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**Washington State
Employment Security Department**

Labor Market and Economic Analysis



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Agricultural Labor Employment and Wages

March 2010

Executive Summary

The statewide total agricultural employment increased by 14.1 percent from March 2009 to March 2010. The employment increase was mainly due to apple pruning.

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



- North Central (Area 3) total employment increased by 3,240 workers and was the largest area increase.

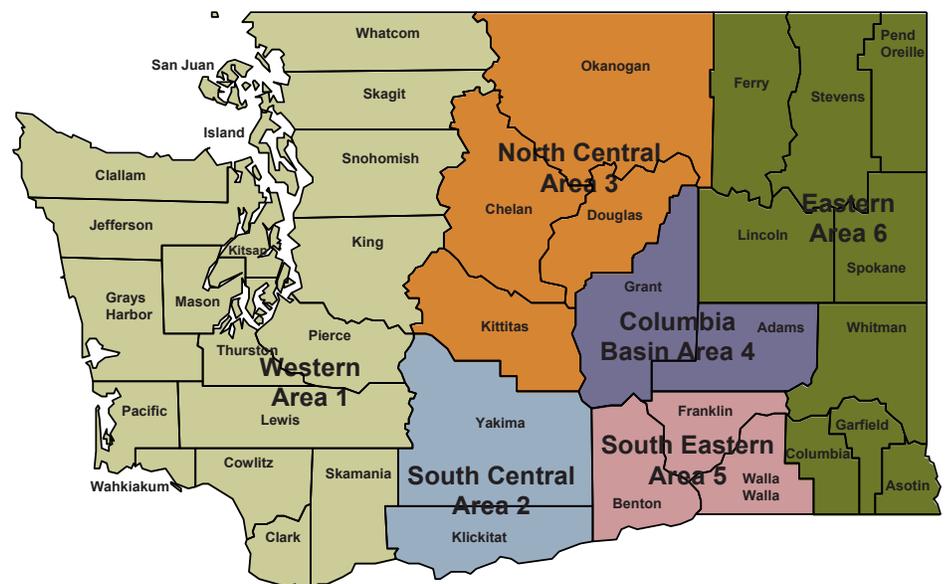
- Western (Area 1) total employment had the only employment decrease of 250 workers.



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 14.1 percent from March 2009 to March 2010.

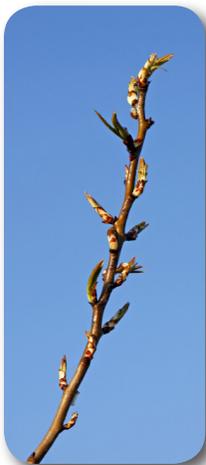


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Total Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide total agricultural employment increased by 14.1 percent from March 2009 to March 2010 primarily due to the apple pruning. Over-the-month total employment increased 5.1 percent. Over the year regionally, Western (Area 1) total employment decreased by 2.6 percent. South Central (Area 2)

total employment increased by 11.4 percent. North Central (Area 3) total employment increased by 25.2 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) total employment increased by 11.3 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) total employment increased by 24.6 percent. Eastern (Area 6) total employment increased by 3.8 percent.

Seasonal Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment increased by 18.5 percent from March 2009 to March 2010. Over-the-year increases in agricultural activities were:

- apple work (4,660),
- cherry work (980),
- onion work (900),
- pear work (300),
- wheat/grain work (250),
- miscellaneous vegetables work (120), and
- other tree fruit work (30).

Activities with decreases were:

- hops work (-950),
- nursery work (-900),
- other seasonal work (-580),
- grapes work (-220),
- blueberry work (-90),
- potato work (-80), and
- raspberry work (-60).

Across the state, Western area seasonal employment decreased by 34.5 percent, due to decreases in nursery work (-1,080). South Central seasonal employment decreased by 3.7 percent, due to a decrease in hops work (-650). North Central seasonal employment increased by 28.5 percent, due to an increase in apple work (880). Columbia Basin seasonal employment increased by 17.1 percent, due to an increase in apple work (720). South Eastern seasonal employment increased by 115.8 percent, due to an increase in apple work (2,130). Eastern seasonal employment increased by 37.5 percent due to an increase in nursery work (190).

