



Agricultural Labor Employment and Wages

June 2010

**Washington State
Employment Security Department**
Labor Market and Economic Analysis



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Executive Summary

The statewide total agricultural employment increased by 8.8 percent from June 2009 to May 2010, primarily due to increased apple thinning.

- There were over-the-year increases in total employment in all six agricultural areas.



- South Central (Area 2) total employment increased by 3,760 workers and was the largest area increase.

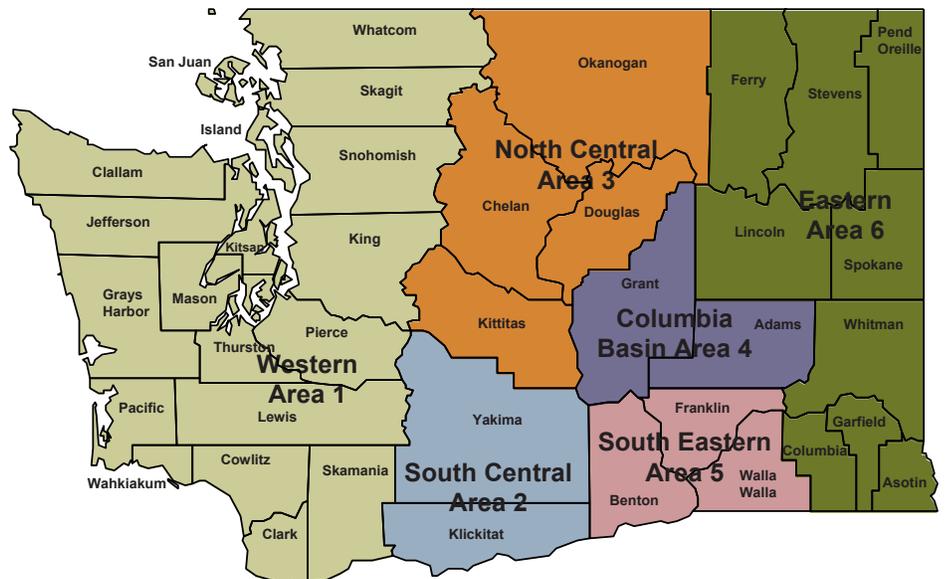
- Eastern (Area 6) total employment had the smallest increase of 100 workers.



Agricultural Reporting Areas in Washington State

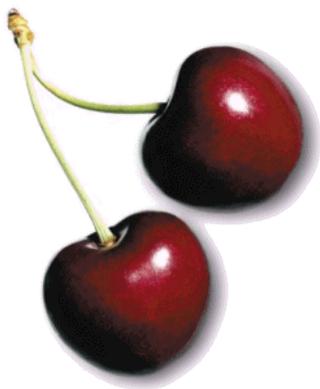
Counties Within Agricultural Reporting Areas

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





Statewide total agricultural employment increased by 8.8 percent from June 2009 to June 2010.



Total Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide total agricultural employment increased by 8.8 percent from June 2009 to June 2010. Over-the-month total employment increased 50.2 percent. Over the year regionally, Western (Area 1) total employment increased by 6.9 percent. South Central (Area 2) total employment increased by 13.3 percent.

North Central (Area 3) total employment increased by 6.0 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) total employment increased by 4.5 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) total employment increased by 8.6 percent. Eastern (Area 6) total employment increased by 7.2 percent.

Seasonal Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment decreased by 0.8 percent from June 2009 to June 2010. Over-the-year decreases in agricultural activities were:

- asparagus work (-3,050),
- grapes work (-1,590),
- other tree fruit work (-1,130),
- other seasonal work (-760),
- hops work (-580), and
- strawberry work (-330).

Activities with increases were:

- apple work (3,130),
- cherry work (1,720),
- pear work (700),
- nursery work (530),
- wheat/grain work (310),
- raspberry work (250),
- miscellaneous vegetables work (200),
- onion work (120),
- blueberry work (50), and
- potato work (40).

