



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

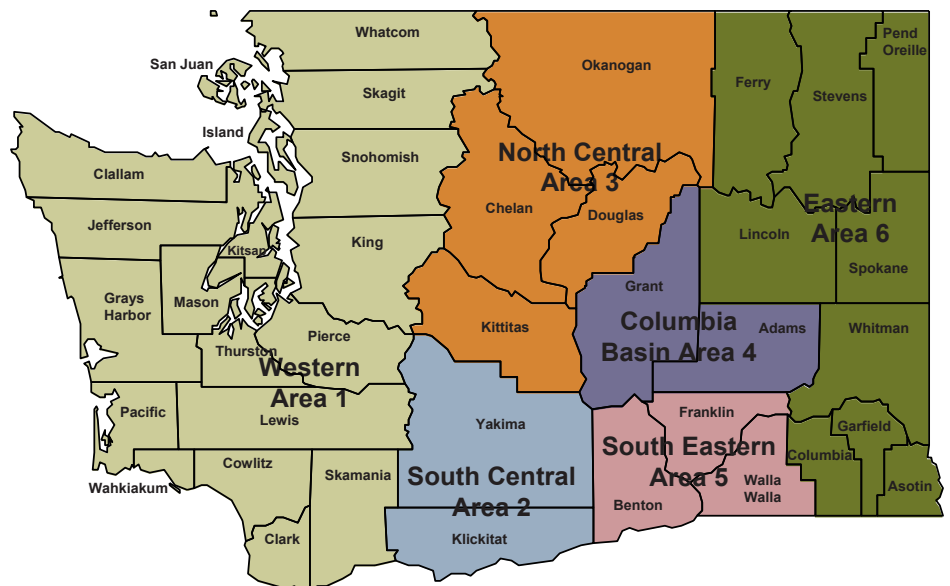
August 2007

Executive Summary

The large downturn in statewide seasonal employment from July 2007 to August 2007 (33.5 percent) can be attributed to the winding down of the cherry harvest (-22,419). Likewise, this same crop was also down by 88.2 percent from August 2006 to August 2007 (-6,612). This over-the-year drop was due to the large seasonal shifts that frequently occur from year to year in the larger harvested crops. These are primarily driven by weather, as well as market and horticultural reasons.

- Statewide apple employment led over-the-year crop growth (4,783) by 31.0 percent.
- Regionally, Columbia Basin (Area 4) experienced the largest annual growth rate of 10.2 percent, due to the arrival of the pear harvest.
- Eastern (Area 6) seasonal employment showed the greatest over-the-year loss at 27.0 percent, caused by a decline in the wheat/grain harvest.

Agricultural Reporting Areas in Washington State



Total Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide total agricultural employment expanded by 7.1 percent from August 2006 to August 2007. Over-the-month total employment fell by 20.2 percent. Over the year regionally, Western (Area 1) total employment

declined by 1.3 percent. South Central (Area 2) total employment moved ahead by 3.8 percent. North Central (Area 3) total employment climbed by 5.3 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) total employment advanced

by 13.4 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) total employment moved upward by 20.1 percent. Eastern (Area 6) total employment increased by 4.0 percent.

Seasonal Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment inched ahead by 0.8 percent from August 2006 to August 2007. Agricultural activities displaying over-the-year gains were:

- apple work (4,783)
- pear work (1,339)
- other seasonal work (1,246)
- miscellaneous vegetables work (988)
- grapes work (590)
- potato work (219)
- cucumber work (134)
- asparagus work (82)
- bulb work (70)

Activities displaying losses were:

- cherry work (-6,612)
- nursery work (-1,019)
- blueberry work (-582)
- raspberry work (-352)
- wheat/grain work (-183)
- onion work (-175)
- other tree fruit work (-115)
- hops work (-52)
- strawberry work (-38)

Across the state, the Western area seasonal employment declined by 1.1 percent, caused by a decrease in nursery work (-681). South Central seasonal

employment contracted by 0.4 percent, due to a decline in apple work (-1,683). North Central seasonal employment grew by 0.7 percent, also due to an increase in apple work (6,986). Columbia Basin seasonal employment grew by 10.2 percent, caused by a surge in pear work (511). South Eastern seasonal employment slowed by 0.4 percent, caused by a drop in apple work (-1,490). Eastern seasonal employment lagged by 27.0 percent, due to a decline in wheat/grain work (-178).

