



Agricultural Labor Employment and Wages

July 2013

Executive summary

Estimates from the monthly agricultural survey indicate statewide total agricultural employment increased 12.8 percent from July 2012 to July 2013. Monthly, over the period of June 2013 through July 2013, estimates show statewide total agricultural employment increased 32.6 percent. July 2013 estimates are based on 630 usable surveys that were returned.

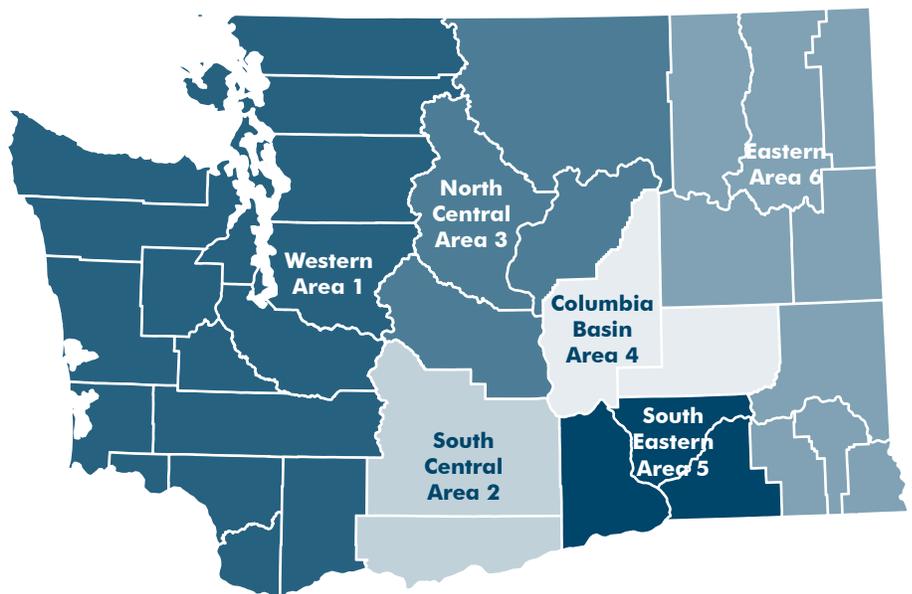
Total agricultural employment increased year-over-year in all six of the agricultural areas.

- North Central (Area 3) experienced the largest total agricultural employment increase (6,310 jobs).
- Eastern (Area 6) experienced the smallest increase in total agricultural employment (410 jobs).

Agricultural reporting areas and their respective counties

- Area 1 – Western
Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Island, Jefferson, King, Kitsap, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, Pierce, San Juan, Skagit, Skamania, Snohomish, Thurston, Wahkiakum and Whatcom
- Area 2 – South Central
Klickitat and Yakima
- Area 3 – North Central
Chelan, Douglas, Kittitas and Okanogan
- Area 4 – Columbia Basin
Adams and Grant
- Area 5 – South Eastern
Benton, Franklin and Walla Walla
- Area 6 – Eastern
Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Garfield, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens and Whitman

Agricultural reporting areas in Washington State



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For additional information, call the
Labor Market Information Center:
800-215-1617

or visit our website,
www.esd.wa.gov/employmentdata

**Washington State
Employment Security Department**

Labor Market and Economic Analysis

August 2013



Statewide total agricultural employment increased 12.8 percent from July 2012 through July 2013.



Total agricultural employment

Estimates from the monthly agricultural survey indicate statewide total agricultural employment increased 12.8 percent from July 2012 to July 2013. Estimates show total agricultural employment increased 32.6 percent over the period of June 2013 through July 2013.

Regional employment change over the year: (July 2012 to July 2013)

- Western (Area 1) total employment increased 15.4 percent.
- South Central (Area 2) total employment increased 5.1 percent.
- North Central (Area 3) total employment increased 16.9 percent.
- Columbia Basin (Area 4) total employment increased 21.3 percent.
- South Eastern (Area 5) total employment increased 13 percent.
- Eastern (Area 6) total employment increased 24.4 percent.

Seasonal agricultural employment

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment decreased by 5.6 percent over the period of July 2012 through July 2013.

