



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



Greg Weeks, Ph.D., *LMEA Director*  
(360) 438-4800

*Prepared by*  
John Wines, *Economic Analyst*

For additional  
labor market information:  
Labor Market Information Center  
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#### 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

**October 2010**

## Executive Summary

Statewide total agricultural employment decreased 0.1 percent over the period of October 2009 to October 2010. Statewide total agricultural employment decreased by 8.1 percent from September 2010 to October 2010, primarily due to the winding down of the pear harvest.



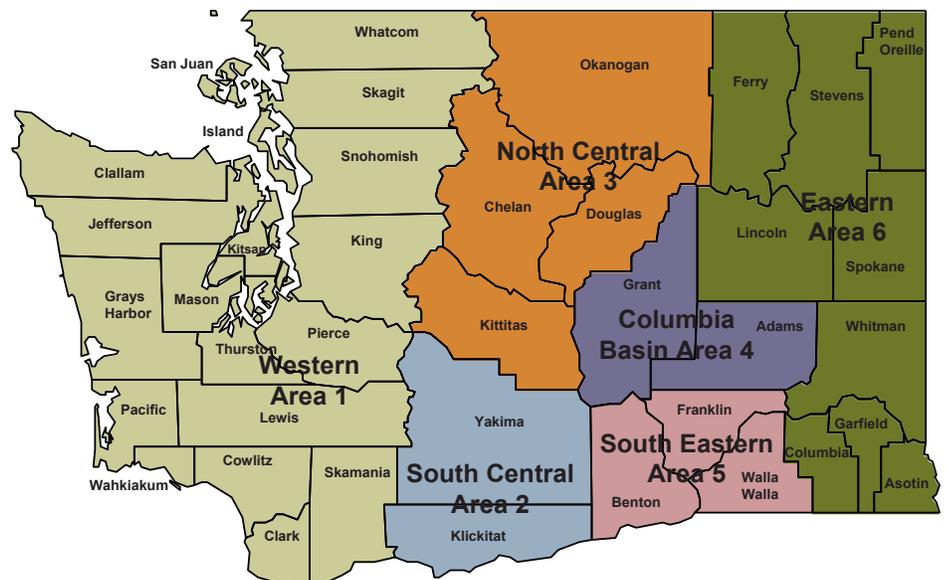
- Total agricultural employment decreased over the year in four of the six agricultural areas.

- Western (Area 1) total employment decreased by 440 workers and was the largest area decrease.

- South Central (Area 2) total employment had the largest employment increase of 780 workers.



## Agricultural Reporting Areas in Washington State





*Statewide total agricultural employment decreased by 0.1 percent from October 2009 to October 2010.*



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Photo by ©iStock/Wojtek Kryczka

## Total Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide total agricultural employment decreased by 0.1 percent from October 2009 to October 2010. Over-the-month total employment decreased 8.1 percent. Over the year regionally, Western (Area 1) total employment decreased by 4.2 percent. South Central (Area 2) total employment increased by

2.4 percent. North Central (Area 3) total employment increased by 0.5 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) total employment decreased by 1.2 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) total employment decreased by 2.3 percent. Eastern (Area 6) total employment decreased by 2.5 percent.

## Seasonal Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment decreased by 4 percent from October 2009 to October 2010. Over-the-year decreases in agricultural activities were:

- apple work (-2,960),
- miscellaneous vegetables work (-1,210),
- raspberry work (-370),
- hops work (-230),
- blueberry work (-220),
- potato work (-170), and
- grapes work (-100).

Activities with increases were:

- pear work (830),
- other seasonal work (710),
- nursery work (380),
- wheat/grain work (170).

Across the state, Western (Area 1) seasonal employment decreased by 4.8 percent, due to decreased raspberry work (-370). South Central (Area 2) seasonal employment decreased by 6.6 percent, due to decreased apple work (-1,160). North Central (Area 3) seasonal employment decreased by 4 percent due to decreased apple work (-2,040). Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal employment decreased by 13.4 percent, due to decreased apple work (-950). South Eastern (Area 5) seasonal employment increased by 9.6 percent, due to increased apple work (1,200). Eastern (Area 6) seasonal employment increased by 65.7 percent due to increased other seasonal work (160).



## Statewide and Regional Wage Trends

Statewide real (inflation-adjusted) agricultural seasonal employee wages increased by 8.1 percent from October 2008 to October 2010. Washington state real minimum wages increased 1.7 percent during this same time period. Statewide real agricultural seasonal employee wages increased 5.2 percent from October 2009 to October 2010. The real state minimum wage increased by 0.7 percent during this same time period. Western (Area 1) real seasonal wages increased 0.9 percent from October 2009 to October 2010. South Central (Area 2)

seasonal wages increased by 2.8 percent. North Central (Area 3) seasonal wages increased by 12 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal wages increased by 2.5 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) seasonal wages increased by 9.3 percent.

