



Agricultural Labor Employment and Wages

October 2009

**Washington State
Employment Security Department**

Labor Market and Economic Analysis
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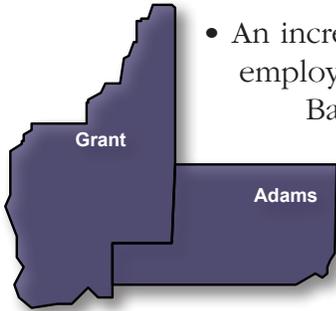
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For additional
labor market information:
Labor Market Information Center
(LMIC)
1-800-215-1617
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Executive Summary

The statewide seasonal agricultural employment expanded by 11.5 percent from October 2008 to October 2009. This year's large apple harvest was primarily responsible for this increase.

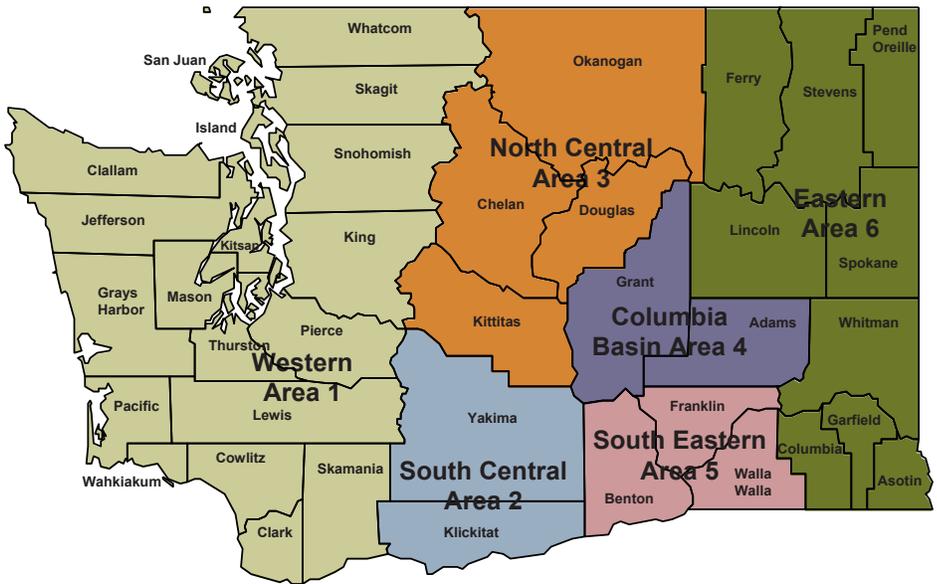
- There were over-the-year gains in seasonal employment in five of the six agricultural areas. Those areas were Western (Area 1), South Central (Area 2), North Central (Area 3), Columbia Basin (Area 4), and South Eastern (Area 5).



- An increase in seasonal agricultural employment of 1,900 in Columbia Basin led the advancing areas.
- The largest decline in seasonal agricultural employment was 150 in Eastern (Area 6).



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 expanded by 9.1 percent from October 2008 to October 2009.



Total Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide total agricultural employment expanded by 9.1 percent from October 2008 to October 2009 due to the large apple harvest. Over-the-month total employment was unchanged at 0.0 percent. Over the year regionally, Western (Area 1) total employment fell by 0.6 percent. South Central (Area 2) total

employment grew by 7.2 percent. North Central (Area 3) total employment increased by 11.8 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) total employment moved ahead by 8.9 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) total employment advanced by 15.8 percent. Eastern (Area 6) total employment rose by 5.2 percent.

Seasonal Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment rose by 11.5 percent from October 2008 to October 2009. Agricultural activities displaying over-the-year gains were:

- apple work (8,510),
- other seasonal work (530),
- grapes work (270), and
- raspberry work (200).

Activities displaying losses were:

- cherry work (-1,950),
- pear work (-770),
- potato work (-540),
- hops work (-270),
- onion work (-270),
- blueberry work (-240),
- nursery work (-110), and
- wheat/grain work (-70).

Across the state, Western area seasonal employment increased by 50.0 percent, which was caused by growth in other seasonal work (290). South Central seasonal employment rose by 7.4 percent, because of an expansion in apple work (1,760). North Central seasonal employment grew by 9.4 percent, also due to an increase in apple work (3,950). Columbia Basin seasonal employment expanded by 20.2 percent, caused by an increase in apple work (1,140). South Eastern seasonal employment grew by 18.8 percent, driven by an increase in apple work (1,660). Eastern seasonal employment declined by 30.0 percent, brought about by a loss in nursery work (-100).