Agricultural activities with statewide seasonal employment increases year-over-year:

- Other tree fruit work (1,990)
- Raspberry work (1,420)
- Hop work (450)
- Wheat/grain work (180)
- Nursery work (170)
- Potato work (170)
- Cucumber work (110)
- Asparagus work (10)

Agricultural activities with statewide seasonal employment decreases year-over-year:

- Cherry work (-13,050)
- Strawberry work (-1,990)
- Miscellaneous vegetables work (-1,920)
- Apple work (-1,100)
- Other seasonal work (-1,070)
- Grape work (-590)
- Pear work (-410)
- Onion work (-400)

Regional seasonal employment change year-over-year:

- Western (Area 1) seasonal employment increased 14.7 percent primarily due to increased blueberry work (1,980).
- South Central (Area 2) seasonal employment decreased 20.4 percent primarily due to decreased cherry work (-4,160).
- North Central (Area 3) seasonal employment increased 5.7 percent primarily due to increased apple work (2,560).
- Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal employment decreased 1.2 percent primarily due to decreased cherry work (-1,060).
- South Eastern (Area 5) seasonal employment decreased 9.4 percent primarily due to decreased cherry work (-4,210).
- Eastern (Area 6) seasonal employment decreased 72 percent primarily due to decreased other seasonal work (-470).

Statewide and regional wage trends

Inflation-adjusted wages

Statewide, average inflation-adjusted agricultural seasonal employee wage rates increased 4.9 percent over the two-year period of July 2011 through July 2013. The inflation-adjusted state minimum wage increased 3.5 percent during the same two-year period.

Statewide, average inflation-adjusted agricultural seasonal employee wage rates increased 3.3 percent over the one-year period of July 2012 through July 2013. The inflation-adjusted state minimum wage increased 1.5 percent during the same period.

Regional average seasonal wage rate changes year-over-year in inflation-adjusted dollars:

- Western (Area 1) seasonal wage rates increased 1.6 percent.
- South Central (Area 2) seasonal wage rates increased 1.2 percent.

- North Central (Area 3) seasonal wage rates increased 6 percent.
- Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal wage rates increased 6.6 percent.
- South Eastern (Area 5) seasonal wage rates increased 5.7 percent.

Current-dollar wages

Statewide, average agricultural seasonal employee wage rates in current dollars increased 7.4 percent over the two-year period of July 2011 through July 2013. The Washington state current-dollar minimum wage increased 6 percent during this same two-year period.

Statewide, average current-dollar agricultural seasonal employee wage rates increased 5 percent over the one-year period of July 2012 through July 2013. The Washington state current-dollar minimum wage increased 1.7 percent during this same one-year period.

Regional wage rate changes year-over-year in current dollars:

- Western (Area 1) seasonal wage rates increased 3.2 percent.
- South Central (Area 2) seasonal wage rates increased 2.8 percent.
- North Central (Area 3) seasonal wage rates increased 7.7 percent.
- Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal wage rates increased 8.3 percent.
- South Eastern (Area 5) seasonal wage rates increased 7.4 percent.

Statewide and regional employment trends

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment increased 4.3 percent over the two-year period of July 2011 through July 2013.

Labor supply

The weighted percent of labor shortage reported was 6.0 percent. This number is based on agricultural operators' responses to the questions: whether they

failed to complete some work due to lack of available seasonal labor; and how many more employees they could have used.

Methodology

Data in this report are from the monthly *Seasonal Farm Labor Survey*. This is a survey of 2,000 agricultural operators in the state. Each year's sample is composed of two parts. The first part is a non-random selection including all agricultural operators having an annual average employment of 50 or more employees. The second part is a random selection of agricultural operators having an annual average employment of fewer than 50 employees.

Agricultural operators report monthly the number of total and seasonal workers by crop, activity and wage. Both hourly and piece rates are used. Seasonal workers for the purpose of the survey are those working less than 150 days per year. The number of workers employed by each operator in the sample is being collected. This means that workers may be counted more than once if they are working

for multiple operators in the survey sample during the pay period including the 12th of the month. The state is grouped into six areas based on agricultural economic similarity.

The tables and charts presented in this report compare the seasonal agricultural employment for the state and the six areas for the current month, previous month and previous year. Percentage increases as well as raw numbers are given. The weighted monthly wage for seasonal employment is given for the state and the six areas. Each crop activity having significant employment is noted as a percentage change from previous month and previous year. Crops having the greatest increase and greatest decrease in employment are highlighted in the narrative. The Seasonal Labor Abstract contains the top four crop activities by employment and

wage for each of the six areas. Piece rates are given in addition to hourly wages when available and disclosable.

Some variation in reporting of seasonal data can be attributed to the requirement that employment be reported in the pay period including the 12th of the month. Due to the fact that the timing of a given crop's harvest and other activities can be affected by weather and other conditions, periods of peak employment do not always fit precisely within the reporting period. This reporting condition can lead to some variation of estimated employment by crop when comparing activity in similar time periods.

This report is intended for economists, growers' associations, educators, state agencies, labor unions, outreach workers and the public.

Washington agriculture links

Washington crop harvest and weather information:
www.nass.usda.gov/wa

What's new in agricultural employment:
www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome

Washington Agricultural Labor Report

Seasonal labor abstract

July 2013

Each month, the Employment Security Department conducts a mid-month survey of farm labor employment and wages. At least 15 percent of all agricultural operators are surveyed for employment data about seasonal workers, type of crop, work activity and wages. Based on these data, estimates are developed on the size of the workforce and average wages for each activity. These data are reported for each agricultural area identified as having similar farm labor characteristics and a significant supply/demand for seasonal hired workforce.

Western (Area 1) (Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Island, Jefferson, King, Kitsap, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, Pierce, San Juan, Skagit, Skamania, Snohomish, Thurston, Wahkiakum and Whatcom counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 9,590

Raspberry harvester	3,150	\$9.23/hr
Raspberry sorter/grader/packer	2,200	\$9.74/hr
Blueberry harvester	1,570	\$11.81/hr
Blueberry worker	540	\$9.19/hr

South Central (Area 2) (Klickitat and Yakima counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 23,320

Cherry harvester	7,880	\$9.22/hr or \$4.00 - \$9.00 per lug
Apple hand thinner	4,240	\$9.85/hr or \$0.20 - \$1.50 per tree
Cherry sorter/grader/packer	3,390	\$9.29/hr
Hops worker	1,100	\$9.80/hr

North Central (Area 3) (Chelan, Douglas, Kittitas and Okanogan counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 30,780

Cherry harvester	17,780	\$11.40/hr or \$3.50 - \$6.00 per lug
Apple hand thinner	4,460	\$10.90/hr or \$0.50 - \$4.99 per tree
Cherry sorter/grader/packer	3,590	\$9.21/hr
Contract postharvest worker	1,260	\$11.00/hr

Columbia Basin (Area 4) (Adams and Grant counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 11,620

Cherry harvester	4,610	\$9.19/hr or \$3.50 - \$7.00 per lug
Apple hand thinner	2,570	\$9.53/hr or \$1.15 - \$10.00 per tree
Apple worker	840	\$12.00/hr
Potato sorter/grader/packer	700	\$9.19/hr

South Eastern (Area 5) (Benton, Franklin and Walla Walla counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 14,150

Apple hand thinner	3,880	\$9.68/hr or \$0.90 - \$1.75 per tree
Blueberry harvester	2,980	*
Cherry harvester	1,150	\$10.00/hr
Apple worker	940	\$11.01/hr

Eastern (Area 6) (Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Garfield, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens and Whitman counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 230

Miscellaneous hay harvester	70	\$10.00/hr
Wheat worker	40	\$10.25/hr
Miscellaneous grain/grain seed worker	40	\$15.00/hr
Wheat harvester	20	\$16.00/hr

*Wages not reported.

July 2013

Agricultural farm labor employment*

Agricultural reporting area	Seasonal total employment	Percent of seasonal total employment	Permanent total employment	Percent of permanent total employment	Total employment	Percent of total employment
Western	9,590	10.7%	8,190	11.8%	17,780	11.2%
South Central	23,320	26.0%	25,030	35.9%	48,350	30.3%
North Central	30,780	34.3%	12,820	18.4%	43,600	27.4%
Columbia Basin	11,620	13.0%	8,420	12.1%	20,040	12.6%
South Eastern	14,150	15.8%	13,380	19.2%	27,530	17.3%
Eastern	230	0.3%	1,860	2.7%	2,090	1.3%
Statewide	89,690	100.0%	69,700	100.0%	159,390	100.0%

Total agricultural employment*

Agricultural reporting area	July 2013 preliminary	June 2013 revised	July 2012 revised	Change		Percent change	
				June 2013 through July 2013	July 2012 through July 2013	June 2013 through July 2013	July 2012 through July 2013
Statewide	159,390	120,200	141,260	39,190	18,130	32.6%	12.8%
Western	17,780	12,100	15,410	5,680	2,370	46.9%	15.4%
South Central	48,350	40,490	45,990	7,860	2,360	19.4%	5.1%
North Central	43,600	22,590	37,290	21,010	6,310	93.0%	16.9%
Columbia Basin	20,040	17,520	16,520	2,520	3,520	14.4%	21.3%
South Eastern	27,530	25,740	24,370	1,790	3,160	7.0%	13.0%
Eastern	2,090	1,760	1,680	330	410	18.8%	24.4%