Across the state, Western (Area 1) seasonal employment increased by 8.7 percent, due to increased nursery work (540). South Central (Area 2) seasonal employment decreased by 0.7 percent, due to decreased asparagus work (-450). North Central (Area 3) seasonal employment increased by 7.1 percent, due to increased pear work (1,000). Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal employment decreased by 19.0 percent, due to decreased cherry work (-630). South Eastern (Area 5) seasonal employment decreased by 4.0 percent, due to decreased asparagus work (-2,390). Eastern (Area 6) seasonal employment increased by 22.9 percent due to increased wheat/grain work (50).

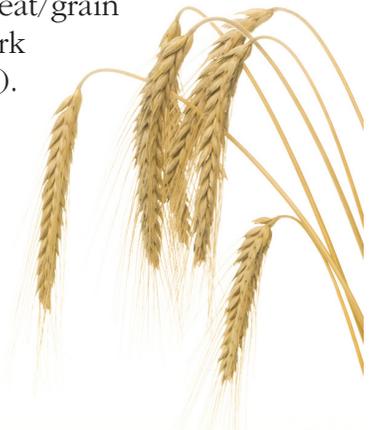


Photo by ©Milos Tasic/Dreamstime.com

Statewide and Regional Wage Trends

Statewide real (inflation-adjusted) agricultural seasonal employee wages increased by 1.5 percent from June 2008 to June 2010. Washington state real minimum wages increased 1.7 percent during this same time period. Statewide real agricultural seasonal employee wages increased 1.6 percent from June 2009 to June 2010. The real state minimum wage increased by 0.7 percent during this same time period. Western (Area 1) real seasonal wages were unchanged from June 2009 to June 2010. South Central (Area 2)

seasonal wages increased by 0.2 percent. North Central (Area 3) seasonal wages decreased by 2.8 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal wages increased by 3.8 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) seasonal wages increased by 5.2 percent.

Statewide nominal agricultural seasonal employee wages increased by 5.8 percent from June 2008 to June 2010. Washington state nominal minimum wages increased by 5.9 percent during this same time period. Statewide nominal agricultural seasonal

employee wages increased by 2.3 percent from June 2009 to June 2010. The state minimum wage did not increase during this time period. Western (Area 1) seasonal wages increased by 0.7 percent from June 2009 to June 2010. South Central (Area 2) seasonal wages increased by 0.9 percent. North Central (Area 3) seasonal wages decreased by 2.1 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal wages increased by 4.5 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) seasonal wages increased by 5.9 percent.

Statewide and Regional Employment Trends

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment increased by 23.3 percent from June 2008 to June 2010. Statewide seasonal agricultural employment decreased by 0.8 percent from June 2009 to June 2010. Western (Area 1) seasonal employment increased by 8.7 percent during the same time period. South Central (Area 2) seasonal em-

ployment decreased by 0.7 percent. North Central (Area 3) seasonal employment increased by 7.1 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal employment decreased by 14.1 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) seasonal employment decreased by 4.0 percent. Eastern (Area 6) seasonal employment increased by 22.9 percent.

Labor Supply

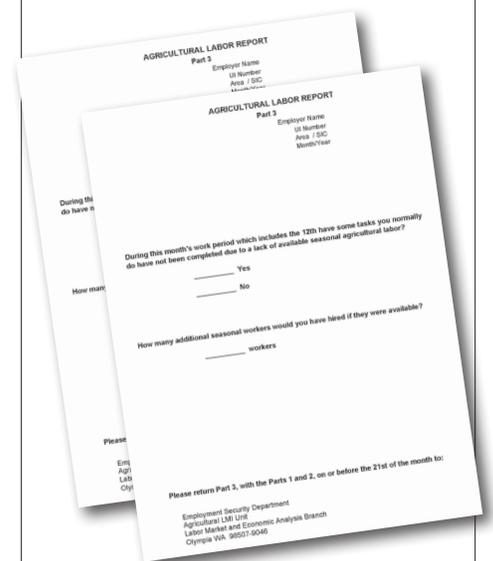
The first question on the labor supply survey asks growers if they failed to complete some work due to lack of available seasonal labor. The second question asks growers how

many more employees they could have used. For June, 1,476 usable surveys were returned. The weighted percent of labor shortage employment reported was 0.0 percent.