Statewide nominal agricultural seasonal employee wages increased by 12.6 percent from October 2008 to October 2010. Washington state nominal minimum wages increased by 5.9 percent during this same time period. Statewide nominal agricultural seasonal employee

wages increased by 5.9 percent from October 2009 to October 2010. The state minimum wage remained unchanged during this same time period. Western (Area 1) seasonal wages increased by 1.6 percent from October 2009 to October 2010. South Central (Area 2) seasonal wages increased by 3.5 percent. North Central (Area 3) seasonal wages increased by 12.7 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal wages increased by 3.2 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) seasonal wages increased by 10 percent.

## Statewide and Regional Employment Trends

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment increased by 4.8 percent from October 2008 to October 2010. Statewide seasonal agricultural employment decreased by 3.9 percent from 2009 October to October 2010. Western (Area 1) seasonal employment decreased by 4.8 percent during the same time period. South Central

(Area 2) seasonal employment decreased by 6.6 percent. North Central (Area 3) seasonal employment decreased by 4 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal employment decreased by 13.4 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) seasonal employment increased by 9.6 percent. Eastern (Area 6) seasonal employment increased by 65.7 percent.

## Labor Supply

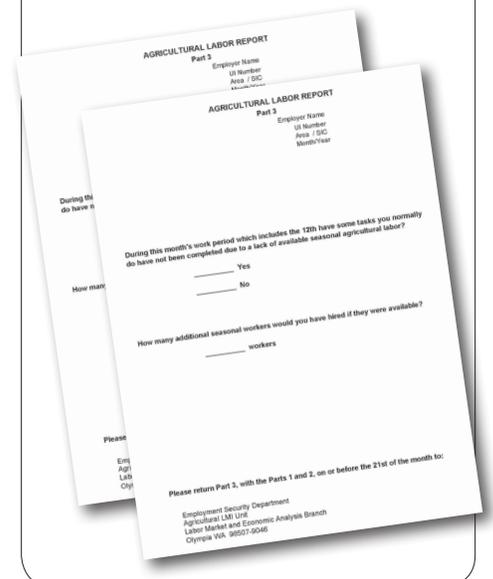
The first question on the labor supply survey asks growers if they failed to complete some work due to lack of available seasonal labor. The second question asks growers how

many more employees they could have used. For October 2010, 1,476 usable surveys were returned. The weighted percent of labor shortage employment reported was 0 percent.

[Link to Survey Methodology](#)



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



# Agricultural Labor Report

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

### Seasonal Labor Abstract

#### October 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: 3,810

Potato Harvester .....	440	\$ 9.07/hr
Potato Sorter/Grader/Packer .....	320	\$ 9.25/hr
Nursery & Tree Worker .....	**	**
Blackberry Harvester .....	240	\$ 8.55/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 16,970

Apple Harvester .....	14,180	\$ 9.84/hr or \$14.00 - \$28.00 per bin
Grapes Harvester .....	560	\$ 9.20/hr
Mint Weeder .....	**	**
Apple Sorter/Grader/Packer .....	230	\$ 9.95/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 16,470

Apple Harvester .....	13,210	\$10.03/hr or \$14.00 - \$30.00 per bin
Pear Harvester .....	1,320	\$17.00 - \$20.00 per bin
Apple Worker .....	490	\$10.92/hr
Apple Vehicle Operator .....	270	\$11.05/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 9,740

Apple Harvester .....	6,750	\$10.39/hr or \$14.00 - \$27.00 per bin
Potato Sorter/Grader/Packer .....	520	\$ 9.29/hr
Misc Grain/Grain Seed Planter .....	**	**
Misc Onion Sorter/Grader/Packer .....	300	\$ 8.72/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 10,800

Apple Harvester .....	8,510	\$10.54/hr or \$14.00 - \$28.00 per bin
Grapes Harvester .....	780	\$10.35/hr or \$ 0.05 - \$ 0.10 per pound
Potato Worker .....	300	Not Reported
Misc Onion Sorter/Grader/Packer .....	260	\$ 8.55/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 580

Pumpkin Harvester .....	100	\$ 9.00/hr
Apple Harvester .....	90	\$10.00/hr
Wheat Worker .....	70	\$11.54/hr
Beef Cattle Worker .....	40	\$10.83/hr

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

**October 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	3,810	6.5%	6,140	13.9%	9,950	9.7%
2. South Central	16,970	29.1%	16,520	37.5%	33,490	32.7%
3. North Central	16,470	28.2%	9,330	21.2%	25,800	25.2%
4. Columbia Basin	9,740	16.7%	4,010	9.1%	13,750	13.4%
5. South Eastern	10,800	18.5%	7,100	16.1%	17,900	17.5%
6. Eastern	580	1.0%	1,000	2.3%	1,580	1.5%
<b>State Totals</b>	<b>58,370</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>44,100</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>102,470</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Total Agricultural Employment**