Statewide and Regional Wage Trends

Statewide real (inflation-adjusted) agricultural seasonal employee wages increased by 0.5 percent from October 2007 to October 2009. Washington state real minimum wages gained 2.3 percent during this same time period. Statewide real agricultural seasonal employee wages expanded by 2.8 percent from October 2008 to October 2009. The real state minimum wage grew by 2.4 percent during this same time period. Western area real seasonal wages moved forward by 5.5 percent from October 2008 to October 2009. South

Central seasonal wages picked up by 2.9 percent. North Central seasonal wages also rose by 6.7 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal wages fell by 1.7 percent. South Eastern seasonal wages contracted by 4.1 percent.

Statewide nominal agricultural seasonal employee wages expanded by 5.9 percent from October 2007 to October 2009. Washington state nominal minimum wages grew by 7.8 percent during this same time period. Statewide nominal agricultural seasonal employee wages in-

creased by 6.3 percent from October 2008 to October 2009. The state minimum wage grew by 5.9 percent during this same time period. Western area seasonal wages moved forward by 9.1 percent from October 2008 to October 2009. South Central seasonal wages advanced by 6.5 percent. North Central seasonal wages climbed by 10.3 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal wages inched up by 1.6 percent. South Eastern seasonal wages slipped by 0.8 percent.

Statewide and Regional Employment Trends

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment increased by 14.9 percent from October 2007 to October 2009. Statewide seasonal agricultural employment expanded by 11.5 percent from October 2008 to October 2009. Western area seasonal employment grew by 50.0 percent during that same time

period. South Central seasonal employment picked up by 7.4 percent. North Central seasonal employment moved ahead by 9.4 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal employment ramped up by 20.2 percent. South Eastern seasonal employment advanced by 18.8 percent. Eastern seasonal employment contracted by 30.0 percent.

Labor Supply

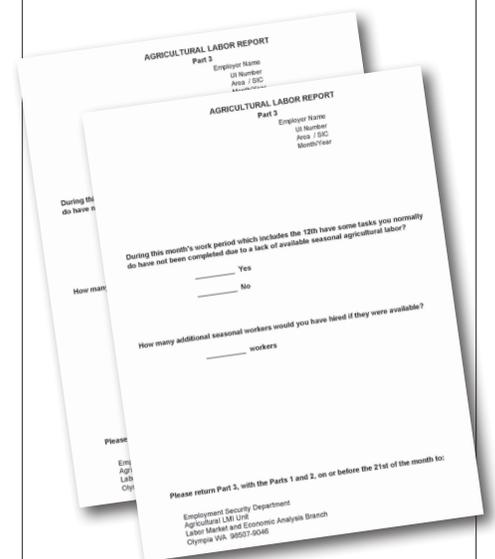
The first question on the labor supply survey asks growers if they failed to complete some work due to lack of available seasonal labor. The second question asks growers how

many more employees they could have used. For October, 703 usable surveys were returned. The weighted percent of labor shortage employment reported was 0.6 percent.

[Link to Survey Methodology](#)



*In October, 703
usable labor
supply surveys
were returned.*



Agricultural Labor Report

Washington State Employment Security, Labor Market and Economic Analysis

Seasonal Labor Abstract

October 2009

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: 3,930

Blueberry Harvester	600	\$ 8.55/hr
Potato Sorter/Grader/Packer	520	\$ 8.73/hr
Apple Harvester	330	\$11.17/hr
Raspberry Pruner	300	\$ 8.76/hr

South Central (Klickitat and Yakima counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 18,840

Apple Harvester	15,840	\$ 9.36/hr or \$12.00 - \$30.00 per bin
Grapes Harvester	1,060	\$ 9.62/hr
Pear Harvester	460	Not Reported
Misc Peppers Harvester	**	**

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 17,930

Apple Harvester	14,410	\$ 9.11/hr or \$13.00 - \$30.00 per bin
Apple Sorter/Grader/Packer	1,540	\$ 9.00/hr
Apple Tractor Operator	580	\$ 9.54/hr
Apple Worker	440	\$ 9.96/hr

Columbia Basin (Adams and Grant counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 11,300

Apple Harvester	7,870	\$ 8.66/hr or \$14.00 - \$30.00 per bin
Potato Sorter/Grader/Packer	690	\$ 9.16/hr
Potato Worker	340	\$ 9.48/hr
Potato Vehicle Operator	320	\$11.49/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 9,800

Apple Harvester	7,270	\$ 8.81/hr or \$13.00 - \$40.00 per bin
Grapes Harvester	490	\$ 8.93/hr
Field Corn Sorter/Grader/Packer	**	**
Misc Onion Worker	200	\$ 8.58/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 350

Apple Harvester	90	\$ 9.00/hr
Wheat Tractor Operator	80	\$11.17/hr
Wheat Vehicle Operator	30	\$13.00/hr
Misc Vegetables Harvester	20	\$ 9.00/hr

