

Washington, D. C.



June 14, 1944

FARM EMPLOYMENT UP MORE THAN USUAL

With generally favorable weather in most parts of the country during May, considerable progress was made in catching up with seasonal farm work which had been retarded by a late spring. The U. S. Department of Agriculture reported today that total farm employment is estimated at 11,285,000 for the first of June, an increase of 12 percent from May 1 compared with a normal rise of 8 percent from May 1 to June 1. Total employment on June 1, however, was 3 percent below a year earlier, due mainly to a 9.5 percent decrease in the number of hired workers, as the number of family workers was only one percent below June 1, 1943. Compared with a year ago, declines in total employment were shown in all of the Regions except the Pacific.

Family labor (including farm operator) totaled 8,845,000 persons on June 1 -- about 9 percent over May 1, although 117,000 under June 1, 1943. As usual this seasonal increase was largely the result of the addition of school children to the ranks of available farm labor with the close of the school year. Hired help reached 2,440,000 by the first of June compared to 2,697,000 on that date last year. This represents a gain of 451,000 workers during May which was slightly greater than the usual seasonal rise. Family labor including operator and unpaid family workers composed 78 percent of the total farm labor force at the first of June.

Favorable weather conditions in New England permitted the fullest utilization of available labor as farmers attempted to reach the normal stage of planting and tillage for this time of year. The number of hired workers in this region on June 1 was 10 percent below a year ago and was only slightly offset by a 1 percent increase in family workers.

In the Middle Atlantic States, farm operations are now proceeding at a fairly even pace despite a labor supply which is limited and the employment of workers who are less skilled than those formerly used. There were 613 thousand workers on these farms this June 1 -- 33 thousand more than on May 1 but 19 thousand fewer than on June 1, 1943. In New York, farm work had been delayed by adverse weather in early May, but workers have been putting in long hours in the field in an attempt to get crops in without further delays. Favorable cultivating weather during May enabled New Jersey farmers to keep up with the necessary field operations. Asparagus and spinach harvesting has passed its peak in New Jersey with the strawberry crop in the peak season in early June.

In most parts of the East North Central States good progress has been made in recent weeks in planting and cultivating of row crops, although in some sections fields are

Farm employment indexes and related data, United States, June 1, 1944
with comparisons

| | Annual average 1910-14 | May 1 1943 | June 1 1943 | May 1 1944 | June 1 1944 |
|---|------------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| FARM EMPLOYMENT (thousands of persons): | 12,052 | 10,492 | 11,659 | 10,068 | 11,285 |
| Family labor | 9,160 | 8,248 | 8,962 | 8,079 | 8,845 |
| Hired labor | 2,892 | 2,244 | 2,697 | 1,989 | 2,440 |
| FARM EMPLOYMENT INDEXES: | | | | | |
| Total - | | | | | |
| Unadjusted | 100 | 87 | 97 | 84 | 94 |
| Adjusted for seasonal variation : | 100 | 85 | 86 | 81 | 84 |
| Family labor - | | | | | |
| Unadjusted | 100 | 90 | 98 | 88 | 97 |
| Adjusted for seasonal variation : | 100 | 85 | 87 | 83 | 86 |
| Hired labor - | | | | | |
| Unadjusted | 100 | 78 | 93 | 69 | 84 |
| Adjusted for seasonal variation : | 100 | 84 | 83 | 74 | 75 |

Foreign workers employed in or available for agricultural war work
by country of origin and State of employment, as of May 31, 1944

