



**Washington State
Employment Security Department**
Labor Market and Economic Analysis
Greg Weeks, Ph.D., LMEA Director

Prepared by
John Wines, *Economist*
(360) 438-4843
jwines@esd.wa.gov

Judy Anderson, *Data Compiler*

For additional
labor market information:
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

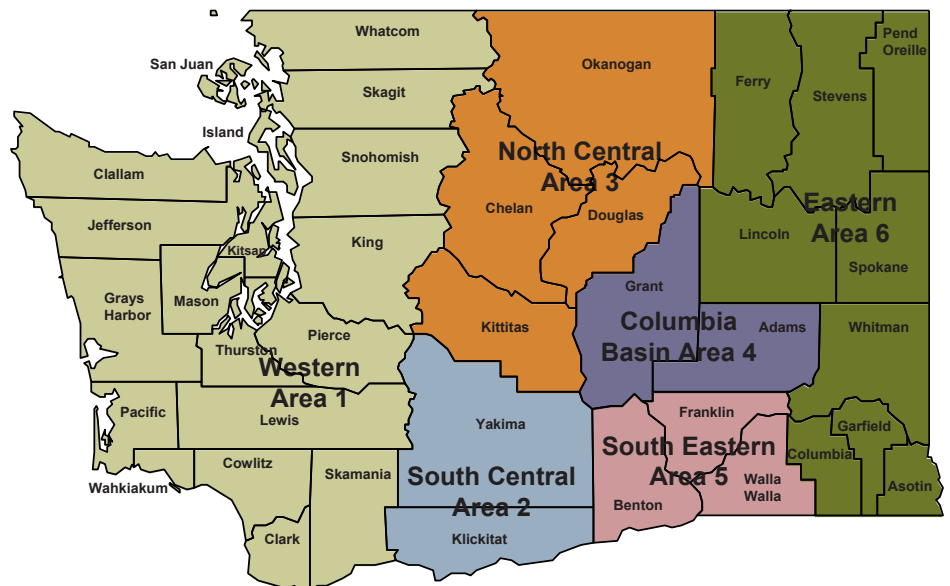
October 2007

Executive Summary

The increase in statewide seasonal employment from October 2006 to October 2007 (3.7 percent) was due to an increase in apple harvest employment. This over-the-year advance 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 over-the-year crop growth (2,015) by 5.3 percent.
- Regionally, South Eastern (Area 5) experienced the largest annual growth rate of 17.7 percent, due to the apple harvest (904).
- Eastern (Area 6) seasonal employment again displayed the largest over-the-year loss at 8.4 percent, caused by a decline in nursery work (-128).

Agricultural Reporting Areas in Washington State



Total Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide total agricultural employment grew by 5.4 percent from October 2006 to October 2007. Over-the-month total employment fell by 3.3 percent. Over the year regionally, Western (Area 1) total employment

declined by 3.0 percent. South Central (Area 2) total employment expanded by 1.4 percent. North Central (Area 3) total employment expanded by 3.6 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) total employment moved ahead

by 9.5 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) total employment ramped up by 17.4 percent. Eastern (Area 6) total employment rose by 6.6 percent.

Seasonal Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment moved forward by 3.7 percent from October 2006 to October 2007. Agricultural activities displaying over-the-year gains were:

- apple work (2,015)
- other seasonal work (1,228)
- grapes work (833)
- blueberry work (600)
- miscellaneous vegetables work (318)
- onion work (276)
- hops work (192)
- asparagus work (119)
- bulb work (74)

- cherries work (70)
- wheat/grain work (46)
- strawberry work (13)

Activities displaying over-the-year losses were:

- pear work (-1,513)
- nursery work (-876)
- raspberry work (-823)
- potato work (-662)
- other tree fruit work (-103)
- cucumber work (-5)

Across the state, Western area seasonal employment declined by 3.3 percent, caused by a decrease in raspberry work (-823).

