



**Washington State
Employment Security Department**

**Labor Market and Economic Analysis
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Labor Market Information Center
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1-800-215-1617
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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

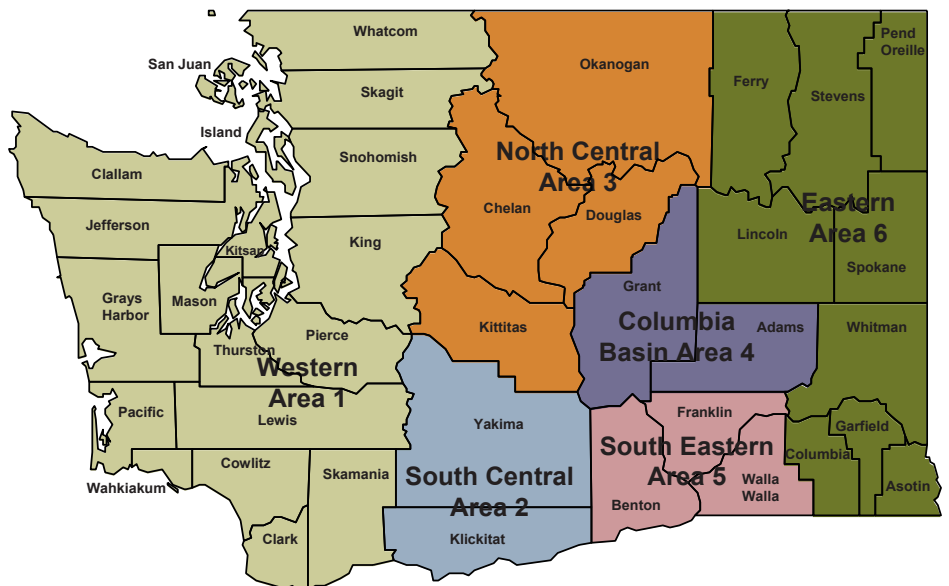
December 2007

Executive Summary

The 12.5 percent decline in statewide seasonal employment from December 2006 to December 2007 was due to less apple pruning. This over-the-year decline was caused by 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 the over-the-year crop decrease (-1,442) by 18.6 percent.
- South Eastern (Area 5) seasonal employment displayed the largest over-the-year gain at 123.5 percent, caused by an increase (909) in apple work.

Agricultural Reporting Areas in Washington State



Total Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide total agricultural employment fell by 0.8 percent from December 2006 to December 2007. Over-the-month total employment decreased by 12.2 percent. Over-the-year regionally, Western (Area 1) total

employment declined by 3.1 percent. South Central (Area 2) total employment declined by 5.1 percent. North Central (Area 3) total employment contracted by 5.6 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) total employment

moved forward by 8.4 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) total employment expanded by 9.1 percent. Eastern (Area 6) total employment advanced by 4.3 percent.

Seasonal Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment declined by 12.5 percent from December 2006 to December 2007. Agricultural activities displaying over-the-year declines were:

- apple work (-1,442)
- nursery work (-915)
- raspberry work (-882)
- miscellaneous vegetables work (-169)
- pear work (-111)
- other tree fruit work (-75)
- wheat/grain work (-29)
- hops work (-4)

Activities displaying gains were:

- cherry work (543)
- bulb work (528)
- blueberry work (388)
- other seasonal work (199)
- potato work (199)
- onion work (122)
- grapes work (32)

Across the state, Western area seasonal employment declined by 20.2 percent, caused by a decrease in raspberry work (-882). South Central seasonal employment decreased by 28.6 percent,

due to a decline in apple work (-1,870). North Central seasonal employment fell by 34.9 percent, due to a decline in apple work (-862). Columbia Basin seasonal employment expanded by 12.6 percent, caused by an increase in apple work (381). South Eastern seasonal employment moved ahead by 123.5 percent, due to an expansion in apple work (909). Eastern seasonal employment slowed by 36.9 percent, due to a decline in wheat/grain work (-29).

Statewide and Regional Wage Trends

From December 2005 to December 2007, statewide real (inflation-adjusted) seasonal agricultural wages advanced by 4.1 percent. Washington state real minimum wages expanded by 2.0 percent. From December 2006 to December 2007, statewide real agricultural seasonal wages increased by 1.7 percent, and the real state minimum wage increased by 2.0 percent. From December 2006 to December 2007, Western real seasonal wages grew by 3.3 percent. South Central seasonal wages expanded by 2.0 percent. North

Central seasonal wages rose by 4.0 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal wages increased by 1.5 percent. South Eastern seasonal wages softened by 2.0 percent.