| Mexicans | | Jamaicans | | Bahamians | | Newfoundlanders | | Jap. evacuees | |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|------------|----------------|--------------|
| State | workers | State | workers | State | workers | State | workers | State | workers |
| Nebr. : | 33 | Maine : | 89 | N.J. : | 213 | Maine : | 56 | Ill. : | 69 |
| Mont. : | 3,267 | Conn. : | 1,921 | Pa. : | 100 | N.H. : | 42 | Nebr. : | 3 |
| Idaho : | 1,811 | N.Y. : | 220 | Del. : | 376 | Vt. : | 65 | Mont. : | 3 |
| Wyo. : | 848 | N.J. : | 967 | Md. : | 868 | Mass. : | 47 | Idaho : | 766 |
| Colo. : | 2,195 | Pa. : | 227 | Va. : | 311 | Conn. : | 74 | Colo. : | 1 |
| Ariz. : | 1,302 | Ohio : | 272 | N.C. : | 232 | N.Y. : | 135 | Utah : | 280 |
| Utah : | 550 | Ind. : | 185 | Fla. : | 2,788 | N.J. : | 25 | Wash. : | 67 |
| Nev. : | 188 | Ill. : | 93 | | | Pa. : | 50 | Oreg. : | 158 |
| Wash. : | 1,877 | Mich. : | 118 | | | Del. : | 25 | | |
| Oreg. : | 1,419 | Fla. : | 885 | | | | | | |
| Calif. : | 23,016 | | | | | | | | |
| Total : | 36,506 | Total : | 4,977 | Total : | 4,888 | Total : | 519 | Total : | 1,347 |

still too wet to be worked. Gardens and truck crops are showing rapid growth. The labor supply is none too plentiful, particularly in sections of more northern States, but farmers and their help are working longer hours to compensate for the small number of workers. In the East North Central States as a group, however, there were almost exactly the same number of persons employed on farms as on that date last year.

Somewhat similar conditions prevail in the West North Central region but in that area the number of family workers and of hired workers both fell below June 1943 levels. To a greater extent than usual farmers are practicing the good neighbor policy of helping each other in getting their farm work done. Many are working far into the night using headlight attachments on mechanized equipment. Floods and high winds retarded work in the northern section, but for the Region as a whole grain crops are making good growth, corn is up to a good stand and hay crops and pastures are in very good condition.

Improved weather conditions in May speeded up farming activities in the South. Early plantings progressed well -- corn, wheat, and small grains particularly; pastures were in excellent condition; and harvesting of early crops is proceeding rapidly. More rain is needed in some areas, especially in the truck crop regions of Florida and Georgia, the eastern shore of Virginia, and the ranges of western Texas. The labor supply appears adequate at present, but as the season progresses, the need for additional help is expected to become more pronounced. On June 1, farm employment in the South Atlantic region totaled 2,285,000 compared with 2,002,000 May 1 and 2,340,000 on June 1, 1943.

A cold spell in the Mountain States slowed down sheep shearing operations, particularly in Wyoming where a considerable loss of old ewes resulted. Ranges are in good condition except in southern New Mexico where drought continues. Plantings are proceeding in all States but skilled labor is reported as scarce in parts of Idaho and Wyoming. As in most parts of the country, farm operators are working longer hours this June than last.

The greatest increase in farm employment during May appeared in the Pacific Coast States, where the total number of persons working on farms advanced more than 16 percent. Many jobs are now being performed in California which require large numbers of seasonal workers: peach thinning, cherry harvest, beet thinning, and harvest of various vegetables, potatoes, hay, grain, and flax. Cotton chopping in the San Joaquin Valley is nearly completed. Additional workers are needed in Washington, as farm work is still a little behind schedule for this time of year.

Farm employment, United States and geographic divisions, June 1, 1944
with comparisons