Statewide and Regional Wage Trends

Statewide real (inflation-adjusted) seasonal agricultural wages moved forward by 5.0 percent from August 2005 to August 2007. Washington state real minimum wages expanded by 4.4 percent during this same time period. Statewide real agricultural seasonal wages grew by 2.8 percent from August 2006 to August 2007. The real state minimum wage increased by 0.8 percent during this same time period. Western real seasonal wages picked up by 3.2 percent from August 2006 to August 2007. South Central seasonal

wages grew by 2.4 percent. North Central seasonal wages expanded by 1.9 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal wages rose by 2.2 percent. South Eastern seasonal wages propelled upward by 6.6 percent. Eastern (Area 6) seasonal wages fell by 1.0 percent.

Statewide nominal seasonal agricultural wages advanced by 11.1 percent from August 2005 to August 2007. Washington state nominal minimum wages expanded by 7.9 percent during this same time period. Statewide nominal agricultural seasonal

wages grew by 6.0 percent from August 2006 to August 2007. The state minimum wage grew by 3.9 percent during this same time period. Western seasonal wages moved ahead by 6.4 percent. South Central seasonal wages grew 5.6 percent. North Central seasonal wages increased by 5.2 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal wages thrust ahead by 5.5 percent. South Eastern seasonal wages also jumped forward by 10.0 percent. Eastern (Area 6) seasonal wages swung upward by 2.2 percent.

Statewide and Regional Employment Trends

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment increased by 8.2 percent from August 2005 to August 2007. Statewide seasonal agricultural employment increased by 0.8 percent from August 2006 to August 2007. Western seasonal employment fell by 1.1 percent. South Central seasonal employment fell by 0.4

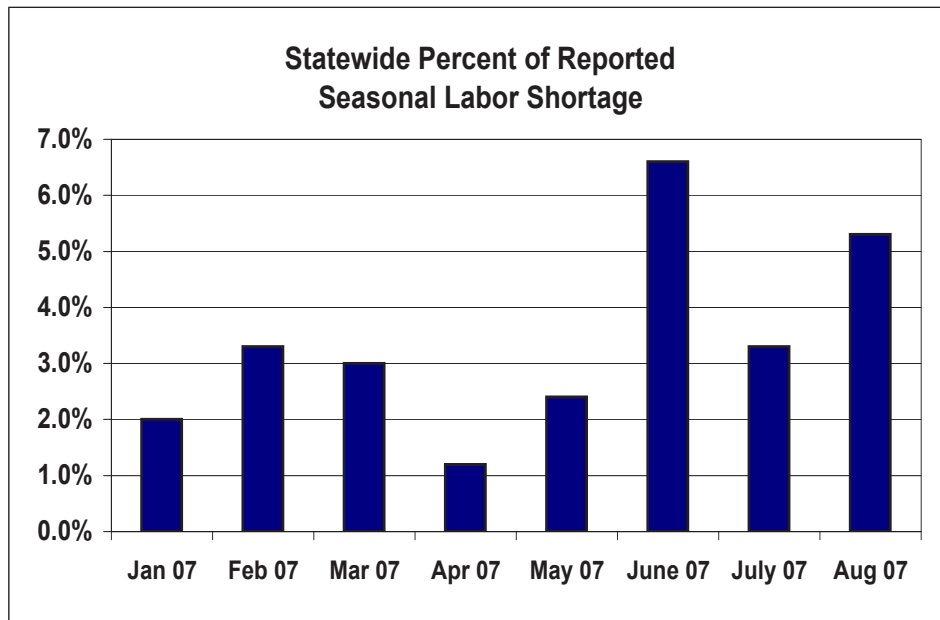
percent. North Central seasonal employment inched up by 0.6 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal employment expanded by 10.2 percent. South Eastern seasonal employment slipped by 0.4 percent. Eastern seasonal employment plunged by 27.5 percent during that same time period.




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 August, 270 usable surveys were returned. The chart below measures all workers needed as a percent of seasonal workers needed.



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



Seasonal workers, for the purpose of the Farm Labor Survey, are those working less than 150 days per year.



Methodology

The *Agricultural Labor Employment and Wages* report uses data from the monthly Seasonal Farm Labor Survey. This is a survey of 600 agricultural growers in the state. They report monthly the number of total and seasonal workers by crop, activity, and wage. Both hourly and piece rates are used. *Seasonal* workers for the purpose of the survey are those working less than 150 days per year. The state is grouped into six areas based on agricultural economic similarity. The tables and charts presented in this report compare the seasonal agricultural employment for the state and the six areas for the current month, previous month, and year ago. Percentage increases as well as raw numbers are given. The weighted monthly wage for seasonal employment is given for the state and the six areas. Each crop activity having significant employment is noted as a percentage change for previous month and year ago. The crops having the high-

est gain and highest decline in employment are highlighted in the narrative.

