



Photo by ©Bendicks/Dreamstime.com

Agricultural Labor Employment and Wages

December 2010

Executive Summary

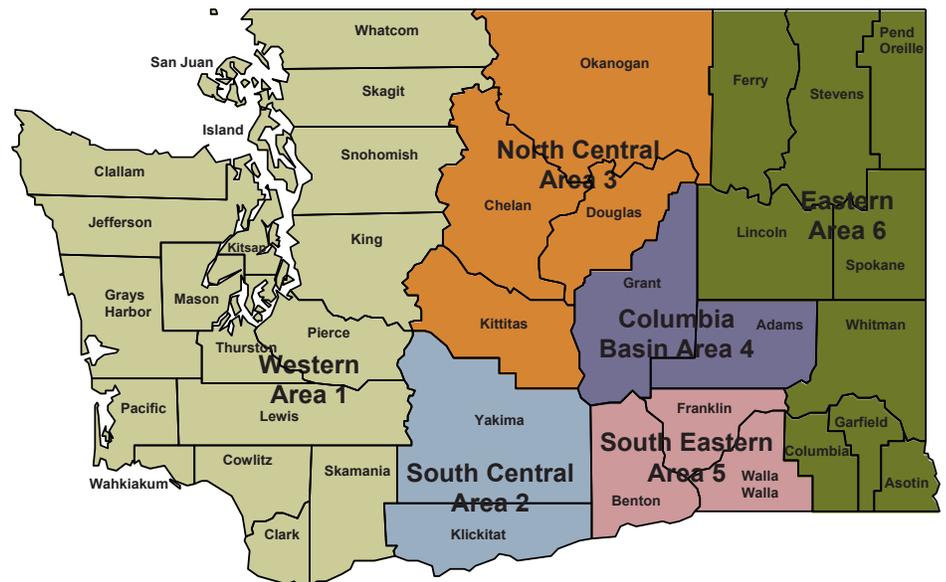
Statewide total agricultural employment increased 1.8 percent over the period of December 2009 through December 2010. Monthly, from November 2010 to December 2010, statewide total agricultural employment decreased by 18.9 percent, primarily due to the completion of the apple harvest.

- Total agricultural employment increased over the year in four of the six agricultural areas.
- South Central (Area 2) experienced the largest total agricultural increase of 650 workers.
- Western (Area 1) experienced the largest total agricultural decrease of 400 workers.

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 Reporting Areas in Washington State



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

Prepared by
John Wines, *Economic Analyst*

**Washington State
Employment Security Department**

Labor Market and Economic Analysis

January 2011

For additional information, call the
Labor Market Information Center:
1-800-215-1617

or visit our Web site,
www.workforceexplorer.com.



Statewide total agricultural employment increased by 1.8 percent from December 2009 through December 2010.



Photo by ©iStock/36clicks



Photo by ©iStock/MireXa



Photo by ©iStock/AlexMotrenko

Total Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide total agricultural employment increased by 1.8 percent over the period of December 2009 through December 2010. Over-the-month total employment decreased 18.9 percent. Over the year regionally, Western (Area 1) total employment decreased by 4.7 percent. South Central (Area 2)

total employment increased by 4 percent. North Central (Area 3) total employment increased by 2.3 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) total employment increased by 2.4 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) total employment increased by 3.3 percent. Eastern (Area 6) total employment was unchanged.

Seasonal Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment increased by 2.9 percent over the period of December 2009 through December 2010. Over-the-year increases in agricultural activities were:

- nursery work (450),
- grapes work (420),
- other seasonal work (330),
- miscellaneous vegetables work (230),
- other tree fruit work (160),
- apple work (40) and wheat/grain work (40).

Activities with over-the-year decreases were:

- potato work (-580),
- blueberry work (-380),
- cherry work (-300),
- onion work (-160),
- pear work (-140),
- hops work (-60) and
- strawberry work (-30).

Across the state, Western (Area 1) seasonal employment increased by 0.5 percent due to increased nursery work (300). South Central (Area 2) seasonal employment decreased by 4.1 percent due to decreased pear work (-420). North Central (Area 3) seasonal employment decreased by 32.7 percent due to decreased apple work (-1,490). Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal employment decreased by 4.3 percent due to decreased cherry work (-260). South Eastern (Area 5) seasonal employment increased by 104.2 percent due to increased apple work (1,520). Eastern (Area 6) seasonal employment increased by 144.4 percent due to increased other seasonal work (80).



Photo by ©iStock/mondiano

Statewide and Regional Wage Trends

Statewide real (inflation-adjusted) agricultural seasonal employee wages increased by 1.1 percent over the period of December 2008 through December 2010. Washington state real minimum wages increased 1.7 percent during this same time period. Statewide real agricultural seasonal employee wages decreased 0.4 percent over the period of December 2009 through December 2010. The real state minimum wage increased by 0.7 percent during this same time period. Western (Area 1) real seasonal wages decreased 0.3 percent over the period of December 2009 through Decem-

ber 2010. South Central (Area 2) seasonal wages decreased by 0.6 percent. North Central (Area 3) seasonal wages increased by 2.5 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal wages decreased by 1.3 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) seasonal wages decreased by 3.2 percent.