TOTAL EMPLOYMENT

| Geographic division | Apr. 1, 1943 | May 1, 1943 | June 1, 1943 | Apr. 1, 1944 | May 1, 1944 | June 1, 1944 |
|---------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| | 1,000's | 1,000's | 1,000's | 1,000's | 1,000's | 1,000's |
| United States | 9,308 | 10,492 | 11,659 | 9,080 | 10,068 | 11,285 |
| New England | 223 | 246 | 257 | 217 | 232 | 250 |
| Middle Atlantic | 553 | 590 | 632 | 544 | 580 | 613 |
| E. North Central | 1,335 | 1,437 | 1,502 | 1,313 | 1,414 | 1,499 |
| W. North Central | 1,500 | 1,626 | 1,756 | 1,467 | 1,564 | 1,707 |
| South Atlantic | 1,758 | 2,083 | 2,340 | 1,723 | 2,002 | 2,285 |
| E. South Central | 1,512 | 1,750 | 2,021 | 1,466 | 1,662 | 1,924 |
| W. South Central | 1,542 | 1,802 | 2,079 | 1,470 | 1,685 | 1,928 |
| Mountain | 398 | 427 | 479 | 390 | 411 | 476 |
| Pacific | 487 | 531 | 593 | 490 | 518 | 603 |

FAMILY WORKERS ^{1/}

| | | | | | | |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| United States | 7,433 | 8,248 | 8,962 | 7,401 | 8,079 | 8,845 |
| New England | 161 | 169 | 166 | 158 | 159 | 168 |
| Middle Atlantic | 404 | 414 | 415 | 400 | 407 | 417 |
| E. North Central | 1,123 | 1,166 | 1,221 | 1,118 | 1,167 | 1,217 |
| W. North Central | 1,281 | 1,345 | 1,438 | 1,279 | 1,336 | 1,428 |
| South Atlantic | 1,361 | 1,603 | 1,812 | 1,357 | 1,583 | 1,785 |
| E. South Central | 1,295 | 1,524 | 1,703 | 1,283 | 1,457 | 1,681 |
| W. South Central | 1,209 | 1,404 | 1,564 | 1,203 | 1,359 | 1,503 |
| Mountain | 297 | 301 | 319 | 298 | 300 | 328 |
| Pacific | 302 | 322 | 324 | 305 | 311 | 318 |

HIRED WORKERS

| | | | | | | |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| United States | 1,875 | 2,244 | 2,697 | 1,679 | 1,989 | 2,440 |
| New England | 62 | 77 | 91 | 59 | 73 | 82 |
| Middle Atlantic | 149 | 176 | 217 | 144 | 173 | 196 |
| E. North Central | 212 | 271 | 281 | 195 | 247 | 282 |
| W. North Central | 219 | 281 | 318 | 188 | 228 | 279 |
| South Atlantic | 397 | 480 | 528 | 366 | 419 | 500 |
| E. South Central | 217 | 226 | 318 | 183 | 205 | 243 |
| W. South Central | 333 | 398 | 515 | 267 | 326 | 425 |
| Mountain | 101 | 126 | 160 | 92 | 111 | 148 |
| Pacific | 185 | 209 | 269 | 185 | 207 | 285 |

^{1/} Includes farm operators and members of their families doing farm work without wages.

Based on reports from 19,964 farmers who reported, for their own farms, the number of family and hired workers doing 2 or more days of work during the week of inquiry.

Length of workday for operators and hired workers, June 1, 1944, with comparisons

