



**Washington State
Employment Security Department**

**Labor Market and Economic Analysis
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Labor Market Information Center
(LMIC)
1-800-215-1617
or visit us on the Web
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

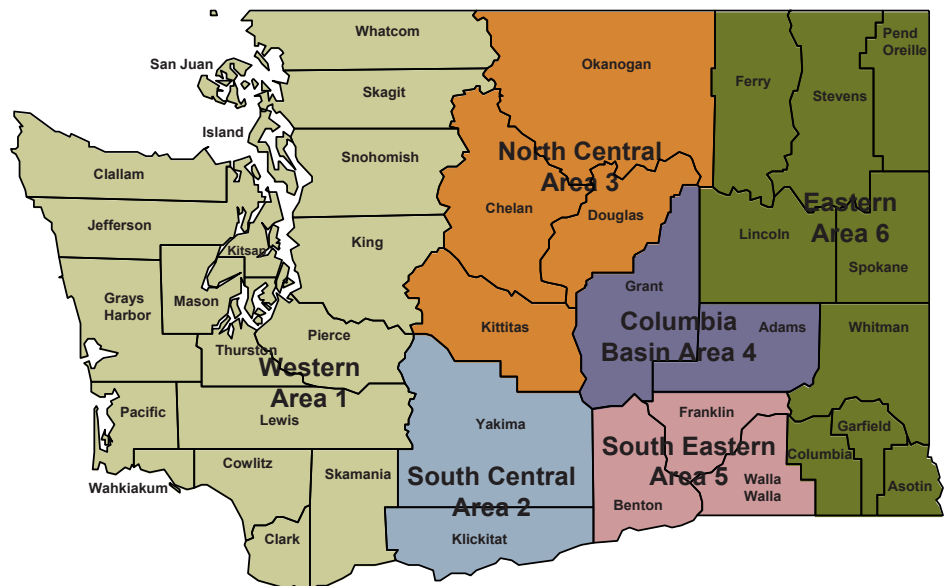
November 2007

Executive Summary

The 14.3 percent decline in statewide seasonal employment from November 2006 to November 2007 was due to a smaller apple harvest. 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 (-3,617) by 32.8 percent.
- Regionally, South Eastern (Area 5) experienced the largest annual decline in seasonal employment of 60.4 percent, due to a smaller apple harvest (-1,613).
- South Central (Area 2) seasonal employment displayed the largest over-the-year gain at 9.5 percent, caused by an increase (959) in other seasonal work.

Agricultural Reporting Areas in Washington State



Total Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide total agricultural employment rose by 5.7 percent from November 2006 to November 2007. Over the month, total employment declined by 39.5 percent. Over the year regionally, Western (Area 1) total

employment fell by 4.9 percent. South Central (Area 2) total employment moved ahead by 1.9 percent. North Central (Area 3) total employment grew by 6.0 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) total employment bumped

up by 11.9 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) total employment moved forward by 15.9 percent. Eastern (Area 6) total employment expanded by 3.0 percent.

Seasonal Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment declined by 14.3 percent from November 2006 to November 2007. Agricultural activities displaying over-the-year declines were:

- apple work (-3,617)
- nursery work (-587)
- other tree fruit work (-381)
- raspberry work (-252)
- miscellaneous vegetables work (-186)
- bulb work (-85)
- potato work (-22)
- blueberry work (-6)

Activities displaying gains were:

- other seasonal work (1,376)
- pear work (530)
- grapes work (214)
- cherry work (204)
- hops work (90)
- wheat/grain work (11)

Across the state, Western area seasonal employment declined by 16.1 percent, caused by a decrease in nursery work (-451). South Central seasonal employment increased by 9.5 percent, due to an increase in other

seasonal work (959). North Central seasonal employment contracted by 17.5 percent, due to a decline in apple work (-806). Columbia Basin seasonal employment grew by 2.6 percent, caused by a growth in onion work (364). South Eastern seasonal employment fell back by 60.4 percent, due to a contraction in apple work (-1,613). Eastern seasonal employment fell by 8.7 percent, due to a decline in nursery work (-69).

Statewide and Regional Wage Trends

Statewide real (inflation-adjusted) seasonal agricultural wages advanced by 3.1 percent from November 2005 to November 2007. Washington state real minimum wages expanded by 2.0 percent during this same time period. Statewide real agricultural seasonal wages increased by 3.7 percent from November 2006 to November 2007. The real state minimum wage increased by 2.0 percent during this same time period. Western real seasonal wages increased by 2.1 percent. South Central seasonal wages advanced by 7.6

percent. North Central seasonal wages grew by 3.2 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal wages also moved forward by 3.2 percent. South Eastern seasonal wages slipped by 1.1 percent in the one-year time period.