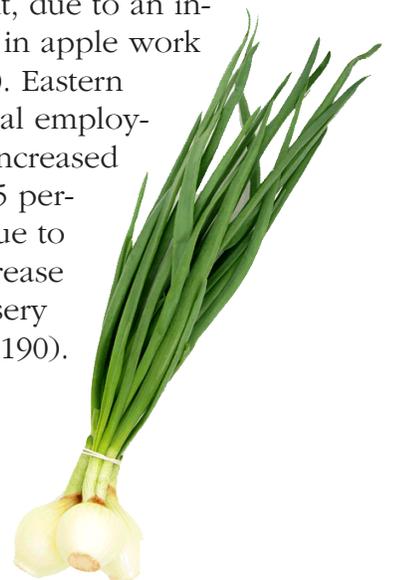


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Statewide and Regional Wage Trends

Statewide real (inflation-adjusted) agricultural seasonal employee wages increased by 2.1 percent from March 2008 to March 2010. Washington state real minimum wages increased 1.7 percent during this same time period. Statewide real agricultural seasonal employee wages increased by 3.3 percent from March 2009 to March 2010. The real state minimum wage increased by 0.7 percent during this same time period. Western area real seasonal wages increased by 9.0 percent from

March 2009 to March 2010. South Central seasonal wages decreased by 1.1 percent. North Central seasonal wages increased by 2.7 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal wages increased by 2.6 percent. South Eastern seasonal wages increased by 4.8 percent.

Statewide nominal agricultural seasonal employee wages increased by 6.3 percent from March 2008 to March 2010. Washington state nominal minimum wages increased by 5.9 percent during this same time

period. Statewide nominal agricultural seasonal employee wages increased by 4.0 percent from March 2009 to March 2010. The state minimum wage did not increase during this time. Western area seasonal wages increased by 9.7 percent from March 2009 to March 2010. South Central seasonal wages decreased by 0.4 percent. North Central seasonal wages increased by 3.4 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal wages increased by 3.3 percent. South Eastern seasonal wages increased by 5.6 percent.

Statewide and Regional Employment Trends

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment increased by 31.1 percent from March 2008 to March 2010. Statewide seasonal agricultural employment increased by 18.5 percent from March 2009 to March 2010. Western area seasonal employment decreased by 34.5 percent during the same time period. South Central seasonal

employment decreased by 3.7 percent. North Central seasonal employment increased by 28.5 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal employment increased by 17.1 percent. South Eastern seasonal employment increased by 115.8 percent. Eastern seasonal employment increased by 37.5 percent.

Labor Supply

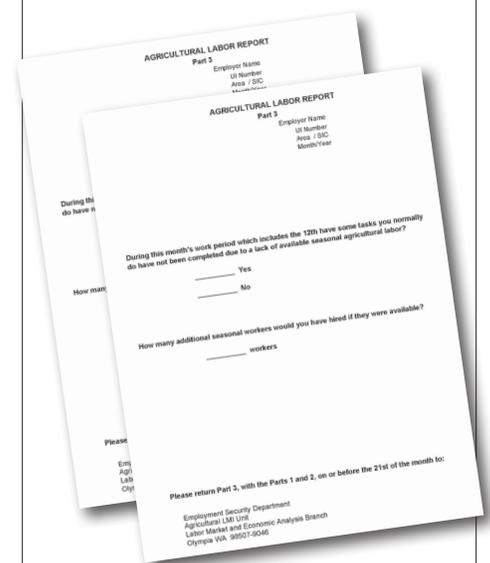
The first question on the labor supply survey asks growers if they failed to complete some work due to lack of available seasonal labor. The second question asks growers how

many more employees they could have used. For March, 1,413 usable surveys were returned. The weighted percent of labor shortage employment reported was 0.0 percent.