[Link to Survey Methodology](#)



*In June, 1,476
usable labor
supply surveys
were returned.*



Agricultural Labor Report

Washington State Employment Security, Labor Market and Economic Analysis

Seasonal Labor Abstract

June 2010

A mid-month survey of farm labor employment and wages is conducted by the Washington State Employment Security Department. At least five percent of all growers 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 crop 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 (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: 4,990

Strawberry Harvester	900	\$ 8.55/hr
Nursery Worker	800	\$ 9.58/hr
Raspberry Worker	500	\$ 9.16/hr
Nursery & Tree Worker	210	\$ 9.32/hr

South Central (Klickitat and Yakima counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 18,490

Apple Hand Thinner	8,310	\$ 8.70/hr	or \$ 1.00 - \$ 3.00 per tree
Cherry Harvester	2,600	\$ 9.21/hr	or \$ 4.00 - \$ 6.00 per box
Cherry Sorter/Grader/Packer	1,380	\$ 8.92/hr	
Apple Worker	860	\$ 8.88/hr	

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 12,440

Apple Hand Thinner	4,910	\$ 9.08/hr	or \$ 1.00 - \$ 3.00 per tree
Cherry Harvester	2,730	\$ 8.55/hr	or \$ 5.00 - \$ 8.00 per lug
Pear Hand Thinner	1,490	\$ 8.97/hr	or \$ 1.00 - \$ 9.00 per tree
Apple Worker	1,260	\$ 8.86/hr	

Columbia Basin (Adams and Grant counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 6,840

Apple Hand Thinner	3,660	\$ 8.99/hr	or \$ 1.00 - \$ 2.00 per tree
Cherry Harvester	920	\$ 9.21/hr	
Asparagus Harvester	340	Not Reported	
Apple Pruner	300	\$ 9.27/hr	or \$ 3.00 - \$ 10.00 per tree

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 12,880

Apple Hand Thinner	5,730	\$ 8.65/hr	or \$ 1.00 - \$ 3.00 per tree
Cherry Harvester	3,590	\$ 10.57/hr	or \$ 4.00 - \$ 7.00 per box
Apple Trainer	1,030	\$ 11.28/hr	
Asparagus Harvester	310	\$ 8.55/hr	

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 590

Nursery & Tree Harvester	100	\$ 9.04/hr
Wheat Worker	100	\$ 11.01/hr
Wheat Weeder	40	\$ 10.34/hr
Apple Hand Thinner	40	\$ 8.91/hr

** Not published due to lack of statistical significance and/or to ensure employers' confidentiality.

**June 2010
Agricultural Farm Labor Report, Washington State**

Agricultural Reporting Area	Seasonal Area	Seasonal Area	Permanent Area	Permanent Area	Total Area	Total Area
	Total	% of Total	Total	% of Total	Total	% of Total
1. Western	4,988	8.8%	6,055	14.5%	11,043	11.2%
2. South Central	18,785	33.2%	13,249	31.7%	32,034	32.6%
3. North Central	12,441	22.0%	8,949	21.4%	21,390	21.8%
4. Columbia Basin	6,836	12.1%	5,119	12.3%	11,955	12.2%
5. South Eastern	12,880	22.8%	7,506	18.0%	20,386	20.7%
6. Eastern	588	1.0%	892	2.1%	1,480	1.5%
State Totals	56,518	100.0%	41,770	100.0%	98,288	100.0%