| State | Operator | | | Hired workers | | |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| | June 1, 1940 | June 1, 1943 | June 1, 1944 | June 1, 1940 | June 1, 1943 | June 1, 1944 |
| | Hours | Hours | Hours | Hours | Hours | Hours |
| Maine | 12.5 | 13.1 | 12.9 | 9.7 | 9.7 | 9.5 |
| N. H. | 11.5 | 12.1 | 12.2 | 9.4 | 9.4 | 9.7 |
| Vt. | 12.5 | 13.0 | 12.9 | 10.6 | 11.0 | 11.1 |
| Mass. | 11.5 | 11.9 | 11.6 | 10.0 | 10.0 | 9.8 |
| R.I. | 12.0 | 13.2 | 12.8 | 10.0 | 10.0 | 10.0 |
| Conn. | 11.5 | 12.1 | 12.0 | 10.1 | 10.1 | 10.1 |
| N. Eng. | 12.0 | 12.5 | 12.4 | 10.0 | 10.1 | 10.0 |
| N.Y. | 12.5 | 12.8 | 13.1 | 10.7 | 11.0 | 11.1 |
| N.J. | 12.0 | 12.5 | 12.6 | 10.6 | 10.6 | 10.0 |
| Pa. | 12.5 | 13.3 | 13.1 | 10.4 | 11.0 | 10.9 |
| M. Atl. | 12.5 | 13.0 | 13.1 | 10.6 | 10.9 | 10.9 |
| Ohio | 12.4 | 13.3 | 13.3 | 10.1 | 10.6 | 10.4 |
| Ind. | 12.6 | 13.3 | 13.5 | 10.4 | 11.1 | 11.0 |
| Ill. | 12.3 | 13.5 | 13.9 | 11.0 | 11.6 | 12.2 |
| Mich. | 12.4 | 13.2 | 13.4 | 10.4 | 10.8 | 11.1 |
| Wis. | 12.9 | 13.5 | 13.6 | 11.7 | 12.1 | 12.1 |
| E. N. Cent. | 12.5 | 13.4 | 13.5 | 10.8 | 11.3 | 11.4 |
| Minn. | 12.6 | 13.4 | 13.7 | 11.2 | 11.7 | 11.9 |
| Iowa | 12.6 | 13.7 | 14.0 | 11.2 | 11.9 | 12.3 |
| Mo. | 12.4 | 13.2 | 13.3 | 10.5 | 11.0 | 10.7 |
| N. Dak. | 12.5 | 14.0 | 13.6 | 11.5 | 12.4 | 12.0 |
| S. Dak. | 12.7 | 13.8 | 13.9 | 11.3 | 12.2 | 11.8 |
| Nebr. | 12.8 | 13.5 | 14.2 | 11.1 | 11.6 | 11.7 |
| Kans. | 12.5 | 13.2 | 13.1 | 10.7 | 10.9 | 11.0 |
| W. N. Cent. | 12.6 | 13.5 | 13.6 | 11.0 | 11.6 | 11.6 |
| Del. | 12.3 | 13.5 | 13.3 | 10.4 | 10.5 | 10.2 |
| Md. | 12.4 | 13.0 | 12.9 | 10.4 | 10.5 | 10.8 |
| Va. | 11.9 | 12.6 | 12.7 | 10.0 | 10.3 | 10.3 |
| W. Va. | 11.5 | 12.2 | 12.1 | 9.4 | 9.5 | 9.9 |
| N.C. | 11.7 | 12.0 | 12.3 | 10.2 | 10.2 | 10.4 |
| S.C. | 12.0 | 12.4 | 12.3 | 10.7 | 10.7 | 10.6 |
| Ga. | 11.9 | 12.3 | 12.6 | 10.8 | 10.8 | 10.8 |
| Fla. | 11.0 | 11.5 | 11.1 | 9.5 | 9.7 | 9.4 |
| S. Atl. | 11.8 | 12.3 | 12.4 | 10.3 | 10.4 | 10.5 |
| Ky. | 11.7 | 12.7 | 12.7 | 10.4 | 10.6 | 10.5 |
| Tenn. | 11.9 | 12.6 | 12.8 | 10.6 | 10.7 | 10.9 |
| Ala. | 11.8 | 12.4 | 12.1 | 10.7 | 10.7 | 10.6 |
| Miss. | 11.5 | 12.1 | 12.1 | 10.6 | 10.6 | 10.6 |
| E. S. Cent. | 11.7 | 12.4 | 12.4 | 10.6 | 10.6 | 10.6 |
| Ark. | 11.9 | 12.4 | 12.1 | 10.3 | 10.3 | 10.2 |
| La. | 11.2 | 12.0 | 11.3 | 10.0 | 10.0 | 9.9 |
| Okla. | 11.9 | 13.0 | 12.8 | 10.2 | 10.4 | 10.3 |
| Tex. | 11.9 | 12.3 | 12.7 | 10.4 | 10.4 | 10.4 |
| W. S. Cent. | 11.8 | 12.5 | 12.3 | 10.3 | 10.3 | 10.3 |
| Mont. | 12.6 | 13.3 | 13.1 | 10.7 | 11.2 | 10.8 |
| Idaho | 12.8 | 13.5 | 13.6 | 10.0 | 10.0 | 10.0 |
| Wyo. | 12.1 | 13.2 | 13.2 | 10.4 | 10.7 | 10.6 |
| Colo. | 12.5 | 13.2 | 13.4 | 10.5 | 11.0 | 10.7 |
| N. Mex. | 12.0 | 12.9 | 12.9 | 10.4 | 10.4 | 10.0 |
| Ariz. | 11.5 | 11.7 | 12.2 | 9.4 | 9.6 | 9.3 |
| Utah | 12.0 | 13.2 | 13.2 | 9.0 | 9.0 | 9.1 |
| Nev. | 11.6 | 12.9 | 12.1 | 9.0 | 9.0 | 10.5 |
| Mount. | 12.3 | 13.1 | 13.2 | 10.1 | 10.3 | 10.1 |
| Wash. | 11.5 | 12.7 | 12.3 | 10.0 | 10.0 | 9.8 |
| Oreg. | 11.8 | 12.5 | 12.2 | 9.6 | 9.6 | 9.5 |
| Calif. | 11.0 | 11.6 | 11.7 | 9.3 | 9.4 | 9.2 |
| Pacific | 11.3 | 12.1 | 12.0 | 9.5 | 9.6 | 9.3 |
| U. S. | 12.1 | 12.8 | 12.8 | 10.4 | 10.7 | 10.6 |

