

Agricultural Labor Employment and Wages

November 2009

Washington State Employment Security Department

Labor Market and Economic Analysis



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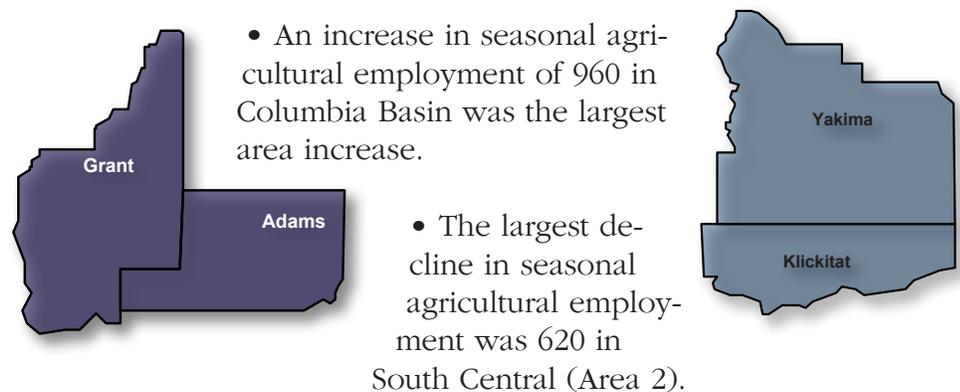
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Labor Market Information Center
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1-800-215-1617
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Executive Summary

The statewide seasonal agricultural employment total increased by 8.5 percent from November 2008 to November 2009. The large apple harvest was primarily responsible for this increase.

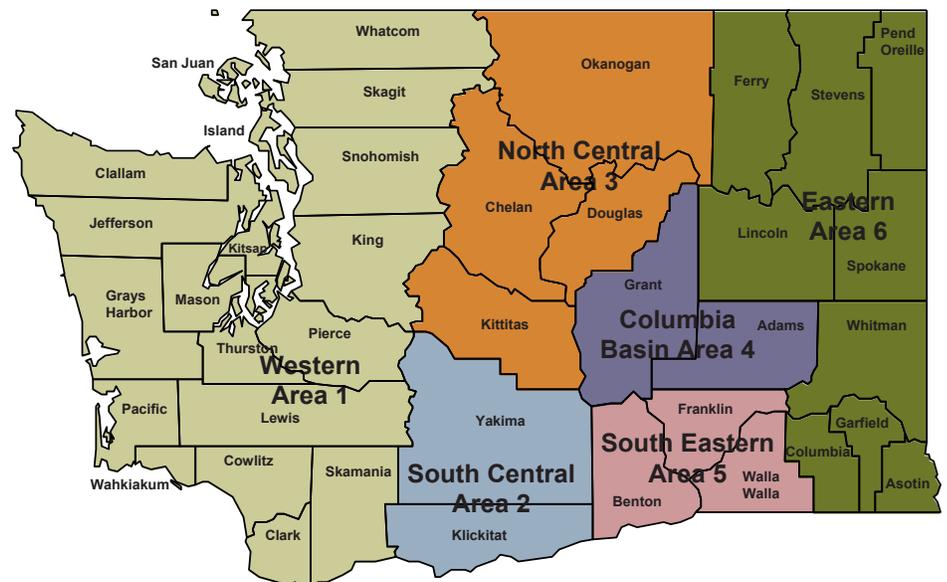
- There were over-the-year increases in seasonal employment in four of the six agricultural areas. The areas with increases were: Western (Area 1), North Central (Area 3), Columbia Basin (Area 4), and South Eastern (Area 5).



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 8.7 percent from November 2008 to November 2009.



Total Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide total agricultural employment increased by 8.7 percent from November 2008 to November 2009 due to the large apple harvest. Over-the-month total employment decreased 34.9 percent. Over the year regionally, Western (Area 1) total employment increased by 0.2 percent. South Central (Area 2)

total employment increased by 6.6 percent. North Central (Area 3) total employment increased by 11.6 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) total employment increased by 9.5 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) total employment increased by 15.1 percent. Eastern (Area 6) total employment increased by 4.5 percent.

Seasonal Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment increased by 8.5 percent from November 2008 to November 2009. Agricultural activities with over-the-year gains were:

- apple work (1,670),
- miscellaneous vegetables work (950),
- pear work (590),
- raspberry work (360), and
- other seasonal work (180).

Activities with losses were:

- nursery work (-550),
- onion work (-440),
- potato work (-200),
- cherry work (-170),
- hops work (-130),
- wheat/grain work (-60),
- grapes work (-50), and
- bulbs work (-30).