[Link to Survey Methodology](#)



*In March, 1,413
usable labor
supply surveys
were returned.*



Agricultural Labor Report

Washington State Employment Security, Labor Market and Economic Analysis

Seasonal Labor Abstract

March 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: 2,240

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|------------|
| Nursery & Tree Worker | 300 | \$10.00/hr |
| Nursery Worker | 280 | \$ 8.69/hr |
| Raspberry Worker | 200 | \$ 9.20/hr |
| Nursery Sorter/Grader/Packer | 200 | \$ 8.55/hr |

South Central (Klickitat and Yakima counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 5,910

| | | | |
|--------------------|-------|------------|-------------------------------|
| Apple Pruner | 2,540 | \$ 8.83/hr | or \$ 0.60 - \$ 2.88 per tree |
| Grapes Pruner..... | 820 | \$ 9.10/hr | or \$ 0.07 - \$ 0.27 per vine |
| Apple Worker..... | 400 | \$ 8.85/hr | |
| Cherry Pruner..... | 260 | \$ 9.37hr | |

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 5,090

| | | | |
|--------------------|-------|------------|-------------------------------|
| Apple Pruner | 2,180 | \$ 9.04/hr | or \$ 1.00 - \$14.00 per tree |
| Cherry Pruner..... | 790 | \$ 9.25/hr | or \$ 0.50 - \$ 3.00 per tree |
| Pear Pruner..... | 630 | \$ 9.16/hr | |
| Apple Worker..... | 580 | \$ 8.69/hr | |

Columbia Basin (Adams and Grant counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 3,770

| | | | |
|--|-------|------------|-------------------------------|
| Apple Pruner | 1,250 | \$ 8.95/hr | or \$ 0.80 - \$ 3.55 per tree |
| Apple Worker..... | 590 | \$ 8.77/hr | |
| Cherry Pruner | 310 | \$ 8.84/hr | or \$ 0.50 - \$ 6.00 per tree |
| Miscellaneous Onion Sorter/Grader/Packer | 250 | \$ 8.62/hr | |

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 6,150

| | | | |
|--|-------|------------|-------------------------------|
| Apple Pruner | 2,550 | \$ 9.74/hr | or \$ 1.00 - \$ 3.00 per tree |
| Grapes Pruner..... | 840 | \$ 8.75/hr | |
| Walla Walla Sweet Onion Sorter/Grader/Packer | ** | ** | |
| Miscellaneous Onion Sorter/Grader/Packer | 370 | \$ 9.64/hr | |

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 440

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|------------|
| Nursery & Tree Worker | 140 | \$ 9.15/hr |
| Nursery & Tree Harvester | 110 | \$ 8.90/hr |
| Wheat Worker | 70 | \$12.18/hr |
| Wheat Tractor Operator..... | 20 | \$11.20/hr |

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

**March 2010
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 | 2,240 | 9.5% | 7,020 | 15.0% | 9,260 | 13.1% |
| 2. South Central | 5,910 | 25.0% | 16,300 | 34.8% | 22,210 | 31.5% |
| 3. North Central | 5,090 | 21.6% | 11,000 | 23.5% | 16,090 | 22.8% |
| 4. Columbia Basin | 3,770 | 16.0% | 4,830 | 10.3% | 8,600 | 12.2% |
| 5. South Eastern | 6,150 | 26.1% | 6,730 | 14.4% | 12,880 | 18.3% |
| 6. Eastern | 440 | 1.9% | 940 | 2.0% | 1,380 | 2.0% |
| State Totals | 23,600 | 100.0% | 46,820 | 100.0% | 70,420 | 100.0% |