	Oct 10-Prel.	Sep 10-Rev.	Oct 09-Rev.	Change		Percent Change	
				Sep 10- Oct 10	Oct 09- Oct 10	Sep 10- Oct 10	Oct 09- Oct 10
State	102,470	111,450	102,620	-8,980	-150	-8.1%	-0.1%
Western	9,950	10,920	10,390	-970	-440	-8.9%	-4.2%
South Central	33,490	35,640	32,710	-2,150	780	-6.0%	2.4%
North Central	25,800	29,080	25,660	-3,280	140	-11.3%	0.5%
Columbia Basin	13,750	14,680	13,920	-930	-170	-6.3%	-1.2%
South Eastern	17,900	19,340	18,320	-1,440	-420	-7.4%	-2.3%
Eastern	1,580	1,790	1,620	-210	-40	-11.7%	-2.5%

**Seasonal Agricultural Employment**

	Oct 10-Prel.	Sep 10-Rev.	Oct 09-Rev.	Change		Percent Change	
				Sep 10- Oct 10	Oct 09- Oct 10	Sep 10- Oct 10	Oct 09- Oct 10
State	58,370	66,510	60,770	-8,140	-2,410	-12.2%	-4.0%
Western	3,810	4,290	4,000	-480	-190	-11.2%	-4.8%
South Central	16,970	19,700	18,170	-2,740	-1,200	-13.9%	-6.6%
North Central	16,470	18,060	17,150	-1,590	-690	-8.8%	-4.0%
Columbia Basin	9,740	10,820	11,250	-1,080	-1,510	-10.0%	-13.4%
South Eastern	10,800	12,820	9,850	-2,010	950	-15.7%	9.6%
Eastern	580	820	350	-240	230	-29.3%	65.7%

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 [October 2010 Agricultural Labor Employment and Wages Tables](#)

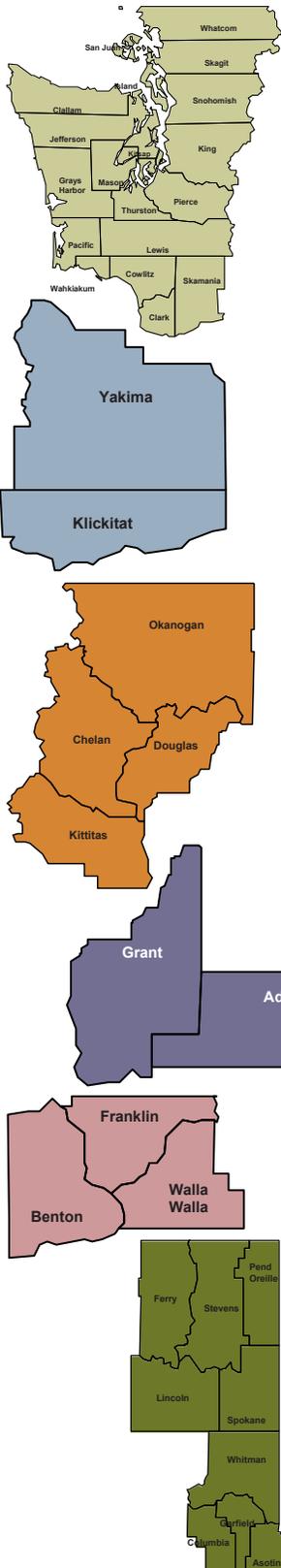
For historical, year-to-date employment, go to [2010 Year-to-Date Employment Tables](#)  
at [www.workforceexplorer.com](http://www.workforceexplorer.com)

# Agricultural Labor Report

## Factors Affecting the Farm Labor Supply and Demand Situation

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

#### Washington State, October 2010



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

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal during the reporting period. Christmas tree growers began the harvest of Noble fir trees and boughs. Growers continued to report a surplus of trees resulting in low prices. Cranberry growers continued harvest activities with average production down nearly 30 percent. A bitter winter, frosty spring, and cool summer are to blame. The Washington coast boasts 32 growers of cranberries that sell to Ocean Spray. Ocean Spray, the nation's largest cranberry marketer, expects nationwide production this year to fall 7 million barrels, a 6 percent downgrade from previous estimates. Washington produced about 6.9 million barrels of cranberries in 2009.

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

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal during the reporting period. Apple harvest continued with Jonagold, Fuji, and Braeburn varieties coming into the packinghouses. Apple growers are rushing to finish picking, as the cold wet spring weather has delayed harvest by about 10 days.

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

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal during the reporting period. The winter wheat crop condition was average in most areas. Apple harvest for late varieties was winding down.

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

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal during the reporting period. Potato harvest continued. Dry corn harvest was also under way. Apple harvest was in full swing and grape harvest continued.

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

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal during the reporting period. Apple and potato harvests continued. The final cutting of hay was completed.

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

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal during the reporting period. Most of the winter wheat was planted and had emerged.