Farm wage rates, rural living costs and real farm wage rates, United States, 1910-44
(Index numbers, 1910-14 = 100)

| Year | Farm wage rates | Rural living costs ^{1/} | Real farm wage rates ^{2/} |
|--------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1910 | 97 | 98 | 99 |
| 1911 | 98 | 100 | 98 |
| 1912 | 101 | 101 | 100 |
| 1913 | 103 | 100 | 103 |
| 1914 | 101 | 102 | 99 |
| 1915 | 103 | 107 | 96 |
| 1916 | 113 | 124 | 91 |
| 1917 | 141 | 147 | 96 |
| 1918 | 177 | 177 | 100 |
| 1919 | 207 | 210 | 99 |
| 1920 | 242 | 222 | 109 |
| 1921 | 155 | 161 | 96 |
| 1922 | 151 | 156 | 97 |
| 1923 | 169 | 160 | 106 |
| 1924 | 173 | 159 | 109 |
| 1925 | 176 | 163 | 108 |
| 1926 | 179 | 162 | 110 |
| 1927 | 179 | 160 | 112 |
| 1928 | 179 | 160 | 112 |
| 1929 | 180 | 159 | 113 |
| 1930 | 167 | 150 | 111 |
| 1931 | 130 | 128 | 102 |
| 1932 | 96 | 108 | 89 |
| 1933 | 85 | 108 | 79 |
| 1934 | 95 | 122 | 78 |
| 1935 | 103 | 124 | 83 |
| 1936 | 111 | 123 | 90 |
| 1937 | 126 | 128 | 98 |
| 1938 | 125 | 122 | 102 |
| 1939 | 123 | 120 | 102 |
| 1940 | 126 | 121 | 104 |
| 1941 | 154 | 131 | 118 |
| 1942 | 201 | 154 | 131 |
| 1943 | 264 | 170 | 155 |
| 1944 ^{3/} | 325 | 178 | 183 |