Total Agricultural Employment

| | Mar. 10-Prel. | Feb. 10-Rev. | Mar. 09-Rev. | Change | | Percent Change | |
|----------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | | | Feb. 10- Mar. 10 | Mar. 09- Mar. 10 | Feb. 10- Mar. 10 | Mar. 09- Mar. 10 |
| State | 70,420 | 66,980 | 61,700 | 3,450 | 8,730 | 5.1% | 14.1% |
| Western | 9,260 | 8,260 | 9,510 | 1,000 | -250 | 12.1% | -2.6% |
| South Central | 22,210 | 21,120 | 19,940 | 1,090 | 2,270 | 5.2% | 11.4% |
| North Central | 16,090 | 15,560 | 12,850 | 530 | 3,240 | 3.4% | 25.2% |
| Columbia Basin | 8,600 | 8,530 | 7,730 | 70 | 870 | 0.8% | 11.3% |
| South Eastern | 12,880 | 12,210 | 10,340 | 680 | 2,550 | 5.5% | 24.6% |
| Eastern | 1,380 | 1,300 | 1,330 | 80 | 50 | 6.2% | 3.8% |

Seasonal Agricultural Employment

| | Mar. 10-Prel. | Feb. 10-Rev. | Mar. 09-Rev. | Change | | Percent Change | |
|----------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | | | Feb. 10- Mar. 10 | Mar. 09- Mar. 10 | Feb. 10- Mar. 10 | Mar. 09- Mar. 10 |
| State | 23,600 | 23,420 | 19,910 | 180 | 3,690 | 0.8% | 18.5% |
| Western | 2,240 | 2,130 | 3,420 | 110 | -1,180 | 5.2% | -34.5% |
| South Central | 5,910 | 5,870 | 6,140 | 40 | -230 | 0.7% | -3.7% |
| North Central | 5,090 | 4,830 | 3,960 | 260 | 1,130 | 5.4% | 28.5% |
| Columbia Basin | 3,770 | 3,590 | 3,220 | 180 | 550 | 5.0% | 17.1% |
| South Eastern | 6,150 | 6,600 | 2,850 | -450 | 3,300 | -6.8% | 115.8% |
| Eastern | 440 | 400 | 320 | 40 | 120 | 10.0% | 37.5% |

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
[March 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

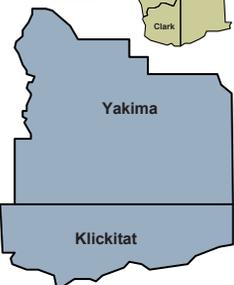
Crop, Market, and Weather Conditions by Area

Washington State, March 2010



Western (Area 1)

Weather conditions were colder and wetter than normal during the reporting period. Cold, cloudy weather slowed the early plantings of fresh market vegetables on the Olympic Peninsula. Primary agricultural activities were nursery work and raspberry work.



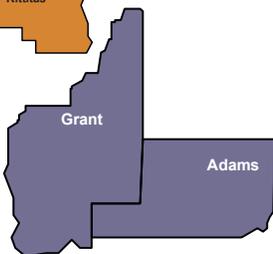
South Central (Area 2)

Weather conditions were colder and wetter than normal during the reporting period. The current weather was not good for pollinating. Orchard workers hand thinned flower blooms. Cherries entered bloom stage. Primary agricultural activities were apple pruning, grapes pruning, and cherry pruning.



North Central (Area 3)

Weather conditions were colder and wetter than normal during the reporting period. Cold weather plus rain and wind slowed the development and pollination of fruit trees. Cherries were just beginning to bloom, though the pears and apples had not yet started to bloom. Primary agricultural activities were apple pruning, cherry pruning, and pear pruning.



Columbia Basin (Area 4)

Weather conditions were colder and wetter than normal during the reporting period. Low temperatures have caused some freeze damage to the cherry crop. Primary agricultural activities were apple pruning, cherry pruning, and onion warehouse work.



South Eastern (Area 5)

Weather conditions were colder and wetter than normal during the reporting period. Winter wheat looked good thanks to the much needed rain received. Primary agricultural activities were apple pruning, grapes pruning, and onion warehouse work.



Eastern (Area 6)

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