. However, intensified local campaigns recruited a few workers. July rain destroyed some early pickle and bean fields and cool nights delayed the development of others. This permitted a transfer of some migrant and foreign labor and curtailed labor shortage. However, at the end of the month there were still unfilled orders for 3,500 workers.

August: Cool weather continued to slow the ripening of bean, pickle, cherry and blueberry crops which continued to ease labor shortages. Once the cherry harvest and the first picking of beans was over small labor surpluses developed in many areas because cool weather continued to retard crops. In spite of the delayed tomato crop, large numbers of workers migrated into the tomato fields of the bordering states. By the end of August, there were unfilled orders for 2,100 workers for snap bean, peach, tomato and vegetable harvesting.

September: Available labor was drastically cut when schools reopened and additional migrant groups left the state. Continued cool weather reduced labor requirements for tomato and vegetable harvests. However, it was still necessary to transfer labor from farm to farm to avoid crop losses. The first frost occurred on September 20, curtailing tomato and vegetable harvests. At the end of the month another large portion of the migrant labor force left for cotton harvests in the southern states. This further reduced the labor supply. At the end of the month there were unfilled orders for 530 workers.

October: With potato, apple and grape harvest at their peak, scattered labor shortages were experienced. Most were eased by the transfer of labor from farm to farm and from area to area. This was possible because the weather remained ideal for harvest work. Some grapes were lost due to shelling after the October 9 frost. More workers could have been transferred into the grape harvest area, but suitable housing was lacking.

November: Weather continued to be ideal for harvest activities. Fewer workers were available from domestic sources than in 1955. As a result it was necessary to retain a greater number of foreign workers as well as maintain a constant check on utilization of available domestic labor to insure crop harvest completion without loss. Most of the harvest of late crops was completed by November 20.

MAJOR CROP ACTIVITIES

The following cover highlights on the major crop activities:

Apples: There was little change from 1955 in the number of bearing apple trees for commercial purposes, at about the 1,970,000 figure. However, the yield was about two-fifths greater. The largest number of commercial orchards are located around Benton Harbor but all areas in the lower peninsula have sizable orchards. Most of the apples were of late fall variety. Picking of these commenced around September 15. Volume picking did not start until the first week in October with the peak reached on October 15. Harvest ended shortly after November 10. The weather was ideal throughout the harvest period. Shortage of field crates, however, made it necessary to move some labor from farm to farm in order to provide workers with steady employment as well as to curtail local labor shortages. During the peak over 10,000 workers picked, sorted, handled and stored the fruit. Wage rates for picking apples ranged from 14¢ to 25¢ per bushel depending upon the size of fruit and height of trees. Piece rated workers averaged 80¢ to 85¢ per hour. Sorting, handling and storing wage rates ranged from 75¢ to \$1.00 per hour depending upon the worker's experience and the kind of work. About \$2,000,000 was paid out to harvest the crop.

Asparagus: There was a slight increase in asparagus acreage in 1956 which made the total over 10,300 acres. The largest acreage was around Benton Harbor with scattered commercial acreages in other areas. Cold weather retarded the growth and reduced peak labor needs for harvest by 2,000 workers. Volume harvest started in the southern end of the state during the first week of May and ended shortly after June 20. At the peak 5,500 workers were employed. Wage rates ranged from 2½¢ to 3¢ per pound for cutting and 6¢ to 8¢ for snapping. Hourly earnings ranged from 70¢ to 75¢ per hour. Growers paid farm labor more than one-half million dollars to harvest this crop.

Blueberries: More than 4,200 acres of bearing age bushes were harvested this year. This represented a slight increase over 1955. The largest acreage was located in a 20-mile strip along Lake Michigan from South Haven to Muskegon. Harvesting started on the earlier varieties July 15 and ended with late varieties October 2. Continued cool weather retarded ripening and reduced daily earnings. This caused a heavy labor turnover. Peak harvest occurred August 15 when over 6,000 workers were employed. This was 2,000 less than in 1955. Wage rates ranged from 6¢ to 8¢ per pound for picking and averaged 70¢ per hour for packaging. Average earnings

for picking amounted to \$5.00 per day. Growers paid out approximately \$250,000 to harvest and handle the crop.