The Seasonal Labor Abstract is also included. This contains the top four crop activities by employment and wage for each of the six areas. Piece rates are given in addition to hourly wages when available and disclosable. Some variation in the reporting of the seasonal data can be attributed to the requirement that employment be reported in the pay period including the 12th of the month. Due to the fact that the timing of a given crop's harvest and other activities can be affected by weather and other conditions, periods of peak employment do not always fit precisely within this reporting period. This can lead to some variation of estimated employment by crop when comparing activity in similar time periods. The report is intended for economists, growers' associations, educators, state agencies, labor unions, and outreach workers.

Related Ag Links

[Washington crop harvest and weather information](#)

[What's new in agricultural employment](#)

Agricultural Labor Report

Washington State Employment Security, Labor Market and Economic Analysis

Seasonal Labor Abstract August 2007

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, wages, and their residence. Based on these data, the Washington Employment Security Department develops estimates on the size of the workforce, average wages for each crop activity, and whether workers commute, live within the state, or come in from outside of Washington state. 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: 6,591 (2,827 local, 11 intrastate, 1,391 interstate, 167 foreign, 2,195 unknown origin)

Blueberry Sorter/Grader/Packer	1,339	\$ 8.08/hr
Blackberry Harvester	672	\$ 7.93/hr
Potato Sorter/Grader/Packer	663	\$ 8.59/hr
Broccoli Harvester	381	\$ 8.00/hr

South Central (Klickitat and Yakima counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 10,589 (8,525 local, 384 intrastate, 370 interstate, 356 foreign, 954 unknown origin)

Pear Harvester.	3,250	\$ 7.93/hr or \$14.00 - \$20.60 per bin
Apple Harvester.	996	\$ 8.00/hr
Apple Pruner	930	\$ 8.00/hr
Apple Hand Thinner	651	\$ 7.96/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 11,868 (3,638 local, 87 intrastate, 693 interstate, 14 foreign, 7,436 unknown origin)

Apple Harvester.	7,978	\$ 9.12/hr
Apple Hand Thinner	890	\$ 7.93/hr
Apple Pruner	825	\$ 7.93/hr
Pear Harvester.	615	\$ 8.50/hr

Columbia Basin (Adams and Grant counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 7,079 (4,430 local, 0 intrastate, 601 interstate, 267 foreign, 1,781 unknown origin)

Apple Harvester.	1,695	\$ 8.17/hr or \$14.00 - \$25.00 per bin
Apple Hand Thinner	1,527	\$ 8.28/hr
Apple Pruner	740	\$ 8.20/hr
Potato Sorter/Grader/Packer	657	\$ 8.03/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 5,476 (4,513 local, 0 intrastate, 173 interstate, 128 foreign, 662 unknown origin)

Apple Harvester.	1,015	\$ 7.93/hr
Peach Sorter/Grader/Packer	560	\$ 9.75/hr
Nectarine Sorter/Grader/Packer	554	\$ 9.75/hr
Grapes Hand Thinner	439	\$ 8.67/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 727 (593 local, 22 intrastate, 0 interstate, 89 foreign, 22 unknown origin)

Wheat Vehicle Operator	228	\$11.67/hr
Wheat Harvester	135	\$12.67/hr
Alfalfa Irrigator	90	\$ 9.00/hr
Wheat Tractor Operator	45	\$12.00/hr

Washington State Agricultural Crop Areas Harvest Periods



Washington state crop harvest timetables are listed below by agricultural areas. The dates may vary considerably due to weather or other conditions.

Note that the five area groupings in the following timeline charts do not directly match with the six agricultural area groupings that are used in the Seasonal Farm Labor Survey data used in this report.

Washington State Agricultural Crop Areas												
Major Crops	Okanogan and Wenatchee Crop Areas											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Apples												
Cherries												
Pears												
Golden Delicious												
Red Delicious												

Washington State Agricultural Crop Areas												
Major Crops	Moses Lake Crop Areas											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Asparagus												
Apples												
Cherries												
Peaches												
Potatoes												

Washington State Agricultural Crop Areas												
Major Crops	Tri-Cities and Walla Walla Crop Areas											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Asparagus												
Apples												
Cherries												
Apricots												
Peaches												
Pears												
Onions												
Strawberries												

Washington State Agricultural Crop Areas												
Major Crops	Bellingham and Mount Vernon Crop Areas											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Flowers												
Cucumbers												
Broccoli												
Cauliflower												
Spinach												
Blueberries												
Raspberries												
Strawberries												

Washington State Agricultural Crop Areas												
Major Crops	Bingen, Sunnyside, and Yakima Crop Areas											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Asparagus												
Apples												
Cherries												
Peaches												
Pears												
Grapes												
Hops												
Vegetables												



August 2007
Agricultural Farm Labor Report, Washington State
Estimated Number of Seasonal Hired Workers by Place of Origin