Statewide nominal seasonal agricultural wages advanced by 9.1 percent from November 2005 to November 2007. Washington state nominal minimum wages rose by 7.9 percent during this same time period. Statewide nominal agricultural seasonal wages expanded by 7.0 percent

from November 2006 to November 2007. The state minimum wage moved ahead by 3.9 percent during this one-year period. Western seasonal wages increased by 5.4 percent. South Central seasonal wages ramped up by 11.0 percent. North Central seasonal wages picked up by 6.4 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal wages moved forward by 6.5 percent; and South Eastern seasonal wages edged up by 2.0 percent during this same time period.

Statewide and Regional Employment Trends

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment fell by 4.9 percent from November 2005 to November 2007. Statewide seasonal agricultural employment declined by 14.3 percent from November 2006 to November 2007. Western seasonal employment contracted by 16.1 percent. South Central seasonal employment increased by 9.5 percent. North

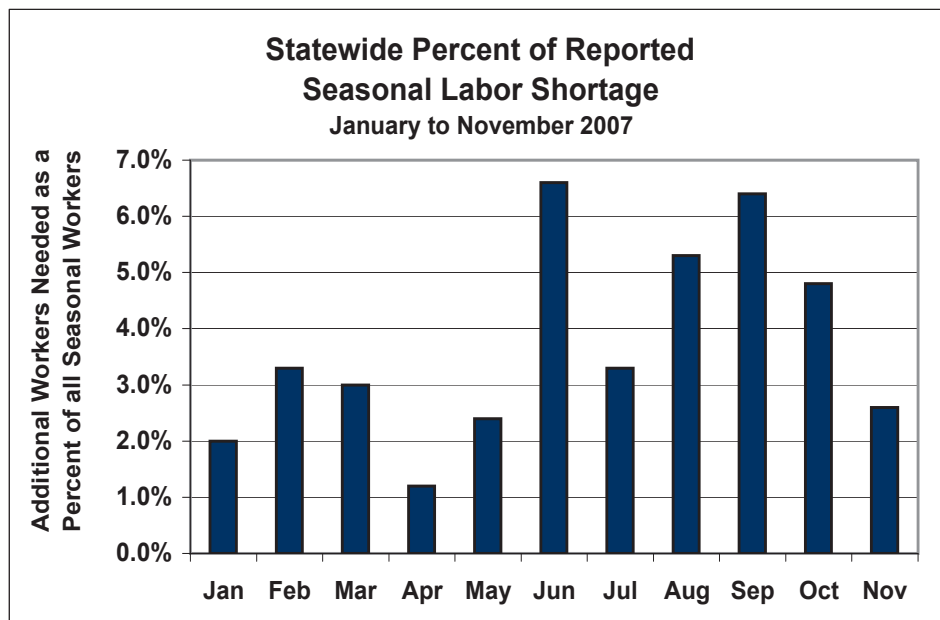
Central seasonal employment declined by 17.5 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal employment expanded by 2.6 percent. South Eastern seasonal employment plummeted by 60.4 percent; and Eastern seasonal employment slowed by 8.7 percent during this same time period.




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 November, 301 usable surveys were returned. The chart below measures additional workers needed as a percent of all seasonal workers.



In November, 301 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](#)

Agricultural Labor Report

Washington State Employment Security, Labor Market and Economic Analysis

Seasonal Labor Abstract November 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: 1,974 (1,598 local, 53, intrastate, 140 interstate, 0 foreign, 183 unknown origin)

Potato Sorter/Grader/Packer	859	\$ 8.46/hr
Raspberry Sorter/Grader/Packer	351	\$ 8.50/hr
General Farm Worker	150	\$ 7.93/hr
Raspberry Trainer	119	Not Available

South Central (Klickitat and Yakima counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 4,756 (3,829 local, 225 intrastate, 118 interstate, 86 foreign, 397 unknown origin)

Apple Harvester	2,299	\$ 9.00/hr
Contract Misc Crop Worker	352	Not Available
Pear Pruner	343	\$ 7.93/hr
Grapes Harvester	251	\$ 7.93/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 3,122 (2,184 local, 0 intrastate, 0 interstate, 0 foreign, 938 unknown origin)

Apple Pruner	1,638	\$ 7.94/hr
Apple Worker	389	\$ 8.00/hr
Pear Sorter/Grader/Packer	280	\$ 8.53/hr
Apple Weeder	252	\$ 8.06/hr

Columbia Basin (Adams and Grant counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 2,961 (2,363 local, 0 intrastate, 0 interstate, 478 foreign, 120 unknown origin)

Misc Onion Sorter/Grader/Packer	610	\$ 8.01/hr
Apple Harvester	590	\$ 8.42/hr
Apple Pruner	428	\$ 8.29/hr
Apple Preparation	428	\$ 8.21/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 1,176 (536 local, 0 intrastate, 0 interstate, 11 foreign, 629 unknown origin)