Cherries: There was an increase of 6% in the number of cherry trees grown for commercial purposes. In 1956 there were 3,130,000 red tart cherry trees of bearing age and 350,000 of the sweet varieties. The larger acreage was located along the western side of the state, with the greatest concentration in the Traverse City region. In spite of the increase in acreage, yield of red tart cherries was 16,000 tons below 1955. The sweet cherry harvest however, was 700 tons more than a year ago.

Cherry harvest started with the sweet varieties in the Benton Harbor area July 10, and ended with the red tart varieties in the Traverse City area August 18. The lower yield reduced earnings about one-third from that of 1955. This caused the cherry harvest to slip from the list of desirable activities by seasonal farm labor. Workers demanded not only better housing but also increased rates in some orchards.

During the last week of July and the first week of August, over 33,000 workers were picking cherries. Wage rates ranged from 50¢ to \$1.00 per lug (26 to 28 pounds). Earnings averaged \$7.00 per day. The total wages paid by growers totaled more than \$2,500,000.

Cucumber Hoeing and Vine Training: The acreage for fresh market remained at 1,200. That planted for processing was up about 11% and totaled 37,000 acres. The larger acreage for fresh market was grown in southeastern and southwestern parts of the state. For processing the larger acreages were grown in a belt from Lake Huron to Lake Michigan across the central portion of the lower peninsula. Since plantings were staggered because of adverse weather conditions during the planting period, hoeing and vine training was also spread over a longer period. The activity commenced during the last half of June and continued through mid-August.

At the peak over 3,400 workers were employed. The hourly wage rates for adult workers ranged from 70¢ to 80¢ per hour with 75¢ predominating. There were a few cases of hiring on a piece rated basis of \$4.00 to \$6.00 per acre. Wages totaled more than \$150,000.

Cucumber Harvest: Rains reduced the cucumbers harvested for pro-

cessing by over 2,000 acres. Harvest commenced during the last half of July and ended around September 10. Total production of cucumbers for fresh market purposes was up 14% over 1955, while that for processing was up about 5%. At the peak (mid-August) over 17,000 workers were harvesting cucumbers. Wage rates for this activity ranged from 70¢ to 85¢ per hour in harvesting for fresh market. The wage rate for processing was the usual 50% of the value of the cucumbers harvested. On this basis earnings ranged from 20¢ to \$1.10 per hour in any one day, with a predominate range of 65¢ to 70¢ per hour by adult workers for the season. It is estimated that slightly more than \$2,000,000 were paid out in wages.

Grapes: The number of vines in commercial vineyards remained at slightly over 7,800,000. The yield was more than twice that of 1955. The largest vineyard acreage was located in the Benton Harbor area. Harvesting commenced around September 15, but due to cool weather which retarded ripening, volume harvest did not start until the first week in October. On October 9 and 10 frost severely damaged the crop. The weather turned warm following the freeze and it was feared that half of the crop would be lost if not picked immediately. Wineries and juice processors were not able to handle the volume of deliveries, so growers were put on delivery schedules. To utilize the available workers more fully, it was necessary to schedule the labor to work alternately in different vineyards. Between 25 and 30 percent loss was experienced due to the freeze. At the peak 4,500 workers harvested grapes. Wage rates ranged from 20¢ to 25¢ per lug and 12¢ per jumbo basket. Workers averaged 80¢ per hour. About \$135,000 was paid in wages for grape harvesting.

Muck Crops: (Plant, Weed, Hoe and Cultivate) Muck crops acreage was about the same as in 1955. (Acreages have been stable for several years.) However, there were many staggered plantings because of the cold and wet spring which not only delayed planting but necessitated replanting parts of early fields. Large acreages of cultivated muckland are located in the Muskegon, Lansing, and Bay City areas. The work started during the early part of May. It ended by August 1. The peak was reached during the latter part of June when 4,100 workers were employed. Wage rates ranged from 60¢ to 85¢ per hour. The lower rate was paid to youth or family groups. It is estimated that more than \$500,000 was paid to workers who planted, weeded, hoed and cultivated muck crops.