Total Agricultural Employment

	June 10-Prel.	May 10-Rev.	June 09-Rev.	Change		Percent Change	
				May 10- June 10	June 09- June 10	May 10- June 10	June 09- June 10
State	98,290	65,430	90,370	32,860	7,920	50.2%	8.8%
Western	11,040	9,570	10,330	1,470	710	15.4%	6.9%
South Central	32,030	21,920	28,270	10,110	3,760	46.1%	13.3%
North Central	21,390	12,270	20,170	9,120	1,220	74.3%	6.0%
Columbia Basin	11,960	8,450	11,440	3,510	520	41.5%	4.5%
South Eastern	20,390	11,910	18,780	8,480	1,610	71.2%	8.6%
Eastern	1,480	1,310	1,380	170	100	13.0%	7.2%

Seasonal Agricultural Employment

	June 10-Prel.	May 10-Rev.	June 09-Rev.	Change		Percent Change	
				May 10- June 10	June 09- June 10	May 10- June 10	June 09- June 10
State	56,520	25,440	56,980	31,080	-460	122.2%	-0.8%
Western	4,990	3,260	4,590	1,730	400	53.1%	8.7%
South Central	18,790	7,910	18,920	10,870	-140	137.4%	-0.7%
North Central	12,440	3,910	11,610	8,530	830	218.2%	7.1%
Columbia Basin	6,840	4,140	7,960	2,700	-930	65.2%	-19.0%
South Eastern	12,880	5,710	13,420	7,170	-540	125.6%	-4.0%
Eastern	590	520	480	70	110	13.5%	22.9%

Due to increased sample size, over-the-month and over-the-year changes may not be comparable.

For more data and a sample of the Agricultural Labor Report survey, go to [June 2010 Agricultural Labor Employment and Wages Tables](#)

For historical, year-to-date employment, go to [2010 Year-to-Date Employment Tables](#)
at www.workforceexplorer.com

Agricultural Labor Report

Factors Affecting the Farm Labor Supply and Demand Situation

Crop, Market, and Weather Conditions by Area

Washington State, June 2010



Western (Area 1)

Weather conditions were colder and wetter than normal during the reporting period. The excessive rain has damaged the strawberry crop and prevented harvest in some areas. Primary agricultural activities were strawberry harvesting, nursery work, and raspberry work.



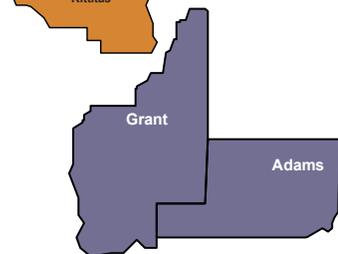
South Central (Area 2)

Weather conditions were colder and wetter than normal during the reporting period. Bing cherry harvest continued. Blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, as well as green beans and cabbage were being harvested. Wheat and barley began to ripen. Primary agricultural activities were apple hand thinning, cherry harvesting, and cherry warehouse work.



North Central (Area 3)

Weather conditions were colder and wetter than normal during the reporting period. Cherry harvest yields were below normal. Primary agricultural activities were apple hand thinning, cherry harvesting, and pear hand thinning.



Columbia Basin (Area 4)

Weather conditions were colder and wetter than normal during the reporting period. Some crop damage was reported due to a large hailstorm. The first cutting of alfalfa neared completion. Winter wheat and spring cereals continued to be in mostly good to excellent condition. Primary agricultural activities were apple hand thinning, cherry harvesting, asparagus harvesting, and apple pruning.



South Eastern (Area 5)

Weather conditions were colder and wetter than normal during the reporting period. The first cutting of alfalfa was completed. The dryland wheat crop looked excellent. Primary agricultural activities were apple hand thinning, cherry harvesting, apple training, and asparagus harvesting.



Eastern (Area 6)

Weather conditions were colder and wetter than normal during the reporting period. Aerial spraying of wheat continued on a daily basis. Some growers were able to start their first cutting of hay. Primary agricultural activities were nursery and tree harvesting, wheat work, wheat weeding, and apple hand thinning.