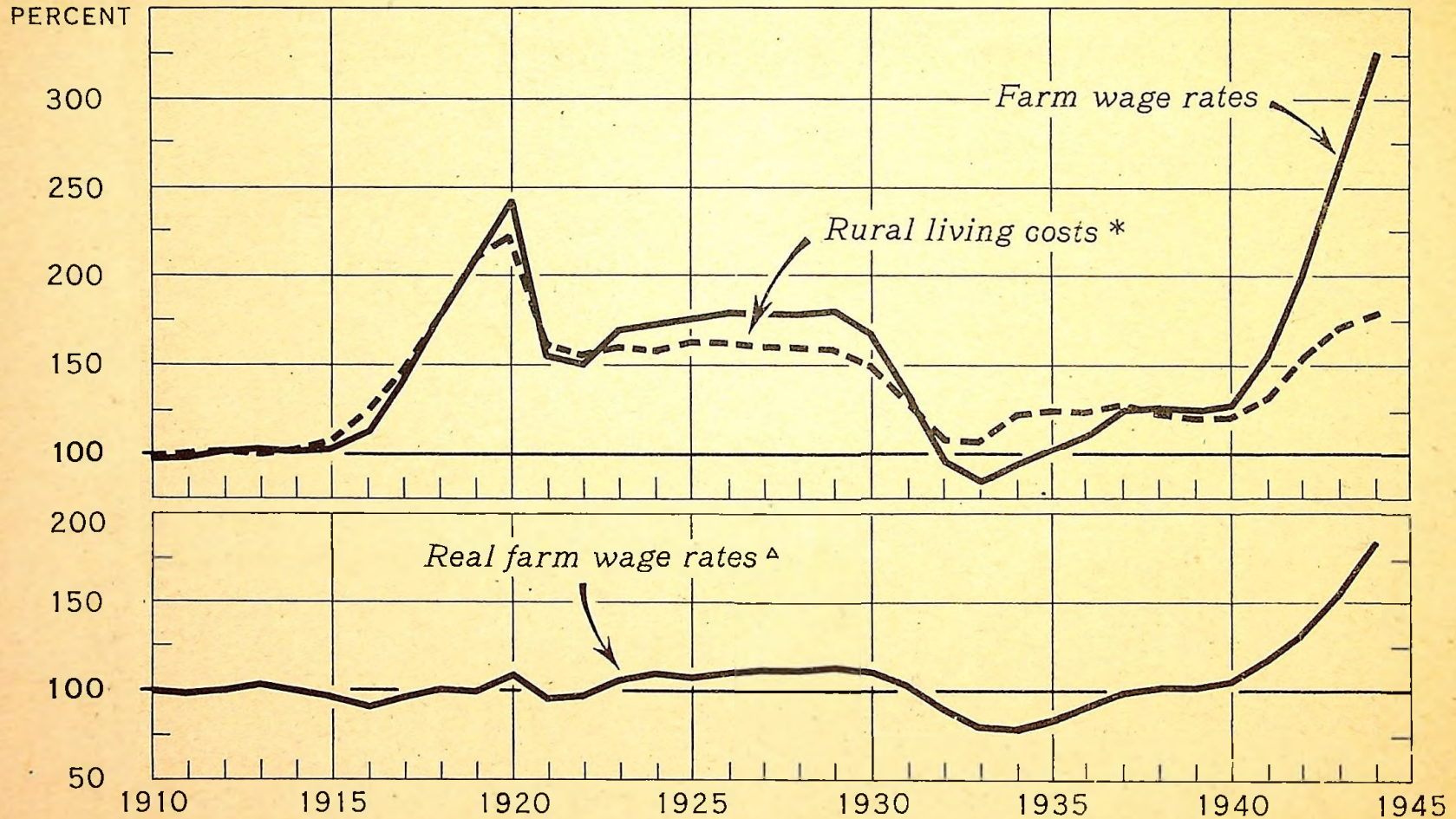
^{1/} Prices paid by farmers for commodities used in family living.

^{2/} Wage rates divided by rural living costs.

^{3/} Preliminary estimates.

FARM WAGE RATES, RURAL LIVING COSTS, AND REAL FARM WAGE RATES, UNITED STATES, 1910-44

INDEX NUMBERS (1910-14=100)



* PRICES PAID BY FARMERS FOR COMMODITIES USED IN LIVING

^Δ WAGE RATES DIVIDED BY RURAL LIVING COSTS

DATA FOR 1944 ARE PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES