

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



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labor market information:  
Labor Market Information Center  
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[www.workforceexplorer.com](http://www.workforceexplorer.com)

**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

# Agricultural Labor Employment and Wages

**July 2010**

## Executive Summary

The statewide total agricultural employment decreased by 5.2 percent over the year, from July 2009 through July 2010. Over-the-month statewide total agricultural employment increased by 33.6 percent from June 2010 to July 2010, primarily due to the cherry harvest.



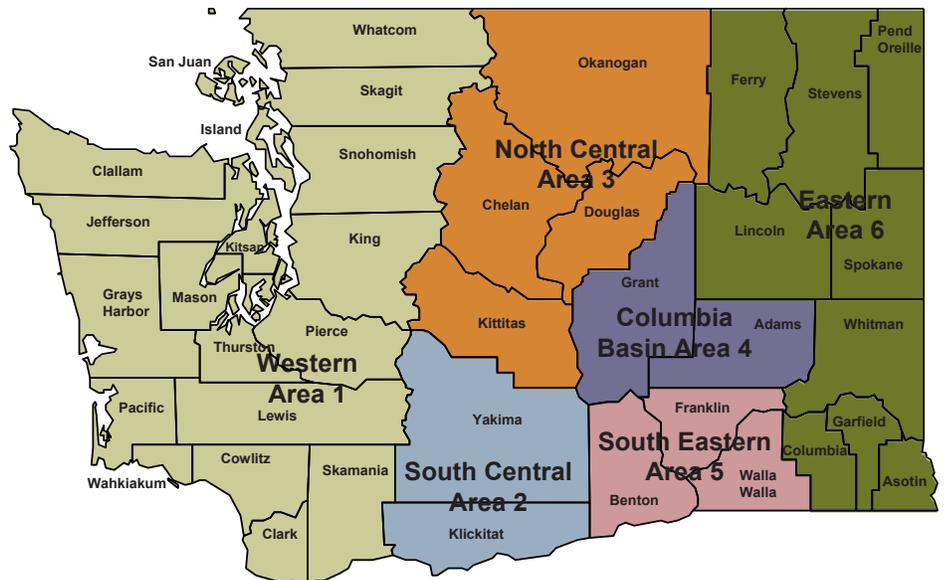
- There were over-the-year decreases in total employment in all six agricultural areas.

- The largest total employment decrease of 3,410 was in North Central (Area 3).

- Eastern (Area 6) total employment experienced the smallest employment decrease of 20 workers.



## Agricultural Reporting Areas in Washington State



*Statewide total agricultural employment decreased by 5.2 percent from July 2009 to July 2010.*



## Total Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide total agricultural employment decreased by 5.2 percent from July 2009 to July 2010. Over-the-month total employment increased 33.6 percent. Over the year regionally, Western (Area 1) total employment decreased by 2.4 percent. South Central (Area 2) total employment decreased by 5.2 percent.

North Central (Area 3) total employment decreased by 8.2 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) total employment decreased by 4.9 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) total employment decreased by 2.2 percent. Eastern (Area 6) total employment decreased by 1.2 percent.

## Seasonal Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment increased by 1.0 percent from July 2009 to July 2010. Over-the-year increases in agricultural activities were:

- other seasonal work (2,830),
- strawberry work (890),
- apple work (660),
- onion work (610),
- nursery work (510),
- wheat/grain work (380), and
- pear work (340).

Activities with decreases were:

other tree fruit work (-1,560), cherry work (-890), miscellaneous vegetables work (-860), raspberry work (-690), grapes work (-670), potato work (-220), hops work (-210), blueberry work (-50), and asparagus work (-40).

Across the state, Western (Area 1) seasonal employment decreased by 3.8 percent, due to decreased raspberry work (-690). South Central (Area 2) seasonal employment decreased by 8.2 percent, due to decreased other tree fruit work (-1,090). North Central (Area 3) seasonal employment increased by 1.6 percent, due to increased pear work (600). Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal employment decreased by 2.3 percent, due to decreased apple work (-620). South Eastern (Area 5) seasonal employment increased by 22.1 percent, due to increased cherry work (2,210). Eastern (Area 6) seasonal employment increased by 40 percent due to increased wheat/grain work (90).



## Statewide and Regional Wage Trends

Statewide real (inflation-adjusted) agricultural seasonal employee wages increased by 4.8 percent from July 2008 to July 2010. Washington state real minimum wages increased 1.7 percent during this same time period. Statewide real agricultural seasonal employee wages increased 0.4 percent from July 2009 to July 2010. The real state minimum wage increased by 0.7 percent during this same time period. Western (Area 1) real seasonal wages increased 0.3 percent from July 2009 to July 2010. South Central (Area 2) seasonal wages increased by 0.3

percent. North Central (Area 3) seasonal wages decreased by 2.1 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal wages increased by 2.2 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) seasonal wages increased by 1.1 percent. Eastern (Area 6) seasonal wages decreased by 3.5 percent.

Statewide nominal agricultural seasonal employee wages increased by 9.2 percent from July 2008 to July 2010. Washington state nominal minimum wages increased by 5.9 percent during this same time period. Statewide nominal agricultural seasonal employee wages increased by

1.1 percent from July 2009 to July 2010. The state minimum wage did not increase during this time period. Western (Area 1) seasonal wages increased by 1 percent from July 2009 to July 2010. South Central (Area 2) seasonal wages increased by 1 percent. North Central (Area 3) seasonal wages decreased by 1.4 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal wages increased by 2.9 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) seasonal wages increased by 1.8 percent. Eastern (Area 6) seasonal wages decreased by 2.8 percent.

## Statewide and Regional Employment Trends

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment increased by 25.9 percent from July 2008 to July 2010. Statewide seasonal agricultural employment increased by 1 percent from July 2009 to July 2010. Western (Area 1) seasonal employment decreased by 3.8 percent during the same time period. South Central (Area 2) seasonal em-

ployment decreased by 8.2 percent. North Central (Area 3) seasonal employment increased by 1.6 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal employment decreased by 2.3 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) seasonal employment increased by 22.1 percent. Eastern (Area 6) seasonal employment increased by 40 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 July, 1,536 usable surveys were returned. The weighted percent of labor shortage employment reported was 0 percent.

[Link to Survey Methodology](#)



*In July, 1,536  
usable labor  
supply surveys  
were returned.*



# Agricultural Labor Report

## Washington State Employment Security, Labor Market and Economic Analysis

### Seasonal Labor Abstract

#### July 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: 8,510

Strawberry Harvester . . . . .	1,950	\$10.00/hr
Raspberry Harvester . . . . .	1,230	\$ 8.64/hr
Raspberry Sorter/Grader/Packer . . . . .	730	\$ 8.72/hr
Strawberry Sorter/Grader/Packer . . . . .	570	\$ 9.04/hr

**South Central (Klickitat and Yakima counties)**

Estimated seasonal workforce: 23,970

Cherry Harvester. . . . .	7,850	\$ 8.79/hr or \$ 2.75 - \$ 6.50 per lug
Apple Hand Thinner . . . . .	6,190	\$ 8.64/hr or \$ 0.20 - \$ 2.25 per tree
Cherry Sorter/Grader/Packer . . . . .	4,590	\$ 8.79/hr
Hops Chemical Applicator . . . . .	400	\$ 8.58/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 29,830

Cherry Harvester. . . . .	14,850	\$ 9.34/hr or \$ 3.00 - \$ 7.00 per lug
Apple Hand Thinner . . . . .	6,700	\$ 8.93/hr or \$ 0.50 - \$ 3.50 per tree
Contract Postharvest Sorter/Grader/Packer. . . . .	2,360	\$ 8.89/hr
Cherry Sorter/Grader/Packer . . . . .	1,340	\$ 8.55/hr

**Columbia Basin (Adams and Grant counties)**

Estimated seasonal workforce: 9,750

Cherry Harvester. . . . .	4,370	\$ 9.12/hr or \$ 3.25 - \$ 7.00 per lug
Apple Hand Thinner . . . . .	2,270	\$ 8.70/hr or \$ 0.58 - \$ 1.75 per tree
Misc Onion Weeder . . . . .	360	\$ 8.56/hr
Apple Pruner . . . . .	340	\$ 9.18/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 16,150

Apple Hand Thinner . . . . .	5,430	\$ 8.63/hr or \$ 0.25 - \$ 1.75 per tree
Cherry Harvester. . . . .	5,150	\$ 9.08/hr or \$ 4.50 - \$ 5.50 per lug
Walla Walla Sweet Onion Sorter/Grader/Packer . . . . .	**	**
Blueberry Harvester . . . . .	710	Not Reported

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 770

Wheat Worker . . . . .	110	\$10.12/hr
Nursery & Tree Worker . . . . .	**	**
Wheat Harvester . . . . .	90	\$ 9.67/hr
Apple Hand Thinner . . . . .	50	\$ 9.08/hr