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

**October 2009
Agricultural Farm Labor Report, Washington State**

Agricultural Reporting Area	Seasonal Area Total	Seasonal Area % of Total	Permanent Area Total	Permanent Area % of Total	Total Area Total	Total Area % of Total
1. Western	3,930	6.3%	7,080	14.0%	11,010	9.8%
2. South Central	18,840	30.3%	17,130	33.9%	35,970	31.9%
3. North Central	17,930	28.8%	9,380	18.6%	27,310	24.2%
4. Columbia Basin	11,300	18.2%	4,570	9.1%	15,870	14.1%
5. South Eastern	9,800	15.8%	11,040	21.9%	20,840	18.5%
6. Eastern	350	0.6%	1,280	2.5%	1,630	1.4%
State Totals	62,150	100.0%	50,480	100.0%	112,630	100.0%

Total Agricultural Employment

				Change		Percent Change	
	Oct 09-Prel.	Sep 09-Rev.	Oct 08-Rev.	Sep 09- Oct' 09	Oct 08- Oct 09	Sep 09- Oct' 09	Oct 08- Oct 09
State	112,630	112,680	103,190	-50	9,440	0.0%	9.1%
Western	11,010	12,050	11,080	-1,040	-70	-8.6%	-0.6%
South Central	35,970	36,380	33,560	-410	2,410	-1.1%	7.2%
North Central	27,310	26,950	24,430	360	2,880	1.3%	11.8%
Columbia Basin	15,870	15,320	14,570	550	1,300	3.6%	8.9%
South Eastern	20,840	20,180	18,000	660	2,840	3.3%	15.8%
Eastern	1,630	1,800	1,550	-170	80	-9.4%	5.2%

Seasonal Agricultural Employment

				Change		Percent Change	
	Oct 09-Prel.	Sep 09-Rev.	Oct 08-Rev.	Sep 09- Oct' 09	Oct 08- Oct 09	Sep 09- Oct' 09	Oct 08- Oct 09
State	62,150	65,050	55,720	-2,900	6,430	-4.5%	11.5%
Western	3,930	5,000	2,620	-1,070	1,310	-21.4%	50.0%
South Central	18,840	21,180	17,550	-2,340	1,290	-11.0%	7.4%
North Central	17,930	16,980	16,390	950	1,540	5.6%	9.4%
Columbia Basin	11,300	10,300	9,400	1,000	1,900	9.7%	20.2%
South Eastern	9,800	10,990	8,250	-1,190	1,550	-10.8%	18.8%
Eastern	350	600	500	-250	-150	-41.7%	-30.0%

For more data and a sample of the Agricultural Labor Report survey, go to [October 2009 Agricultural Labor Employment and Wages Tables](#)

For historical, year-to-date employment, go to [2009 Year-to-Date Employment Tables](#)
at www.workforceexplorer.com

Agricultural Labor Report

Factors Affecting the Farm Labor Supply and Demand Situation

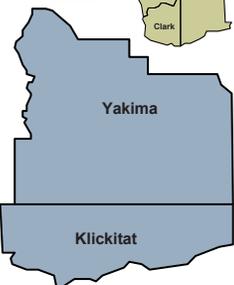
Crop, Market, and Weather Conditions by Area

Washington State, October 2009



Western (Area 1)

Weather conditions were warmer and wetter than normal during the reporting period. Pumpkin harvest continued. Apple harvest continued and Christmas tree farms were busy tagging trees and getting ready for the holiday season.



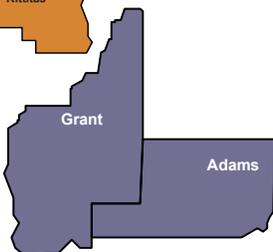
South Central (Area 2)

Weather conditions were warmer and wetter than normal during the reporting period. Apple harvest was being completed as mostly Fuji, Pink Lady, and a few Braeburn apples came into packing houses.



North Central (Area 3)

Weather conditions were warmer and wetter than normal during the reporting period. Late variety apple harvest was complete. Winter wheat was still below average.



Columbia Basin (Area 4)

Weather conditions were warmer and wetter than normal during the reporting period. Dry corn harvest was in full swing. Potato harvest was mostly completed. Processing carrot harvest was underway. Apple harvest wound down.



South Eastern (Area 5)

Weather conditions were warmer and wetter than normal during the reporting period. Apple harvest was heavy, and a large portion of the field corn was being harvested. Late planted winter wheat was emerging nicely and potatoes continued to be harvested.



Eastern (Area 6)

Seasonal employment did not meet the criterion of 500 seasonal employees and therefore is not published for the month of October.