Muck Crop Harvest: Onions, head lettuce, celery and carrots were the principal muck crops harvested by seasonal workers. Harvest of early lettuce started during the first week of July. Early onion and celery harvest began around mid-August. Harvest of late onions, celery and carrots started in mid-September and ended October 20. Harvest of celery and head lettuce was curtailed by frost on October 9. The peak period occurred during September when 4,000 workers were harvesting muck crops. Harvest of lettuce and celery rates ranged from 75¢ to \$1.00 per hour. Onion topping was paid at 10¢ per crate for the large yellow globe and 15¢ for the small white. Daily earnings averaged \$7.50. Total earnings exceeded \$700,000.

Peaches: There was a slight decline in the number of bearing peach trees which totaled slightly over 1,500,000. The crop yield, however, was higher than in 1955 by 300,000 bushels. About 70% of the orchards were located in the Benton Harbor area. Harvest of the early varieties started during the first week of August and ended about October 8, in the northern areas. During the peak (latter half of August) 5,000 workers were picking, sorting and packing peaches. Wage rates ranged from 70¢ to \$1.00 per hour and from 15¢ to 20¢ per bushel. Daily earnings averaged \$7.50. Wages totaled more than \$500,000.

Potatoes: The acreage was 7,000 less than in 1955 or a total of 51,100. However, the yield was about three-eighths larger. Large potato acreages were grown in all areas except Benton Harbor. Harvest of early potatoes commenced during July and the late fall potatoes around September 15. Potato picking was over by November 10. The peak was reached during the first half of October when 5,500 workers were picking up, handling, sorting and/or packaging potatoes. Wage rates for picking averaged 7¢ per bushel or 10¢ per bag. Handling, etc., ranged from 70¢ to 85¢ per hour. The total wages exceeded \$900,000.

Raspberries: There was a slight decrease in raspberry acreage from 1955. The total was about 7,300 acres. The largest acreage was grown in the Benton Harbor area but significant acreage was grown in other areas of the lower peninsula. Harvest started during the first week in July in the southern part of the state and ended during the middle of August in Alpena area. At the peak in July 4,500 workers were harvesting this crop. Wage rates ranged from 5¢ to 7¢ per pint and from 9¢ to 13¢ per quart. Workers av-

eraged \$6.00 to \$7.00 per day. In excess of \$400,000 was paid in wages for harvesting this crop.

Snap and Wax Beans: Over 9,700 acres were grown. About 80% of the acreage was in green beans. The acreage for fresh market purposes was down 200 acres from last year but for processing it was up 1,000 acres. The yield per acre was up 90% over 1955. Largest acreages were located in Manistee, Lansing and Bay City areas. Significant acreages also were grown in the Benton Harbor, Upper Peninsula and the Alpena areas. Harvest started during the last week of July and ended September 10. Peak harvest occurred during August when 14,000 workers were picking beans. Wage rates ranged from 2¢ to 3½¢ per pound. Those receiving more than 2½¢ per pound were generally harvesting on a 50-50 basis. The average earning of adult workers was \$8.00 per day. The total amount paid out in wages exceeded \$800,000.

Strawberries: In 1956, commercial acreage increased to over 12,100 acres. Most of the increase was confined to Manistee, Alpena and the Upper Peninsula. The Benton Harbor area had the largest acreage. Harvest of strawberries commenced the first week of June. The average harvest period in each area was four weeks. The end-stem rot which developed just before peak harvest of the late varieties in the Benton Harbor area, reduced peak labor requirements by 3,000 pickers. During the peak period, 25,950 pickers were employed. Wage rates ranged from 6¢ to 8¢ per quart basket for the uncapped and 8¢ to 10¢ for the capped berries. Earnings by adult workers averaged \$8.00 per day. Growers paid more than \$1,500,000 to workers harvesting this crop.

Sugar Beet Blocking and Thinning: There was an increase of over 4,000 planted acres over 1955 or a total of 77,000. About 6,000 acres were first mechanically thinned and then followed by hand thinning. (This mechanical thinning operation while not 100 percent effective did reduce labor needs because workers were able to complete some mechanically thinned fields twice as fast.) It is anticipated that in 1957 mechanical thinning will be expanded further. The largest acreage was planted in the Bay City area. Blocking and thinning started around May 20 and finished about July 15. At the peak in June 7,500 workers were engaged in this activity. Wage rates were \$10.00 per acre in machine-thinned fields and \$13.00 per acre for all hand thinning. Daily earnings averaged \$7.50 per day in machine thinned fields and \$5.50 per

day on straight hand thinning. More than \$900,000 was paid in wages.

