



Agricultural Employment and Wage Report

October 2013

Executive summary

Estimates from the monthly agricultural survey indicate statewide total agricultural employment increased 14.1 percent comparing October 2012 to October 2013. Monthly, comparing September 2013 to October 2013, estimates show statewide total agricultural employment decreased 4.9 percent. October 2013 estimates are based on 655 usable surveys that were returned.

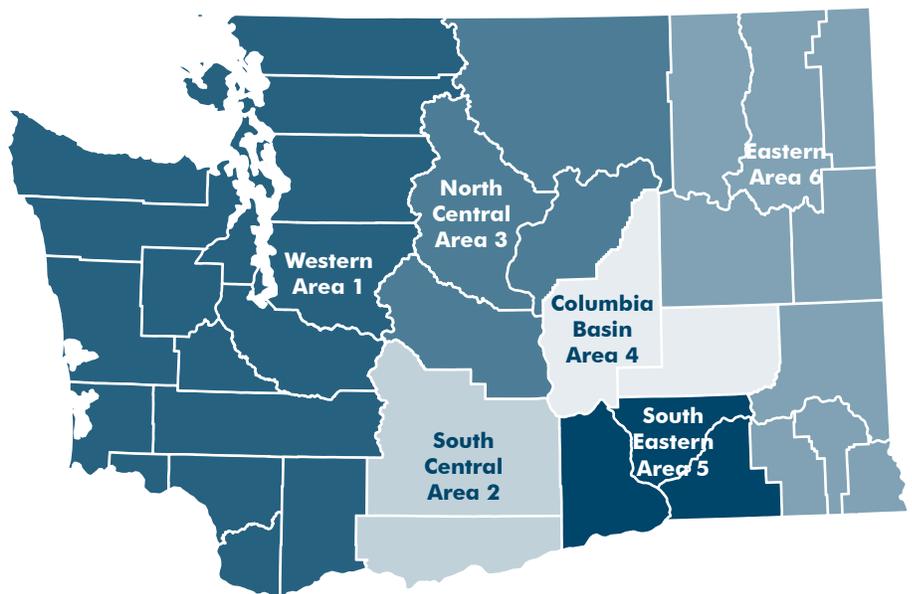
Total agricultural employment increased year-over-year in all six of the agricultural areas.

- South Central (Area 2) experienced the largest total agricultural employment increase (7,080 jobs).
- Eastern (Area 6) experienced the smallest increase in total agricultural employment (70 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



Prepared by
John Wines, *economic analyst*

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

November 2013





Statewide total agricultural employment increased 14.1 percent from October 2012 to October 2013.



Total agricultural employment

Estimates from the monthly agricultural survey indicate statewide total agricultural employment increased 14.1 percent comparing October 2012 to October 2013. Estimates show total agricultural employment decreased 4.9 percent between September 2013 and October 2013.

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

- Western (Area 1) total employment increased 8.9 percent.
- South Central (Area 2) total employment increased 19.7 percent.
- North Central (Area 3) total employment increased 18.6 percent.
- Columbia Basin (Area 4) total employment increased 9.3 percent.
- South Eastern (Area 5) total employment increased 6.0 percent.
- Eastern (Area 6) total employment increased 3.9 percent.

Seasonal agricultural employment

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment decreased by 6.4 percent over the year (October 2012 compared to October 2013):

Agricultural activities with statewide seasonal employment increases over the year:

- Onion work (810)
- Other seasonal work (750)
- Hop work (720)
- Nursery work (310)
- Other tree fruit work (220)

Agricultural activities with statewide seasonal employment decreases over the year:

- Apple work (-4,670)
- Miscellaneous vegetables work (-800)
- Pear work (-630)
- Blueberry work (-510)
- Grape work (-350)
- Wheat/grain work (-180)
- Raspberry work (-110)
- Potato work (-80)

Regional seasonal employment change over the year:

- Western (Area 1) seasonal employment decreased 27.9 percent primarily due to decreased blueberry work (-510).
- South Central (Area 2) seasonal employment increased 17.7 percent primarily due to increased apple work (2,910).
- North Central (Area 3) seasonal employment decreased 14.8 percent primarily due to decreased apple work (-3,520).
- Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal employment decreased 14.9 percent primarily due to decreased apple work (-2,460).
- South Eastern (Area 5) seasonal employment decreased 13.9 percent primarily due to decreased apple work (-1,610).
- Eastern (Area 6) seasonal employment decreased 37.3 percent primarily due to decreased other seasonal work (-280).