Statewide nominal agricultural seasonal employee wages increased by 5.3 percent over the period of December 2008 through December 2010. Washington state nominal minimum wages increased by 5.9 percent during this same time period. Statewide nominal agricultural

seasonal employee wages increased by 0.3 percent over the period of December 2009 through December 2010. The state minimum wage remained unchanged during this same time period. Western (Area 1) seasonal wages increased by 0.4 percent over the period of December 2009 through December 2010. South Central (Area 2) seasonal wages increased by 0.1 percent. North Central (Area 3) seasonal wages increased by 3.2 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal wages decreased by 0.6 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) seasonal wages decreased by 2.6 percent.

Statewide and Regional Employment Trends

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment increased by 0.1 percent over the period of December 2008 through December 2010. Statewide seasonal agricultural employment increased by 2.9 percent over the period of December 2009 through December 2010. Western (Area 1) seasonal employment increased by 0.5 percent during the same time period.

South Central (Area 2) seasonal employment decreased by 4.1 percent. North Central (Area 3) seasonal employment decreased by 32.4 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal employment decreased by 3.9 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) seasonal employment increased by 104.2 percent. Eastern (Area 6) seasonal employment increased by 144.4 percent.

Labor Supply

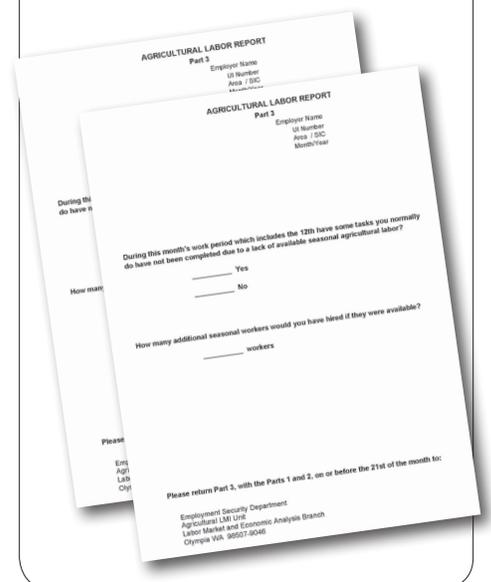
The first question on the labor supply survey asks growers if they failed to complete some work due to lack of available seasonal labor. The second question asks growers how

many more employees they could have used. For December 2010, 1,505 usable surveys were returned. The weighted percent of labor shortage employment reported was 0 percent.

[Learn about our survey methodology](#)



*In December, 1,505
usable labor
supply surveys
were returned.*



Agricultural Labor Report

Washington State Employment Security, Labor Market and Economic Analysis

Seasonal Labor Abstract

December 2010

A mid-month survey of farm labor employment and wages is conducted by the Washington State Employment Security Department. At least 5 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 (Area 1) (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: 2,040

Nursery & Tree Harvester	370	\$ 9.98/hr
Raspberry Sorter/Grader/Packer	310	\$ 8.64/hr
Raspberry Pruner	220	\$ 9.14/hr
Potato Sorter/Grader/Packer	220	\$ 9.13/hr

South Central (Area 2) (Klickitat and Yakima counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 3,450

Apple Pruner	1,280	\$ 9.16/hr or \$ 0.50 - \$ 3.75 per tree
Apple Worker	890	\$ 8.55/hr
Grapes Pruner	330	\$ 9.33/hr or \$ 0.08 - \$ 0.32 per vine
Pear Pruner	300	\$ 9.91/hr or \$ 0.50 - \$ 4.75 per tree

North Central (Area 3) (Chelan, Douglas, Kittitas, and Okanogan counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 2,540

Apple Pruner	1,000	\$ 8.90/hr or \$ 0.40 - \$ 2.75 per tree
Pear Pruner	940	\$ 9.35/hr or \$ 0.25 - \$ 4.50 per tree
Apple Sorter/Grader/Packer	290	\$ 8.93/hr
Cherry Pruner	120	\$ 9.16/hr

Columbia Basin (Area 4) (Adams and Grant counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 2,380

Apple Pruner	1,380	\$ 8.79/hr or \$ 0.35 - \$ 5.00 per tree
Nursery & Tree Sorter/Grader/Packer	240	\$ 8.55/hr
Potato Sorter/Grader/Packer	180	\$ 8.87/hr
Misc Onion Sorter/Grader/Packer	*	*

South Eastern (Area 5) (Benton, Franklin, and Walla Walla counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 3,300