Tomatoes: Tomato acreage for fresh market purposes remained about the same as the previous year. However, there was an increase of over 1,200 acres for processing. The total exceeded 14,900 acres. The largest tomato acreage for fresh market was located in southwestern Michigan the largest for processing was in the southeastern section. Fresh market harvest started during the last week in July and for processing during the week of August 20. Cool weather retarded ripening and volume picking was not reached until the first week of September. Frost on September 20 curtailed harvest on the eastern side of Michigan. Frost on October 9 stopped all tomato harvesting. At the peak 9,000 were employed in the tomato harvest. Wage rates for fresh market purposes ranged from 70¢ to 80¢ per hour and from 10¢ to 15¢ per hamper for processing purposes. Earnings averaged \$7.00 per day and totaled more than \$700,000 for the season.

WAGE DATA

Workers were paid on a piece-rate basis on most seasonal crop activities. Earnings by adult workers generally ranged from 70¢ to 85¢ per hour. Migrant workers usually received free housing and free use of basic appliances and furniture. They had to furnish their own food, bedding, cooking and eating utensils as well as fuel. Local workers usually furnished their own transportation. Variances in prerequisites or lack of them did not appear to effect wage rates.

Wage rates paid on selected crop activities are included in the highlights of major crop activities, page 10 through 16.

There were reports of some workers stuffing potato and tomato vines and other trash in the bottom of the containers to increase their daily earnings on piece-rate harvest activities. This was not discovered until after the workers were paid at the end of the day. Such workers did not report for work the next day. (This practice may tend to lower wage rates in future years.)

COMMUNITY - EMPLOYER - WORKER RELATIONS

Migrant farm workers were our greatest source of seasonal agricultural labor. In most localities, the entire community derived economic benefits as a result of their migration. Yet in some areas the migrants were looked upon as unwelcome strangers.

The number of available domestic migrants has been declining each year. Michigan's agriculture has to compete for available migrant workers with other states or assume the higher cost of foreign workers. Further, foreign workers generally spend less in the area of employment.

Experience has shown that migrants prefer to work in communities with programs that afford them social services which otherwise they would not be able to enjoy. The major 1956 community projects for migrant workers in Michigan follows:

1. The Mexican Apostolate operated by the Catholic Diocese of Saginaw with the help of the Knights of Columbus, Daughters of Isabella and League of Catholic Women provided religious and secular education; welfare assistance, medical assistance and recreational programs to many migrants in the Saginaw Valley.

2. The National Council of Churches provided religious and secular education, welfare aid and recreational programs in many communities of the state.

3. The Bay County educational project for migrant children sponsored by the National Child Labor Committee in cooperation with state and local agencies provided seven weeks of regular school courses to 26 youngsters aged four through seven, and 23 aged eight through thirteen, in the southeastern part of the county. Free bus transportation, medical aid, and school lunches were given these children. The cost of this project amounted to \$3,500. Attendance proved that migrant family heads will cooperate when a meaningful and worthwhile educational program is supplied.

Parent interest was developed through evening sessions held every two weeks for both parents and children. Over 90 parents and children attended the last session. The parents voted public thanks to the representatives of the various agencies and organizations who helped on this project. These mothers and fathers expressed

BAY COUNTY SCHOOL PROJECT FOR MIGRANT CHILDREN



Arriving on a Bus



Older Children Answer School Bell



Story Hour for Kindergarten Pupils



Recess After Story Hour

a desire of continued cooperation and that such projects could be expanded in the future. It is contended by those taking part in this project that such projects should be coordinated on a national level to provide a uniform educational program in all states as migrants move from one state to another.

4. The Fiesta sponsored by the Rotarians and Jaycees of Hart was held for the ninth consecutive year. It was a carefully planned affair by members of both organizations. Over 10,000 attended the Fiesta, most of whom were migrants of Latin-American descent. There is no doubt of the value of such an affair. It will bring additional migrants to an area where they will be vitally needed because of increased agricultural needs. Since the program started, the number of migrants coming to this area has increased by over 50 percent.

Extension of benefits to migrants by non-profit organizations was severely limited by a lack of funds. In order to continue such program, it will be necessary to increase efforts in solicitation of funds from private sources or obtain public assistance.

To secure better employer-worker relations it is necessary to provide workers with full-time employment. The seasonal farm workers depend upon the full-time employment to compensate for periods of under-employment. Many farmers could not provide steady employment, so they made contact with the nearest Farm Placement representative of the Employment Security Commission, to refer the workers for fill-in employment. This interest in full utilization of seasonal agricultural labor has reduced turnover. Some farmers asked their workers whether they had a place to work once the crop was harvested. If not, farmers tried to locate a job or else notified the Farm Placement representative of the size of group, number of workers and when they would be available. In many cases, a job was located before the workers were released. This interest in the workers' welfare has resulted in migrant groups expressing a desire to work for such employers the following year. This reduces the cost of recruiting. Also, the grower is assured that he will have a supply of satisfactory workers the following year.

Some farmers have lost dependable workers by not adjusting rates when crop yields were low. As a result, their workers left before completing the activity. Such employers experienced considerable difficulty in obtaining replacements to finish the job.

Suitable housing is another factor which promotes better employer-worker relationship. During 1956, the Employment Service had several orders which could not be filled because available housing was not adequate. The housing fell short of minimum specifications and corrective measures could not be completed in time.

MECHANIZATION

No new mechanical devices were introduced in 1956, which effected the labor needs for seasonal workers. The mechanical pickle harvester introduced in 1955 is still an experimental model and appears to need more engineering adjustments before it is accepted for general use. A mechanical beet thinner was used on about 10% of the acreage. Some reports say that it has reduced labor needs by 50 percent. Other farmers felt that it was of little help in reducing labor requirements. It is not known whether this is due to improper use or whether the machine does not meet the need under varying soil conditions.

FOOD PROCESSING

Food processing included such methods as canning, refining, freezing, dehydrating, brining and distilling. The canning processes required the largest number of workers followed by beet sugar refining.

Between 700 and 800 seasonal or short time workers were needed during the early months of the calendar year. Peak requirements were reached in July when nearly 10,000 seasonal workers were employed.

Some difficulty was experienced in recruiting enough male workers for canning and freezing processes. In some cases, employers hired

migrant family groups to obtain enough men to handle the more difficult jobs. (For monthly labor force figures see page 24).

OUTLOOK FOR 1957

All information indicates a larger number of seasonal agricultural workers will be needed in 1957. Increases are predicted in strawberry, asparagus, cherry, blueberry, tomato and sugar beet acreage. In addition better yields are expected in asparagus, pickling cucumber, early onion, red tart cherry and blueberry crops which would normally increase labor needs. Snap bean is the only crop on which information indicates reduced acreage.

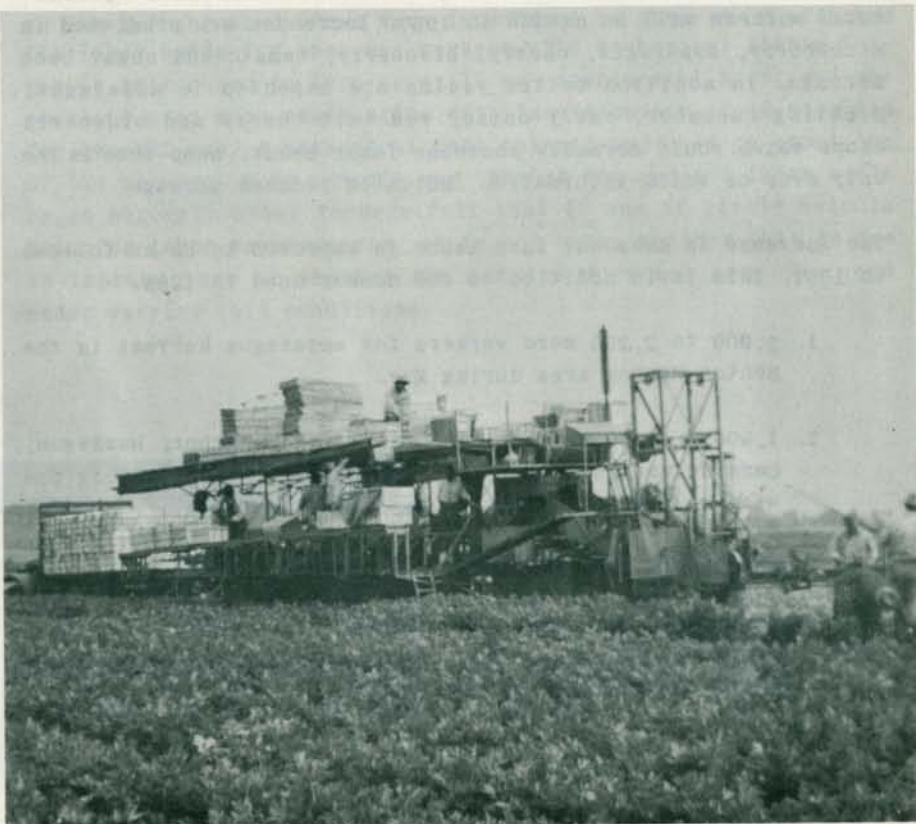
The increase in seasonal farm labor is expected to be as follows in 1957. This is in addition to the number used in 1956.