Statewide and regional wage trends

Inflation-adjusted wages

Statewide, average inflation-adjusted agricultural seasonal employee wage rates increased 6.3 percent when comparing October 2011 to October 2013. The inflation-adjusted state minimum wage increased 3.5 percent during the same period.

Statewide, average inflation-adjusted agricultural seasonal employee wage rates increased 3.4 when comparing October 2012 to October 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 6.1 percent.
- South Central (Area 2) seasonal wage rates increased 8.3 percent.

- North Central (Area 3) seasonal wage rates decreased 2.4 percent.
- Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal wage rates increased 5.2 percent.
- South Eastern (Area 5) seasonal wage rates decreased 0.4 percent

Current-dollar wages

Statewide, average agricultural seasonal employee wage rates in current dollars increased 8.8 percent when comparing October 2011 to October 2013. The Washington state current-dollar minimum wage increased 6 percent during this same period.

Statewide, average current-dollar agricultural seasonal employee wage rates increased 5.1 when comparing October 2012 to October 2013. The Washington state current-dollar minimum wage increased 1.7 percent during this same period.

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

- Western (Area 1) seasonal wage rates increased 7.8 percent.
- South Central (Area 2) seasonal wage rates increased 10 percent.
- North Central (Area 3) seasonal wage rates decreased 0.8 percent.
- Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal wage rates increased 6.8 percent.
- South Eastern (Area 5) seasonal wage rates increased 1.2 percent.

Statewide and regional employment trends

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment increased 2.1 percent comparing October 2011 to October 2013.

Labor supply

The weighted percent of labor shortage reported was 3.6 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 Employment and Wage Report

Seasonal labor abstract

October 2013

Each month, the Employment Security Department conducts a mid-month survey of farm labor employment and wages. 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: 3,730

Blueberry harvester	580	\$10.00/hr
Blackberry harvester	520	*
Blackberry worker	250	\$10.00/hr
Potato Harvester	230	\$10.00/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 24,550

Apple harvester	18,280	\$11.83/hr or \$16.00 to \$25.00 per bin
Apple archer	670	*
Hops planter	490	\$9.19/hr
Hops preparation	460	\$9.21/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 16,240

Apple harvester	7,210	\$10.76/hr or \$17.00 to \$30.00 per bin
Apple hand thinner	3,660	*
Apple worker	2,480	\$11.70/hr
Contract postharvest sorter/grader/packer	480	\$9.19/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 11,580

Apple harvester	6,420	\$10.89/hr or \$18.00 to \$35.00 per bin
Apple worker	920	\$12.00/hr
Miscellaneous onion sorter/grader/packer	710	\$9.19/hr
Field corn sorter/grader/packer	690	\$9.19/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 11,420

Apple harvester	6,980	\$10.75/hr or \$10.00 to \$35.00 per bin
Apple worker	1,280	\$11.04/hr
Grapes harvester	350	\$10.42/hr
Miscellaneous onion sorter/grader/packer	350	\$9.37/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 370

Wheat worker	60	\$11.15/hr
Nursery and tree worker	50	\$12.33/hr
Nursery and tree irrigator	40	\$10.88/hr
Wheat vehicle operator	30	\$13.67/hr

*Wages not reported.

