

2020 April Ag Labor Survey – Information

- **Project Code:** 956 - Labor Survey
- **Reference Periods:**
 - April 12 – 18, 2020
 - January 12 – 18, 2020
- **Questionnaires:** Mailed April 2nd
- **Release:** *Farm Labor Report*, May 28th, 2020 (3p.m. EST)
- **Purpose:** To determine the types and number of farm workers employed, and wages paid.

Farm employment and wage statistics are used by federal, state, and local government agencies, farm organizations, and employers for many purposes, including planning, recruitment and placement of workers, and policy-making. The agricultural wage rate is a component of the Parity Index and is used in the establishment of minimum wage rates for domestic and foreign agricultural workers.

What IS Agricultural Work: (what should be included)?

Agricultural work includes any activity performed on a farm or ranch in connection with the production and delivery of agricultural products, up to the point of first sale. Agricultural work also includes the maintenance of buildings and machinery, bookkeeping, and supervision of employees if these activities are directly related to the production of agricultural products. However, exclude any workers if their job isn't directly related to farming, such as "value-added" workers (ex: cashiers working retail sales in a store on the farm).

Take Note: Questionnaire Changed for April 2020: Total Hours Worked

- Hours are now broken out by Base and Overtime.
 - Similar to how wages are reported
 - Base: hours worked at the employee's regular rate of pay.
 - For salaried employees, report the standard amount of hours worked on your operation

Watch for:

-Extreme hours per week or wages per hour. Low hours could be indicative of misreported contract labor. Leave notes verifying any unusually high values.

- Misreporting of data. Be sure the operator understands we are asking for TOTALS
- Livestock operations should have livestock workers reported.
- Workers reported as “Jack of All Trades”: In these cases, try to get as much detail as possible about the exact work performed, in order for office staff to code the workers accurately
- Base Hours + Overtime Hours **MUST** equal Total Hours
- Base Wages + Incentive Wages **MUST** equal Gross Wages

Terms & Definitions: See Chapter 2 of the Agricultural Labor Survey Interviewer’s Manual for specific terms and definitions as they relate to the survey.

Questionnaire Versions:

- There is only 1 version of the survey
- This most current version records Total Hours and Total Gross Wages, and then goes on to break that out by Base & Overtime Hours then Base Wages, Bonus Wages, and Overtime Wages.
 - Base Hours: Base hours are hours worked at the employee’s regular rate of pay.
 - Overtime Hours: hours worked that are paid at an amount above the employee’s regular rate of pay.
 - Base rate/wages = The normal compensation for those employees during the week
 - Bonus wages = Pay that is in addition to the usual compensation received (i.e., performance pay, hazard pay, regularly paid bonuses, etc.).
 - Overtime pay: wages paid for overtime hours
 - The instruction sheet includes examples of the table, showing how to record hours and wages.
 - To accommodate the additional questions, the “work description” box has been removed.
 - Now only asking for the worker code from table. Therefore, if possible, leave a note with more detailed information about the exact type of work being performed.

From the RFOs:

Note: These were submitted by RFOs for their regions, however, many of the items can apply to other states as well.

Northern Plains: Workers are sometimes misreported by type. In the NPR farmer workers usually fall into the “Equipment Operators” category and not the “Farmworkers” category as they are likely operating a tractor or some other large piece of equipment and not manually planting or harvesting by hand.

Upper Midwest: Grape Operations: Watch out for grape producers who process their grapes into wine. The correct procedure is to count only workers who are in the fields or who are working on the agricultural production side. We want to exclude workers and associated wages and hours of those involved in the wine-making process. In addition, the value of sales should reflect the value of the grapes as fresh grapes and not the value of wine.

Nursery Operations: A number of greenhouse workers may get reported as “Other,” when really they should be included in “Field Workers.” Landscape workers, florists, etc. and non-ag income, should be excluded from the data. Nurseries should report only what is produced on the operation as gross value of sales.

Supervisors: You need to watch out for operations paying their CEOs and upper management large salaries when they are not involved in the day-to-day decision making process of the operation. We want to collect data on supervisors who are making the day-to-day decisions on the farm, not someone who is in a corporate office away from the day-to-day decision making.

Northwest:

Lessons learned or things to be aware of from previous surveys:

If a respondent is not capable of providing hours worked or wages the way we need them for the survey, then provide us with detailed notes.

Sometimes the person listed as the contact is not the best person to speak to for labor data. In many cases depending on the type of operation, the bookkeeper, office manager, or other office personnel may be the person with labor data more readily available. Please make sure to ask who the best contact person is for the labor data and make notes of who they are and their phone number if different from what we already have listed.

Any other items you want the enumerators to be aware of before contacting producers in your area:

Minimum wage for the states in our region are: Idaho-\$7.25, Oregon-\$11.25, and Washington-\$12.00.

Nursery, dairy and fruit operations tend to have higher wages than the minimum wage. So, you will see more warnings on these types of operations. More so in Washington and Oregon. We would like a more specific notes/comments than just “Verified wage/hours,” if at all possible to avoid callbacks. I understand that respondents may not be as detailed, but please try.