1. 2,000 to 2,200 more workers for asparagus harvest in the Benton Harbor area during May.
2. 1,000 to 1,200 more workers in the Benton Harbor, Muskegon, Lansing and Pontiac areas for planting, transplanting and weeding vegetables during May.
3. 400 to 500 more workers for blocking and thinning sugar beets in Bay City and Lansing areas during May and June.
4. 2,000 to 3,000 more workers for strawberry harvest during June in the Benton Harbor, Muskegon and Manistee areas.
5. 3,000 more workers for cherry, blueberry, and pickling cucumber harvest during the last half of July and first half of August. (A reduction of 2,000 workers for snap bean harvest has been considered in estimating this increase.)
6. Between 800 and 1,000 more workers for tomato harvest in Benton Harbor and Pontiac areas during September.

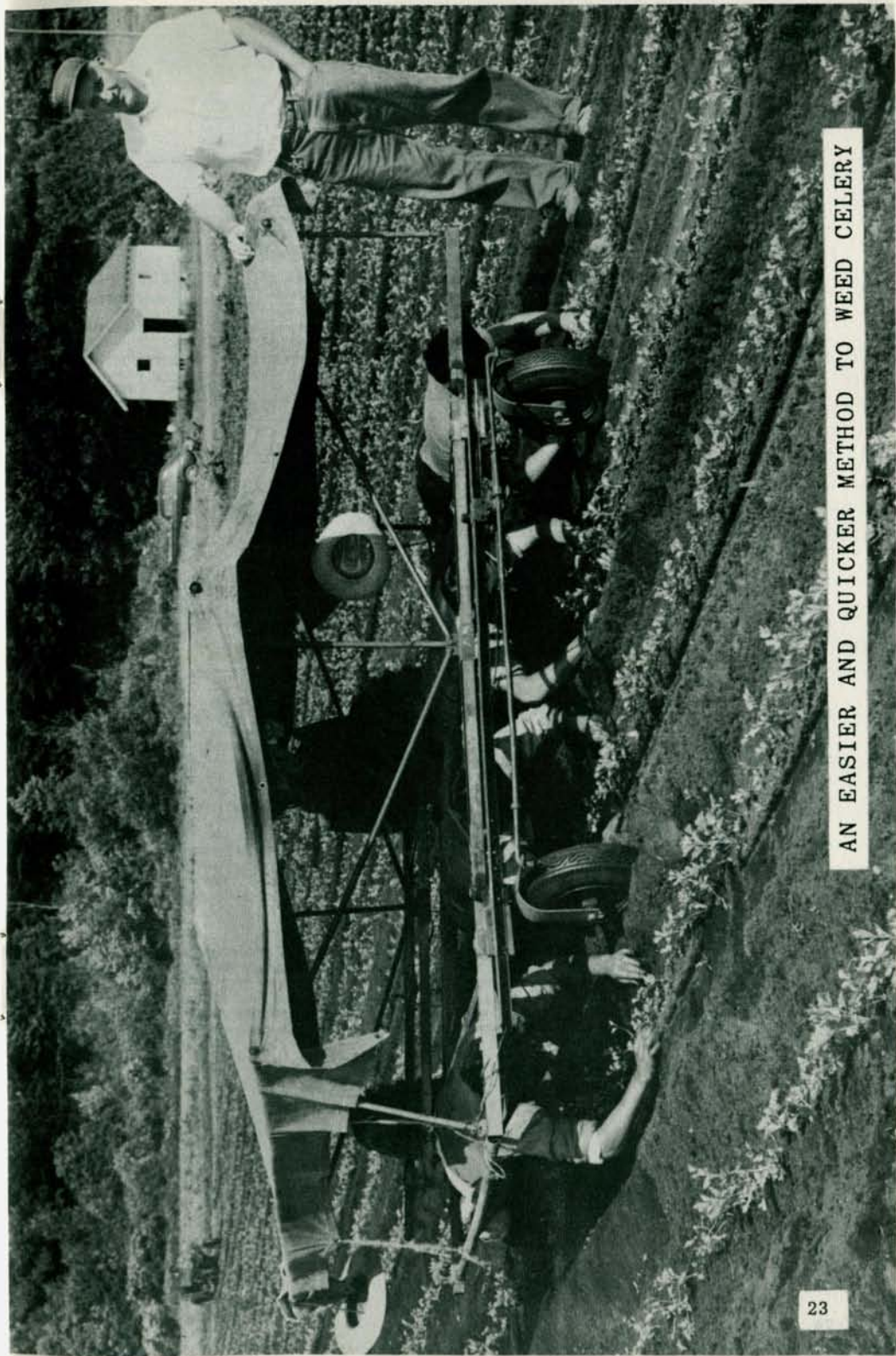
7. An increase of 40 males and 200 females for peak food processing activities based upon expected increase in total production.