Agricultural Reporting Area	Local	Intra-state	Inter-state	Foreign	Unknown	Seasonal Area Total	Permanent Area Total	Total Area Total
1. Western	2,830	10	1,390	170	2,200	6,590	6,490	13,080
2. South Central	8,530	380	370	360	950	10,590	17,770	28,360
3. North Central	3,640	90	690	10	7,440	11,870	10,670	22,530
4. Columbia Basin	4,430	0	600	270	1,780	7,080	5,930	13,010
5. South Eastern	4,510	0	170	130	660	5,480	10,740	16,220
6. Eastern	590	20	0	90	20	730	1,350	2,080
State Totals	24,530	500	3,230	1,020	13,050	42,330	52,950	95,280
% State Seasonal	56.7%	0.9%	6.6%	4.7%	31.1%	100%		

Total Agricultural Employment

	August 07	July 07	August 06	Change		Percent Change	
				July 07- August 07	August 06- August 07	July 07- August 07	August 06- August 07
State	95,280	119,350	88,940	-24,070	6,340	-20.2%	7.1%
Western	13,080	14,200	13,250	-1,120	-170	-7.9%	-1.3%
South Central	28,360	34,010	27,330	-5,650	1,030	-16.6%	3.8%
North Central	22,530	36,070	21,400	-13,540	1,130	-37.5%	5.3%
Columbia Basin	13,010	13,880	11,470	-870	1,540	-6.3%	13.4%
South Eastern	16,220	19,650	13,510	-3,430	2,710	-17.5%	20.1%
Eastern	2,080	1,540	2,000	540	80	35.4%	4.0%

Seasonal Agricultural Employment

	August 07	July 07	August 06	Change		Percent Change	
				July 07- August 07	August 06- August 07	July 07- August 07	August 06- August 07
State	42,330	63,630	42,010	-21,300	320	-33.5%	0.8%
Western	6,590	7,140	6,670	-550	-70	-7.7%	-1.1%
South Central	10,590	21,400	10,630	-10,810	-40	-50.5%	-0.4%
North Central	11,870	19,280	11,790	-7,410	80	-38.5%	0.6%
Columbia Basin	7,080	7,260	6,430	-190	650	-2.5%	10.2%
South Eastern	5,480	7,880	5,500	-2,400	-20	-30.5%	-0.4%
Eastern	730	680	1,000	50	-270	7.7%	-27.3%

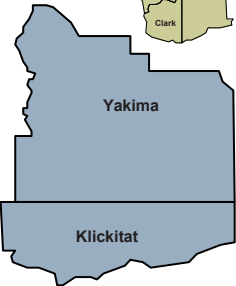
For more data and a sample of the Agricultural Labor Report survey, go to [August 2007 Agricultural Labor Employment and Wages Tables on Workforce Explorer](#)

Agricultural Labor Report
Factors Affecting the Farm Labor Supply and Demand Situation
Crop, Market, and Weather Conditions by Area
Washington State, July 2007



Western (Area 1)

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal for the reporting period. Greenhouse tomato growers reported prolific yields and excellent demand. Potato harvest began with yields expected to be down this year. Sweet corn harvest was under way, and blueberries were still be harvested.



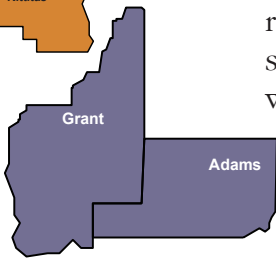
South Central (Area 2)

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal for the reporting period. Rain delayed some of the fruit harvest, but later Gala apple harvest was in full swing. Bartlett pears, peaches, and nectarines were also being harvested.



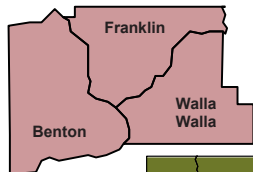
North Central (Area 3)

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal for the reporting period. The second cutting of timothy hay was being swathed, and sweet corn harvest was under way. Primary agricultural activities were apple harvesting, apple hand thinning, apple pruning, and pear harvesting.



Columbia Basin (Area 4)

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal for the reporting period. The fourth cutting of alfalfa was 5 percent complete. Onion and carrot seed planting continued. Sweet corn and dry pea harvest continued. Winter wheat seeding progressed well throughout the area. Primary agricultural activities were apple harvesting, apple hand thinning, apple pruning and potato warehouse work.



South Eastern (Area 5)

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal for the reporting period. Wheat and hay harvest was progressing well. Primary agricultural activities were apple harvesting, peach warehouse work, nectarine warehouse work, and grapes hand thinning.



Eastern (Area 6)

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal for the reporting period. Most grain crops had been harvested. Primary agricultural activities were wheat vehicle operation and wheat harvest.