October 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
Statewide	67,890	100.0%	53,860	100.0%	121,750	100.0%
Western	3,730	5.5%	8,690	16.1%	12,420	10.2%
South Central	24,550	36.2%	18,410	34.2%	42,960	35.3%
North Central	16,240	23.9%	11,480	21.3%	27,720	22.8%
Columbia Basin	11,580	17.1%	5,510	10.2%	17,090	14.0%
South Eastern	11,420	16.8%	8,290	15.4%	19,710	16.2%
Eastern	370	0.5%	1,480	2.7%	1,850	1.5%

Total agricultural employment*

Agricultural reporting area	October 2013 preliminary	September 2013 revised	October 2012 revised	Change		Percent change	
				September 2013 compared to October 2013	October 2012 compared to October 2013	September 2013 compared to October 2013	October 2012 compared to October 2013
Statewide	121,750	128,070	106,670	-6,320	15,080	-4.9%	14.1%
Western	12,420	12,790	11,400	-370	1,020	-2.9%	8.9%
South Central	42,960	45,950	35,880	-2,990	7,080	-6.5%	19.7%
North Central	27,720	27,890	23,380	-170	4,340	-0.6%	18.6%
Columbia Basin	17,090	18,620	15,630	-1,530	1,460	-8.2%	9.3%
South Eastern	19,710	20,780	18,600	-1,070	1,110	-5.1%	6.0%
Eastern	1,850	2,040	1,780	-190	70	-9.3%	3.9%

Seasonal agricultural employment*

Agricultural reporting area	October 2013 preliminary	September 2013 revised	October 2012 revised	Change		Percent change	
				September 2013 compared to October 2013	October 2012 compared to October 2013	September 2013 compared to October 2013	October 2012 compared to October 2013
Statewide	67,890	69,770	72,550	-1,880	-4,660	-2.7%	-6.4%
Western	3,730	4,850	5,170	-1,120	-1,440	-23.1%	-27.9%
South Central	24,550	24,870	20,850	-320	3,700	-1.3%	17.7%
North Central	16,240	15,950	19,070	290	-2,830	1.8%	-14.8%
Columbia Basin	11,580	12,940	13,600	-1,360	-2,020	-10.5%	-14.9%
South Eastern	11,420	10,630	13,270	790	-1,850	7.4%	-13.9%
Eastern	370	530	590	-160	-220	-30.2%	-37.3%

* 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 [October 2013 Agricultural Employment and Wage Report 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, October 2013



Western (Area 1)

Weather conditions were warmer and drier than normal during the reporting period. U-Pick pumpkin farms reported excellent sales. Christmas tree growers were busy tagging trees for wholesale sales. Fall spinach crop was up and up and was growing well and apple harvest was underway. Primary agricultural activities were blueberry harvesting, blackberry harvesting, general blackberry work and potato harvesting.



South Central (Area 2)

Weather conditions were warmer and drier than normal during the reporting period. Most of the vegetable crops and hops were being harvested. Apple harvest continued with Jonagold and Honeycrisp coming in from the upper valley and Fuji, Red Delicious, Braeburn and Granny Smith coming in from the lower valley. Primary agricultural activities were apple harvesting, apple arching, hops planting and hops preparation.



North Central (Area 3)

Weather conditions were warmer and drier than normal during the reporting period. Apple harvest continued in later varieties. Fuji and Granny Smith varieties were over 50 percent harvested. Pink Lady will be harvested in late October and early November. Primary agricultural activities were apple harvesting, apple hand thinning, general apple work and contract postharvest warehouse work.



Columbia Basin (Area 4)

Weather conditions were warmer and drier than normal during the reporting period. Potatoes, onions, dry beans, dry corn, silage corn and late planted sweet corn harvest were underway. Apple harvest continued as well, with strong yields being reported. Primary agricultural activities were apple harvesting, general apple work, miscellaneous onion warehouse work and field corn warehouse work.



South Eastern (Area 5)

Weather conditions were warmer and drier than normal during the reporting period. Concord grape harvest began and wine grape, apple, sweet and field corn and potato harvest continued. Early planted winter wheat was emerging. Primary agricultural activities were apple harvesting, general apple work, grapes harvesting and miscellaneous onion warehouse work.



Eastern (Area 6)

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

The Employment Security Department is an equal-opportunity employer and provider of programs and services. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to people with disabilities. Washington Relay Service: 711