From December 2005 to December 2007, statewide nominal seasonal agricultural wages rose by 10.2 percent. Washington state nominal minimum wages rose by 7.9 percent. From December 2006 to December 2007, statewide nominal agricultural seasonal wages grew by 4.9 percent. The state minimum wage moved ahead by 3.9 percent.

From December 2006 to December 2007, Western seasonal wages expanded by 6.6 percent. South Central seasonal wages moved forward by 5.2 percent. North Central seasonal wages charged ahead by 7.3 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal wages expanded by 4.8 percent. South Eastern seasonal wages slipped up by 1.1 percent.

Statewide and Regional Employment Trends

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment grew by 4.7 percent from December 2005 to December 2007. Statewide seasonal agricultural employment contracted by 12.5 percent from December 2006 to December 2007. Western seasonal employment declined by 20.2 percent during that same time period. South Central seasonal employ-

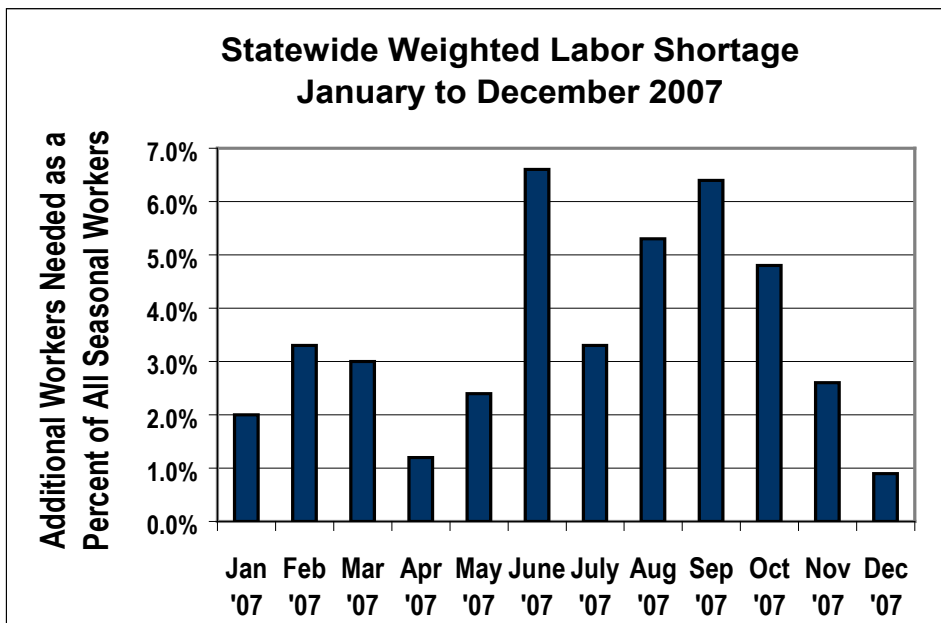
ment decreased by 28.6 percent. North Central seasonal employment slowed by 34.9 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal employment moved forward by 12.6 percent. South Eastern seasonal employment leaped ahead by 123.5 percent. Eastern seasonal employment lagged by 36.9 percent.



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, 287 usable surveys were returned. The chart below estimates additional workers needed as a percent of all seasonal workers.



In December, 287 usable labor supply surveys were returned.

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](#)

Seasonal Labor Abstract December 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, estimates are developed 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: 2,314 (1,849 local, 161 intrastate, 0 interstate, 0 foreign, 304 unknown origin)

Potato Sorter/Grader/Packer	875	\$ 8.46/hr
Bulbs Sorter/Grader/Packer	559	\$ 8.91/hr
Blueberry Pruner	382	\$ 7.93/hr
Raspberry Sorter/Grader/Packer	122	\$ 8.13/hr

South Central (Klickitat and Yakima counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 2,698 (2,231 local, 192 intrastate, 101 interstate, 174 foreign, 0 unknown origin)

Apple Pruner	1,394	\$ 7.93/hr
Cherry Pruner	490	\$ 9.39/hr
Bulbs Sorter/Grader/Packer	243	\$ 8.00/hr
Pear Pruner	236	Not Available

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 2,333 (1,804 local, 0 intrastate, 0 interstate, 0 foreign, 529 unknown origin)

Apple Pruner	1,657	\$ 8.03/hr or \$ 0.80 - \$ 5.00 per tree
Apple Sorter/Grader/Packer	421	\$ 8.43/hr
Apple Forklift Driver	96	\$ 9.47/hr
Cherry Pruner	84	\$ 9.40/hr

Columbia Basin (Adams and Grant counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 1,855 (1,356 local, 0 intrastate, 0 interstate, 0 foreign, 499 unknown origin)