Seasonal agricultural employment*

Agricultural reporting area	July 2013 preliminary	June 2013 revised	July 2012 revised	Change		Percent change	
				June 2013 through July 2013	July 2012 through July 2013	June 2013 through July 2013	July 2012 through July 2013
Statewide	89,690	63,950	94,980	25,740	-5,290	40.3%	-5.6%
Western	9,590	4,750	8,360	4,840	1,230	101.9%	14.7%
South Central	23,320	21,350	29,310	1,970	-5,990	9.2%	-20.4%
North Central	30,780	11,740	29,110	19,040	1,670	162.2%	5.7%
Columbia Basin	11,620	10,910	11,760	710	-140	6.5%	-1.2%
South Eastern	14,150	14,840	15,620	-690	-1,470	-4.6%	-9.4%
Eastern	230	360	820	-130	-590	-36.1%	-72.0%

* All total and seasonal employment numbers published in the report are not adjusted for multiple jobholders. The number of jobs is being counted, not the number of workers.

For more data and a sample of the Agricultural Labor Report survey, go to the [July 2013 Agricultural Labor Employment and Wages Tables](#).

[2013 Year-to-Date Employment Tables](#)
are available at www.esd.wa.gov/employmentdata

Factors affecting the farm labor supply and demand situation.

Crop, market and weather conditions by area.

Washington state, July 2013



Western (Area 1)

Weather conditions were warmer and drier than normal during the reporting period. Warmer weather has resulted in an early blueberry harvest this year. Blueberries are a significant crop in Whatcom county. The Washington Blueberry Commission estimates that Whatcom county produced about 17 million pounds in 2010. Statewide, an estimated 68 million pounds of blueberries were harvested in 2012. Raspberries are Whatcom county's largest berry crop, with an annual harvest of 55 million pounds.



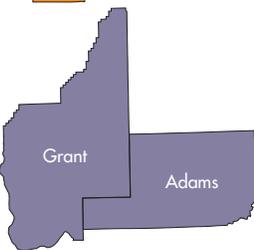
South Central (Area 2)

Weather conditions were warmer and drier than normal during the reporting period. The latest forecast for this year's cherry crop is for a 22 percent drop from last year, due to the bad weather in May and June. The current projection is for 14.2 million boxes for the 2013 crop, down from the 18.3 million boxes predicted on May 15. A total of 23 million boxes were shipped in 2012. Last July, 13 million boxes of cherries were shipped. This July's prediction is for 7.8 million boxes. This year's hay crop has been decimated by the worst rains in many years in hay crop-producing areas. Hay growers and brokers-exporters are estimating that between 75 and 90 percent of the first cutting has been extensively damaged. The first cutting can be 75 to 80 percent of a grower's income for the year, with the second cutting making up the rest. Overall global demand for U.S. hay is high, but it's too early to speculate on prices. Final grading and pricing of this year's first cutting hasn't been determined with overseas buyers.



North Central (Area 3)

Weather conditions were warmer and drier than normal during the reporting period. The national apple crop will be significantly larger this fall. The crop looks to be 250.7 million bushels, or 40-pound boxes, up from 214 million in 2012. The five-year average is about 225 million. New York and Michigan appear headed for larger than normal crops after decimating losses last year. Total fresh and processed crop for Michigan is expected to be around 26.3 million boxes, up from 2.8 million last year and well above than the 23 million average. New York forecast is for 34 million boxes, up from 16.9 million in 2012 and above a 25 million-box average. Washington's forecast is for 148 million boxes, down from 159 million in 2012. That equates to a 118 million-box fresh crop, down from 129.4 million last year.



Columbia Basin (Area 4)

Weather conditions were warmer and drier than normal during the reporting period. Potato growers in the Northwest and throughout the U.S. have significantly reduced their acreage this season following a 2012 crop marked by overproduction and low prices. Growers in Washington cut their crop from 165,000 acres in 2012 to 160,000 this season.



South Eastern (Area 5)

Weather conditions were warmer and drier than normal during the reporting period. China normally meets 95 percent of its demand for wheat through domestic production. However this season, due to frost and rain damage, China forecasts it will have to import as much as 10 percent of its wheat. China has already increased its imports this year. Last year China imported 800,000 metric tons of U.S. wheat. This year, the country has already purchased 2.8 million metric tons. In its July report, the USDA increased its estimates of Chinese global wheat imports from 3.5 million metric tons to 8.5 million metric tons.



Eastern (Area 6)

Seasonal employment did not meet the minimum criterion of seasonal employees and therefore is not published for the month of July.

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