Apple Pruner	492	\$ 7.95/hr
Grapes Preparation	109	\$ 7.97/hr
Chicken Eggs Worker	104	\$ 8.30/hr
Apple Preparation	94	\$ 7.95/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 178 (123 local, 5 intrastate, 0 interstate, 5 foreign, 46 unknown origin)

Wheat Tractor Operator	65	\$12.00/hr
Bulbs Harvester	31	\$ 9.09/hr
Nursery Sorter/Grader/Packer	28	\$ 8.50/hr
Wheat Worker	16	\$10.00/hr

November 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	1,600	50	140	0	180	1,970	6,540	8,520
2. South Central	3,930	230	120	90	400	4,760	12,490	17,240
3. North Central	2,180	0	0	0	940	3,120	9,290	12,410
4. Columbia Basin	2,360	0	0	480	120	2,960	6,440	9,400
5. South Eastern	540	0	0	10	630	1,180	10,900	12,080
6. Eastern	120	0	0	0	50	180	1,060	1,240
State Totals	10,730	280	260	580	2,310	14,170	46,720	60,890
% State Seasonal	75.8%	2.0%	1.8%	4.1%	16.3%	100%		

Total Agricultural Employment

				Change		Percent Change	
	Nov 07	Oct 07	Nov 06	Oct 07- Nov 07	Nov 06- Nov 07	Oct 07- Nov 07	Nov 06- Nov 07
State	60,890	100,680	57,620	-39,790	3,270	-39.5%	5.7%
Western	8,520	10,200	8,960	-1,690	-440	-16.5%	-4.9%
South Central	17,240	30,750	16,930	-13,510	320	-43.9%	1.9%
North Central	12,410	23,930	11,710	-11,520	700	-48.1%	6.0%
Columbia Basin	9,400	16,080	8,410	-6,680	1,000	-41.5%	11.9%
South Eastern	12,080	18,240	10,420	-6,160	1,660	-33.8%	15.9%
Eastern	1,240	1,470	1,200	-240	40	-16.0%	3.0%

Seasonal Agricultural Employment

				Change		Percent Change	
	Nov 07	Oct 07	Nov 06	Oct 07- Nov 07	Nov 06- Nov 07	Oct 07- Nov 07	Nov 06- Nov 07
State	14,170	50,920	16,530	-36,760	-2,370	-72.2%	-14.3%
Western	1,970	3,710	2,350	-1,740	-380	-46.8%	-16.1%
South Central	4,760	13,570	4,340	-8,820	410	-65.0%	9.5%
North Central	3,120	15,010	3,790	-11,890	-660	-79.2%	-17.5%
Columbia Basin	2,960	9,800	2,890	-6,840	80	-69.8%	2.6%
South Eastern	1,180	8,460	2,970	-7,290	-1,800	-86.1%	-60.4%
Eastern	180	370	200	-190	-20	-51.8%	-8.7%

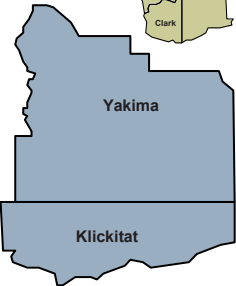
For more data and a sample of the Agricultural Labor Report survey, go to [November 2007 Agricultural Labor Employment and Wages Tables on Workforce Explorer](#)

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



Western (Area 1)

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal for the reporting period. Christmas tree harvest peaked. Primary agricultural activities were potato and raspberry warehouse work.



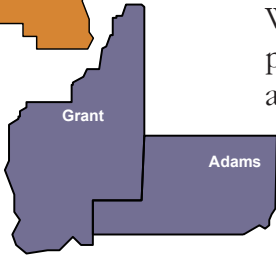
South Central (Area 2)

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal for the reporting period. No crop damage due to weather conditions was reported. Apple harvest wrapped up with the last pickings of Pink Lady apples.



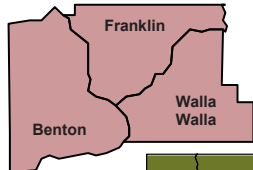
North Central (Area 3)

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal for the reporting period. All fruit harvesting was complete. Some growers began pruning their orchards. Winter wheat growing conditions continued to be below normal.



Columbia Basin (Area 4)

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal for the reporting period. Dry corn and fresh carrot harvests continued. Dryland winter wheat acreage looked good.



South Eastern (Area 5)

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal for the reporting period. Dryland wheat emergence improved with the added precipitation. Hay was in short supply. Many areas in Washington were out of hay for sale according to members of the Washington State Hay Growers Board.



Eastern (Area 6)

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