Apple Pruner	947	\$ 8.20/hr or \$ 0.55 - \$ 1.90 per tree
Apple Hand Thinner	264	\$ 7.93/hr
Misc Onion Sorter/Grader/Packer	199	\$ 7.93/hr
Cherry Pruner	113	\$ 7.93/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 2,070 (1,085 local, 0 intrastate, 49 interstate, 684 foreign, 252 unknown origin)

Apple Pruner	1,389	\$ 7.96/hr
Cherry Pruner	180	\$ 7.99/hr
Pear Pruner	178	\$ 7.93/hr or \$ 0.65 - \$ 5.00 per tree
Chicken Eggs Worker	107	\$ 8.30/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 82 (23 local, 0 intrastate, 0 interstate, 0 foreign, 59 unknown origin)

Nursery Worker	40	\$ 8.00/hr
Wheat Worker	30	\$10.00/hr
Apple Pruner	8	\$ 8.75/hr
Apple Mechanic	4	\$ 8.75/hr

December 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	1,850	160	0	0	300	2,310	5,900	8,210
2. South Central	2,230	190	100	170	0	2,700	12,550	15,250
3. North Central	1,800	0	0	0	530	2,330	7,700	10,030
4. Columbia Basin	1,360	0	0	0	500	1,860	4,560	6,410
5. South Eastern	1,090	0	50	680	250	2,070	6,670	8,740
6. Eastern	20	0	0	0	60	80	1,120	1,200
State Totals	8,350	350	150	860	1,640	11,350	38,490	49,850
% State Seasonal	73.6%	3.1%	1.3%	7.6%	14.5%	100%		

Total Agricultural Employment

	Dec 07	Nov 07	Dec 06	Change		Percent Change	
				Nov 07- Dec 07	Dec 06- Dec 07	Nov 07- Dec 07	Dec 06- Dec 07
State	49,850	56,760	50,240	-6,910	-400	-12.2%	-0.8%
Western	8,210	8,410	8,470	-210	-260	-2.5%	-3.1%
South Central	15,250	16,580	16,070	-1,330	-820	-8.0%	-5.1%
North Central	10,030	11,160	10,630	-1,120	-590	-10.0%	-5.6%
Columbia Basin	6,410	8,330	5,920	-1,920	500	-23.0%	8.4%
South Eastern	8,740	11,040	8,020	-2,300	730	-20.8%	9.1%
Eastern	1,200	1,230	1,150	-30	50	-2.4%	4.3%

Seasonal Agricultural Employment

	Dec 07	Nov 07	Dec 06	Change		Percent Change	
				Nov 07- Dec 07	Dec 06- Dec 07	Nov 07- Dec 07	Dec 06- Dec 07
State	11,350	14,170	12,970	-2,820	-1,620	-19.9%	-12.5%
Western	2,310	1,970	2,900	340	-590	17.2%	-20.2%
South Central	2,700	4,760	3,780	-2,060	-1,080	-43.3%	-28.6%
North Central	2,330	3,120	3,590	-790	-1,250	-25.3%	-34.9%
Columbia Basin	1,860	2,960	1,650	-1,110	210	-37.4%	12.6%
South Eastern	2,070	1,180	930	890	1,140	76.0%	123.5%
Eastern	80	180	130	-100	-50	-53.9%	-36.9%

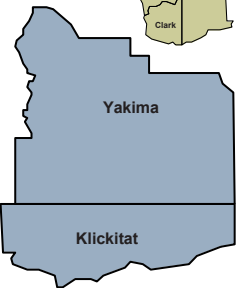
For more data and a sample of the Agricultural Labor Report survey, go to [December 2007 Agricultural Labor Employment and Wages Tables on Workforce Explorer](#)

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



Western (Area 1)

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal for the reporting period. Primary agricultural activities were potato, bulbs and raspberry warehouse work and blueberry pruning.



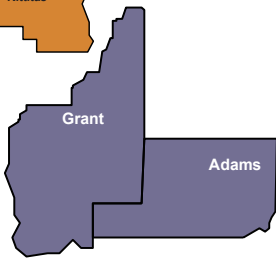
South Central (Area 2)

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



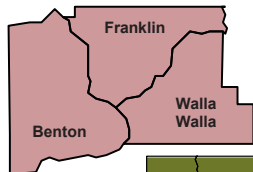
North Central (Area 3)

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal for the reporting period. Primary agricultural activities were apple pruning and apple warehouse work.



Columbia Basin (Area 4)

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal for the reporting period. Primary agricultural activities were apple pruning, apple hand thinning, onion warehouse work, and cherry pruning.



South Eastern (Area 5)

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal for the reporting period. Primary agricultural activities were apple pruning, cherry pruning, 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.