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

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

<b>Agricultural Reporting Area</b>	<b>Seasonal Area Total</b>	<b>Seasonal Area % of Total</b>	<b>Permanent Area Total</b>	<b>Permanent Area % of Total</b>	<b>Total Area Total</b>	<b>Total Area % of Total</b>
1. Western	8,510	9.6%	6,590	15.6%	15,100	11.5%
2. South Central	23,970	26.9%	15,560	36.9%	39,530	30.1%
3. North Central	29,830	33.5%	8,250	19.5%	38,080	29.0%
4. Columbia Basin	9,750	11.0%	4,510	10.7%	14,260	10.9%
5. South Eastern	16,150	18.2%	6,440	15.3%	22,590	17.2%
6. Eastern	770	0.9%	850	2.0%	1,620	1.2%
<b>State Totals</b>	<b>88,970</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>42,200</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>131,190</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Total Agricultural Employment**

				<b>Change</b>		<b>Percent Change</b>	
	<b>July 10-Prel.</b>	<b>June 10-Rev.</b>	<b>July 09-Rev.</b>	<b>June 10- July 10</b>	<b>July 09- July 10</b>	<b>June 10- July 10</b>	<b>July 09- July 10</b>
State	131,190	98,220	138,380	32,970	-7,190	33.6%	-5.2%
Western	15,100	11,040	15,470	4,060	-370	36.8%	-2.4%
South Central	39,530	31,850	41,690	7,680	-2,160	24.1%	-5.2%
North Central	38,080	21,170	41,490	16,910	-3,410	79.9%	-8.2%
Columbia Basin	14,260	12,140	15,000	2,120	-740	17.5%	-4.9%
South Eastern	22,590	20,540	23,100	2,050	-510	10.0%	-2.2%
Eastern	1,620	1,480	1,640	140	-20	9.5%	-1.2%

**Seasonal Agricultural Employment**

				<b>Change</b>		<b>Percent Change</b>	
	<b>July 10-Prel.</b>	<b>June 10-Rev.</b>	<b>July 09-Rev.</b>	<b>June 10- July 10</b>	<b>July 09- July 10</b>	<b>June 10- July 10</b>	<b>July 09- July 10</b>
State	88,970	55,940	88,090	33,030	880	59.0%	1.0%
Western	8,510	4,960	8,850	3,550	-340	71.6%	-3.8%
South Central	23,970	17,120	26,100	6,850	-2,130	40.0%	-8.2%
North Central	29,830	11,870	29,370	17,960	460	151.3%	1.6%
Columbia Basin	9,750	8,030	9,980	1,720	-230	21.4%	-2.3%
South Eastern	16,150	13,350	13,230	2,800	2,920	21.0%	22.1%
Eastern	770	610	550	160	220	26.2%	40.0%

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  
[July 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](http://www.workforceexplorer.com)

# Agricultural Labor Report

## Factors Affecting the Farm Labor Supply and Demand Situation

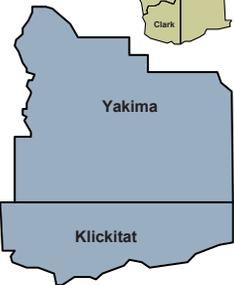
### Crop, Market, and Weather Conditions by Area

#### Washington State, July 2010



#### **Western (Area 1)**

Weather conditions were warmer and drier than normal during the reporting period. Hay cutting was starting to wind down. Everbearing strawberries started their second crop bloom. Raspberry and blueberry harvest was in full swing.



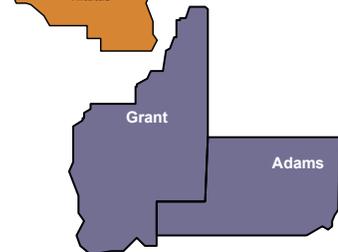
#### **South Central (Area 2)**

Weather conditions were warmer and drier than normal during the reporting period. Most cherries had been harvested with the exception of a few late maturing varieties. Apple hand thinning continued along with vegetable harvest. Wheat harvest began two to three weeks later than usual.



#### **North Central (Area 3)**

Weather conditions were warmer and drier than normal during the reporting period. Cherry harvest continued and should be finished by the third week in August. Winter wheat harvest was about ten days late this year due to the cool spring weather. Apple hand thinning continued.



#### **Columbia Basin (Area 4)**

Weather conditions were warmer and drier than normal during the reporting period. Dry land wheat harvest was expected to soon begin. Fresh pea and sweet corn harvest continued. Primary agricultural activities were cherry harvest and apple hand thinning.



#### **South Eastern (Area 5)**

Weather conditions were warmer and drier than normal during the reporting period. Winter wheat yields were reported as very good. Most second cutting of hay was done. Blueberry, dry peas, and beans were also being harvested. Primary agricultural activities were apple hand thinning, cherry harvest, Walla Walla Sweet onion harvest, and blueberry harvest.



#### **Eastern (Area 6)**

Weather conditions were warmer and drier than normal during the reporting period. Wheat harvest was beginning in some areas. Good yields were being reported. First cutting of hay was completed and second cutting had begun.