In view of the experience during the last three years, it is expected that about one-sixth of the increase in seasonal farm labor requirements can be filled from domestic sources. The balance may have to be filled by foreign labor.

The table on page 25 lists the estimated number of seasonal agricultural and food processing workers that will be needed each month during 1957.



A MECHANICAL CELERY HARVESTER ON A MICHIGAN FARM



AN EASIER AND QUICKER METHOD TO WEED CELERY

EMPLOYMENT OF SEASONAL WORKERS IN
AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PROCESSING AND
AGRICULTURAL PLACEMENTS IN 1956

1956 MONTH	AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT 1/				FOOD PROCESSING EMPLOYMENT 1/ (All Domestic)			AGRICULTURAL PLACEMENTS
	TOTAL	DOMESTIC		FOREIGN 2/	TOTAL	LOCAL WORKERS	NON- LOCAL WORKERS	
		LOCAL WORKERS	NON- LOCAL WORKERS					
Jan.	4,750	4,540	187	23	1,200	1,100	100	263
Feb.	4,790	4,600	166	24	600	600	---	305
Mar.	5,070	4,840	202	28	700	700	---	330
Apr.	7,950	6,579	1,341	30	910	890	20	1,437
May	12,725	6,896	5,766	63	1,820	1,450	370	3,503
June	51,452	16,009	31,808	3,635	2,750	2,230	520	15,844
July	63,862	24,329	31,873	4,660	5,625	4,555	1,070	51,034
Aug.	74,001	28,937	34,213	10,851	8,100	6,700	1,400	54,794
Sept.	44,265	21,103	18,625	4,537	6,900	5,550	1,350	29,281
Oct.	34,030	21,093	11,008	1,568	5,630	4,230	1,400	13,200
Nov.	9,800	7,755	2,025	20	3,050	2,950	100	3,067
Dec.	5,980	5,714	240	26	2,850	2,750	100	387

1/ Figures represent the number of seasonal farm workers employed on the 15th of each month. (The peak period occurred during the last half of July when 83,803 workers were employed. The peak in foreign workers occurred during the latter half of August when 11,190 were employed.)

2/ Foreign employment in December, January, February and March was not seasonal but is included as such due to limited period of certification.