Across the state, Western area seasonal employment increased by 3 percent, caused by increases in raspberry seasonal work (360). South Central seasonal employment decreased by 8.8 percent, caused by a decrease in cherry work (-170). North Central seasonal employment increased by 28.3 percent, due to an increase in apple work (120). Columbia Basin seasonal employment increased by 25.5 percent, also caused by an increase in apple work (1,060). South Eastern seasonal employment increased by 13 percent, caused by an increase in other seasonal work (180). Eastern seasonal employment decreased by 32 percent, due to decreases in nursery work (-90).



Statewide and Regional Wage Trends

Statewide real (inflation-adjusted) agricultural seasonal employee wages increased by 0.8 percent from November 2007 to November 2009. Washington state real minimum wages increased 2.3 percent during this same time period. Statewide real agricultural seasonal employee wages increased by 0.3 percent from November 2008 to November 2009. The real state minimum wage increased by 2.4 percent during this same time period. Western area real seasonal wages increased by 3.8 percent from November 2008 to

November 2009. South Central seasonal wages increased by 6.5 percent. North Central seasonal wages were unchanged. Columbia Basin seasonal wages decreased by 0.7 percent. South Eastern seasonal wages decreased by 0.4 percent.

Statewide nominal agricultural seasonal employee wages increased by 6.2 percent from November 2007 to November 2009. Washington state nominal minimum wages increased by 7.8 percent during this same time period. Statewide nominal

agricultural seasonal employee wages increased by 3.8 percent from November 2008 to November 2009. The state minimum wage increased by 5.9 percent during this same time period. Western area seasonal wages increased by 7.3 percent from November 2008 to November 2009. South Central seasonal wages increased by 10.1 percent. North Central seasonal wages increased by 3.4 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal wages increased by 2.7 percent. South Eastern seasonal wages increased by 3.0 percent.

Statewide and Regional Employment Trends

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment increased by 59 percent from November 2007 to November 2009. Statewide seasonal agricultural employment increased by 8.5 percent from November 2008 to November 2009. Western area seasonal employment increased by 3 percent during the same time period. South

Central seasonal employment decreased by 8.8 percent. North Central seasonal employment increased by 28.6 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal employment increased by 25.5 percent. South Eastern seasonal employment increased by 12.7 percent. Eastern seasonal employment decreased by 32 percent.

Labor Supply

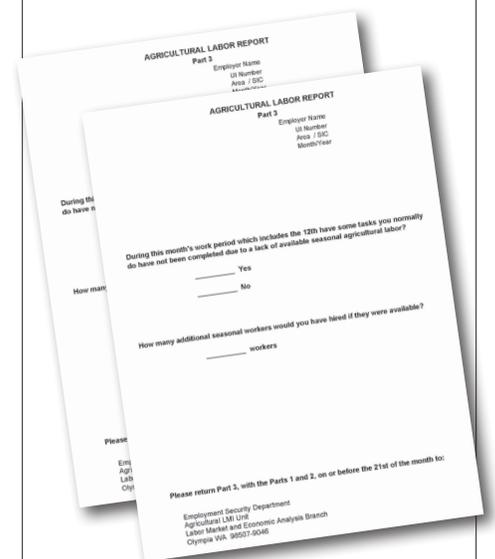
The first question on the labor supply survey asks growers if they failed to complete some work due to lack of available seasonal labor. The second question asks growers how

many more employees they could have used. For November, 711 usable surveys were returned. The weighted percent of labor shortage employment reported was 0.1 percent.

[Link to Survey Methodology](#)



*In November, 711
usable labor
supply surveys
were returned.*



Agricultural Labor Report

Washington State Employment Security, Labor Market and Economic Analysis

Seasonal Labor Abstract

November 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: 2,370

Raspberry Trainer	330	\$ 0.20 - \$ 0.27 per plant
Potato Sorter/Grader/Packer	310	\$ 8.56/hr
Raspberry Pruner	280	\$ 9.63/hr or \$ 0.20 - \$ 0.27 per plant
Raspberry Sorter/Grader/Packer	260	\$ 8.55/hr

South Central (Klickitat and Yakima counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 6,450

Apple Harvester	3,610	\$ 9.94/hr or \$20.00 - \$33.00 per bin
Apple Pruner	830	\$ 8.59/hr or \$ 1.40 - \$ 2.50 per tree
Apple Trainer	430	\$ 8.60/hr
Hops Worker	320	\$ 9.91/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 4,090

Apple Sorter/Grader/Packer	970	\$ 8.75/hr
Apple Pruner	780	\$ 8.63/hr
Pear Pruner	710	\$ 8.65/hr or \$ 0.95 - \$ 7.00 per tree
Apple Harvester	530	\$ 8.57/hr or \$16.00 - \$30.00 per bin

Columbia Basin (Adams and Grant counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 4,720