Apple Pruner	1,510	\$ 8.85/hr or \$ 0.35 - \$ 2.00 per tree
Carrot Harvester	*	*
Apple Worker	320	\$ 8.55/hr
Pear Pruner	200	\$ 8.78hr or \$ 1.50 - \$ 2.75 per tree

Eastern (Area 6) (Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Garfield, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, and Whitman counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 220

Apple Pruner	80	\$ 9.00/hr
Wheat Worker	50	\$10.20/hr
Beef Cattle Worker	20	\$12.30/hr
Nursery & Tree Sorter/Grader/Packer	20	\$ 8.55/hr

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

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

Agricultural Reporting Area	Seasonal Area		Permanent Area		Total Area	
	Total	% of Total	Total	% of Total	Total	% of Total
1. Western	2,020	14.1%	6,040	16.1%	8,060	15.6%
2. South Central	3,700	25.8%	-2,020	-5.4%	1,680	3.2%
3. North Central	2,540	17.7%	8,370	22.4%	10,910	21.1%
4. Columbia Basin	2,440	17.0%	3,910	10.4%	6,350	12.3%
5. South Eastern	3,430	23.9%	4,810	12.8%	8,240	15.9%
6. Eastern	220	1.5%	1,030	2.8%	1,250	2.4%
State Totals	14,350	100.0%	37,440	100.0%	51,790	100.0%

Total Agricultural Employment

				Change		Percent Change	
	Dec 10-Prel.	Nov 10-Rev.	Dec 09-Rev.	Nov 10-	Dec 09-	Nov 10-	Dec 09-
				Dec 10	Dec 10	Dec 10	Dec 10
State	51,790	63,880	50,880	-12,090	910	-18.9%	1.8%
Western	8,060	8,430	8,460	-370	-400	-4.4%	-4.7%
South Central	16,980	20,560	16,330	-3,580	650	-17.4%	4.0%
North Central	10,910	12,810	10,660	-1,900	250	-14.8%	2.3%
Columbia Basin	6,350	8,870	6,200	-2,520	150	-28.4%	2.4%
South Eastern	8,240	11,850	7,980	-3,610	260	-30.5%	3.3%
Eastern	1,250	1,360	1,250	-110	0	-8.1%	0.0%

Seasonal Agricultural Employment

				Change		Percent Change	
	Dec 10-Prel.	Nov 10-Rev.	Dec 09-Rev.	Nov 10-	Dec 09-	Nov 10-	Dec 09-
				Dec 10	Dec 10	Dec 10	Dec 10
State	14,350	24,960	13,940	-10,610	410	-42.5%	2.9%
Western	2,020	1,960	2,010	50	10	2.6%	0.5%
South Central	3,700	7,290	3,860	-3,580	-160	-49.1%	-4.1%
North Central	2,540	4,070	3,760	-1,540	-1,230	-37.8%	-32.7%
Columbia Basin	2,440	4,960	2,540	-2,520	-110	-50.8%	-4.3%
South Eastern	3,430	6,390	1,680	-2,960	1,750	-46.3%	104.2%
Eastern	220	290	90	-70	130	-24.1%	144.4%

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 the [December 2010 Agricultural Labor Employment and Wages Tables](#).

[2010 Year-to-Date Employment Tables](#)
are available at www.workforceexplorer.com.

Agricultural Labor Report

Factors Affecting the Farm Labor Supply and Demand Situation

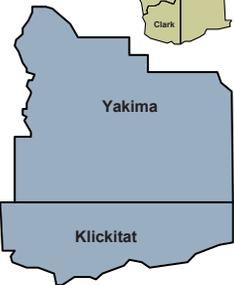
Crop, Market, and Weather Conditions by Area

Washington State, December 2010



Western (Area 1)

Weather conditions were wetter and colder than normal during the reporting period. Raspberries have been pruned and tied up. Primary agricultural activities were nursery and tree harvesting, raspberry warehouse work, raspberry pruning and potato warehouse work.



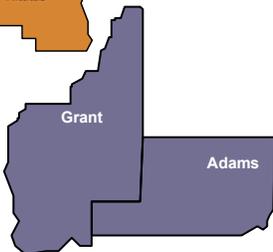
South Central (Area 2)

Weather conditions were wetter and colder than normal during the reporting period. Cold temperatures caused some damage to apples and pears. Primary agricultural activities were apple pruning, grapes pruning and pear pruning.



North Central (Area 3)

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



Columbia Basin (Area 4)

Weather conditions were wetter and colder than normal during the reporting period. Winter wheat remained in good to excellent condition despite some leaf burn from cold conditions with minimal snow cover. Primary agricultural activities were apple pruning, nursery warehouse work, potato warehouse work and onion warehouse work.



South Eastern (Area 5)

Weather conditions were wetter and colder than normal during the reporting period. The winter wheat crop looked good. Primary agricultural activities were apple pruning, carrot harvesting and pear pruning.



Eastern (Area 6)

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