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF SEASONAL WORKERS NEEDED
FOR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PROCESSING IN 1957

MONTH	ESTIMATED EMPLOYMENT 1/							EXPECTED SURPLUS FOR OUT- OF-STATE MIGRATION 2/
	TOTAL	AGRICULTURAL			FOOD PROCESSING			
		LOCAL	NON- LOCAL	FOREIGN	TOTAL	LOCAL	NON- LOCAL	
Jan.	4,800	4,560	200	40	1,200	1,100	100	---
Feb.	4,780	4,560	180	40	600	600	---	---
Mar.	5,200	4,910	250	40	700	700	---	---
Apr.	8,700	6,655	1,600	445	900	880	20	---
May	15,500	7,000	6,000	2,500	2,000	1,600	400	---
June	56,500	16,700	32,500	7,300	2,800	2,250	550	---
July	67,000	25,000	32,500	9,500	5,800	4,600	1,200	---
Aug.	77,000	29,000	35,000	13,000	8,300	6,800	1,500	---
Sept.	45,000	21,000	18,600	5,400	6,900	5,550	1,350	20,000
Oct.	34,000	20,000	11,000	3,000	5,650	4,200	1,450	6,000
Nov.	9,800	7,600	2,100	100	3,050	2,950	100	7,000
Dec.	5,900	5,600	260	40	2,850	2,750	100	0

1/ Figures represent the number of seasonal workers expected to be employed on the 15th of each month. (Peak is expected between July 20 and August 15 and needs will rise to 85,000 workers.)

2/ Includes domestic and foreign workers. (Approximately 25% of the total non-local labor force will not be available for other farm work during balance of year. Estimate less than 10% of the available migratory workers will have no work lined up with other employers when they complete their job in Michigan.)

YEAR-ROUND FARM LABOR

There was a continual shortage of qualified persons to fill year-round farm jobs in 1956. Over 1,600 workers were placed on year-round farm jobs. About 600 of these did not remain on the job the entire year but quit to enter other occupations. Some of these workers were asked why they quit. They reported that they disliked the 54 to 60 hour work week normally required by agriculture. Unfilled orders in December totaled 152 openings for year-round farm hands and couples.

The outlook for 1957 indicates a continual shortage of interested and qualified applicants especially for dairy, fruit and vegetable farming. Operators of these types of farms usually desire workers who possess specialized training and experience.

Wages paid to year-round farm hands ranged from \$40.00 to \$200 per month plus room and board, or from 75¢ to \$1.10 per hour plus two meals. The average for qualified farm hands was \$125 per month or 95¢ per hour. Farm couples received from \$125 to \$300 per month plus house and other prerequisites, with \$200 per month predominating. The wide range in wages is due to variations in size and type of farming operations. Large dairy, fruit or vegetable farms are paying the highest wages. Specialists, foremen and farm managers received proportionately higher rates of pay than farm hands.

Act No. 251 of Public Acts of 1955 (Michigan)

Section 1. The opportunity to obtain employment without discrimination because of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry is hereby recognized as and declared to be a civil right.

Section 2. When used in this Act:

- (e) The term "employment agency" includes any person undertaking with or without compensation to procure opportunities to work or to procure, recruit, refer or place employees

Section 3. It shall be unfair labor practice:

- (b) For any employment agency to fail or refuse to classify properly, refer for employment or otherwise to discriminate against any individual because of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry....
- (d) Except where based on a bonafide occupational qualification, for anyemployment agency, prior to employment ... to: (1) elicit any information concerning the race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry of an applicant for employment or ...; (2) make or keep a record of the race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry of any applicant for employment ...; (3) use any form of application for employment, ... seeking to elicit information regarding race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry; (4) print or publish or cause to be printed or published any notice or advertisement relating to employment ... indicating any preference, limitation, specification or discrimination, based upon race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry; (5) establish, announce, or follow a policy of denying or limiting through a quota system or otherwise, employment ... opportunities of any group because of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry of such group; and (6) utilize in the recruitment or hiring of individuals any employment agency, ... known by such person to discriminate against individuals because of their race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry. ...
- (g) For any person, whether or not an employment agency, ... to aid, abet, incite, compel or coerce the doing of any act declared by this section to be unfair employment practice or to obstruct or prevent any person from complying with the provisions of this Act or under any order issued thereunder, or to attempt directly or indirectly to commit any act declared by this section to be unfair employment practice.