

# Agricultural Labor Survey Info Sheet

## Overview:

Project Code: 956 – Agricultural Labor

Questionnaires: Mailed out around the 25<sup>th</sup> of September

Release of information: *Farm Labor Report* comes out around November 26<sup>th</sup> on the NASS website at [www.nass.usda.gov/](http://www.nass.usda.gov/)

The Agricultural Labor Survey is conducted semi-annually in all States (except Alaska) in April and October. Labor data is collected for two periods each time it is enumerated. In April, NASS collects data for the months of January and April; in October data is collected for July and October.

## Purpose:

Estimates of farm labor are used for a variety of purposes by State and Federal governments, educational institutions, farmer organizations, and private sector employers of agricultural labor.

- Legislators and USDA use farm worker data in making farm policy decisions.
- Labor data are used in the formulation of farm productivity indexes. The inclusion of wage rate data in the Parity Index (Index of Prices Paid by Farmers) is required by law.
- Farm worker data are an important component of the agricultural sector of the Gross Domestic Product.
- Agencies responsible for administering farm labor recruitment and placement programs use the statistics in their planning and evaluation. The U.S. Department of Labor currently uses NASS's Regional annual average combined field and livestock wage rates, as the Adverse Effect Wage Rates per State for the following year (see further explanation, below).
- Individual producers may use wage rate data as a guide when hiring workers and when estimating expenses for their operation.
- Producers may use wage data in hiring and estimating expenses for their operation.

## Questions asked:

- This survey aims to identify the number and type of employees on the operation, along with how many hours they worked and the wages they received.
- The same worker data questions are asked for each reference period (October and July).
- Additional questions are asked to determine the value of sales and type of operation.

## Things to remember:

**Break the workers down by the codes listed in the questionnaire.**

\*\*\*Please remember that the **assigned code** is based upon what the worker was hired to do and not necessarily what the worker was doing during the reference week.\*\*\*

**Do not combine workers!** For the survey to be accurate and usable, we need the workers split out. There are 16 categories to split out workers. Please make sure the operator understands we need to have them broken out. **Most workers will fall under the general categories such as 12 and 21, but we cannot combine supervisors with field workers, office workers with greenhouse workers, etc.**

**Special Note:** If an operation cannot split out the workers and they lump all the workers into one or two categories, please leave a note to let the statisticians in the office know what happened.

Please note that worker codes 11 and 20 pertain to heavy farm equipment drivers, etc. These are field and livestock workers who drive the tractors, grain harvesters, etc. There is a tendency for enumerators and respondents to report ordinary workers in this category. **This is one of the most common mistakes**

**“Total Hours Worked”** is for all workers in that category. Do not report an average of hours worked. We need total hours for all workers in each category.

**“Total Gross Wages That Week”** is for all the workers in the category. Do not report an average. We need total wages for all workers in each category.

**Only report wages for arrangements where the operator pays wages directly to the worker.** Do not pick up information for Contract, Ag service or custom workers where the wages are paid indirectly and NOT directly to the worker.

If a respondent refuses hours, wages or other information, **please do not estimate any data** for the respondent. Write notes on the questionnaire concerning the operation or the item refused.

**Terms and Definitions:** Check Chapter 2 of the Agricultural Labor Interviewer's Manual