Apple Harvester	2,440	\$ 8.55/hr or \$15.00 - \$30.00 per bin
Misc Vegetables Sorter/Grader/Packer	570	\$ 8.55/hr
Apple Worker	360	\$ 8.72/hr
Potato Sorter/Grader/Packer	230	\$ 8.86/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 4,350

Apple Harvester	2,140	\$ 8.55/hr or \$22.00 - \$30.00 per bin
Apple Pruner	440	\$ 8.85/hr
Chicken Eggs Worker	210	\$ 8.75/hr
Cherry Pruner	160	\$ 9.30/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 170

Misc Fruit Trees Worker	80	Not Reported
Wheat Tractor Operator	20	\$13.33/hr
Other General Farm Worker	10	\$14.57/hr
Alfalfa Hay Irrigator	10	\$12.00/hr

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

**November 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	2,370	10.7%	7,140	14.5%	9,510	13.3%
2. South Central	6,450	29.1%	15,050	30.6%	21,500	30.2%
3. North Central	4,090	18.5%	10,200	20.8%	14,290	20.1%
4. Columbia Basin	4,720	21.3%	4,740	9.6%	9,460	13.3%
5. South Eastern	4,350	19.6%	10,780	21.9%	15,130	21.2%
6. Eastern	170	0.8%	1,210	2.5%	1,380	1.9%
State Totals	22,150	100.0%	49,120	100.0%	71,270	100.0%

Total Agricultural Employment

				Change		Percent Change	
	Nov 09-Prel.	Oct 09-Rev.	Nov 08-Rev.	Oct 09- Nov 09	Nov 08- Nov 09	Oct 09- Nov 09	Nov 08- Nov 09
State	71,270	109,470	65,560	-38,200	5,710	-34.9%	8.7%
Western	9,510	11,020	9,490	-1,510	20	-13.7%	0.2%
South Central	21,500	35,780	20,160	-14,280	1,340	-39.9%	6.6%
North Central	14,290	27,370	12,810	-13,080	1,480	-47.8%	11.6%
Columbia Basin	9,460	12,830	8,640	-3,370	820	-26.3%	9.5%
South Eastern	15,130	20,840	13,140	-5,710	1,990	-27.4%	15.1%
Eastern	1,380	1,630	1,320	-250	60	-15.3%	4.5%

Seasonal Agricultural Employment

				Change		Percent Change	
	Nov 09-Prel.	Oct 09-Rev.	Nov 08-Rev.	Oct 09- Nov 09	Nov 08- Nov 09	Oct 09- Nov 09	Nov 08- Nov 09
State	22,150	60,760	20,420	-38,620	1,730	-63.6%	8.5%
Western	2,370	4,000	2,300	-1,630	70	-40.8%	3.0%
South Central	6,450	18,170	7,070	-11,710	-620	-64.4%	-8.8%
North Central	4,090	17,150	3,180	-13,070	900	-76.2%	28.6%
Columbia Basin	4,720	11,240	3,760	-6,530	960	-58.1%	25.5%
South Eastern	4,350	9,850	3,860	-5,490	500	-55.7%	12.7%
Eastern	170	350	250	-190	-80	-54.3%	-32.0%

For more data and a sample of the Agricultural Labor Report survey, go to [November 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

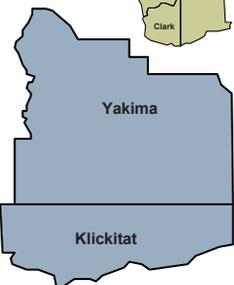
Crop, Market, and Weather Conditions by Area

Washington State, November 2009



Western (Area 1)

Weather conditions were colder and wetter than normal during the reporting period. Primary agricultural activities were raspberry training, potato warehouse work, raspberry pruning, and raspberry warehouse work.



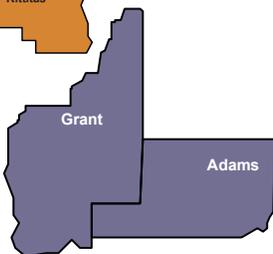
South Central (Area 2)

Weather conditions were colder and wetter than normal during the reporting period. Primary agricultural activities were apple harvest, apple pruning, apple training, and general hops work.



North Central (Area 3)

Weather conditions were colder and wetter than normal during the reporting period. Primary agricultural activities were apple warehouse work, apple pruning, pear pruning, and apple harvest.



Columbia Basin (Area 4)

Weather conditions were colder and wetter than normal during the reporting period. Primary agricultural activities were apple harvest, miscellaneous vegetables warehouse work, general apple work, and potato warehouse work.



South Eastern (Area 5)

Weather conditions were colder and wetter than normal during the reporting period. Primary agricultural activities were apple harvest, apple pruning, chicken eggs work, and cherry pruning.



Eastern (Area 6)

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