South Central seasonal employment increased by 5.3 percent, due to an increase in apple work (2,620). North Central seasonal employment contracted by 2.3 percent, due to a decline in pear work (-585). Columbia Basin seasonal employment grew by 3.8 percent, caused by a growth in apple work (758). South Eastern seasonal employment ramped up by 17.7 percent, due to an expansion in apple work (904). Eastern seasonal employment fell by 8.4 percent, due to a decline in nursery work (-128).

Statewide and Regional Wage Trends

Statewide real (inflation-adjusted) seasonal agricultural wages advanced by 3.9 percent from October 2005 to October 2007. Washington state real minimum wages expanded by 4.4 percent during this two-year time frame. Statewide real agricultural seasonal wages decreased by 2.8 percent from October 2006 to October 2007. The real state minimum wage increased by 0.8 percent during this same time period. Western real seasonal wages expanded by 2.3 percent. South Central seasonal wages

slipped by 0.1 percent. North Central seasonal wages fell by 2.9 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal wages expanded by 2.5 percent, and South Eastern seasonal wages climbed by 1.6 percent over the year.

Statewide nominal seasonal agricultural wages grew by 9.9 percent from October 2005 to October 2007. Washington State nominal minimum wages grew by 7.9 percent during this two-year time period. Statewide nominal agricultural seasonal

wages grew by a small 0.3 percent from October 2006 to October 2007. The state minimum wage advanced by 3.9 percent during this same time period. Western seasonal wages expanded by 5.5 percent. South Central seasonal wages moved forward by 3.0 percent. North Central seasonal wages inched forward by 0.2 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal wages expanded by 5.7 percent, and South Eastern seasonal wages gained 4.8 percent over the year.

Statewide and Regional Employment Trends

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment grew by 4.9 percent from October 2005 to October 2007. Statewide seasonal agricultural employment expanded by 3.7 percent from October 2006 to October 2007. Western seasonal employment decreased by 3.3 percent during the same one-year period. South Central seasonal employment

moved ahead by 5.3 percent. North Central seasonal employment contracted by 2.3 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal employment advanced by 3.8 percent. South Eastern seasonal employment leaped ahead by 17.7 percent, and Eastern seasonal employment fell by 8.4 percent during that same time period.

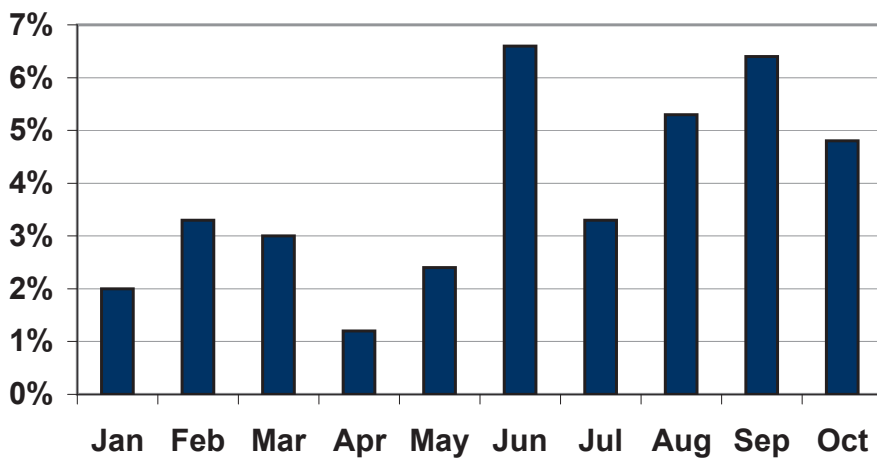
Labor Supply

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 October, 302 usable surveys were returned. The chart below measures additional workers needed as a percent of all seasonal workers.




Statewide Percent of Reported Seasonal Labor Shortage January to October 2007



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 October 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: 3,714 (1,747 local, 193, intrastate, 1,383 interstate, 9 foreign, 382 unknown origin)

Potato Sorter/Grader/Packer	1,228	\$ 8.35/hr
Blueberry Harvester	336	Not Available
Broccoli Harvester	267	\$ 8.00/hr
Blueberry Sorter/Grader/Packer	225	\$ 8.33/hr

South Central (Klickitat and Yakima counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 13,572 (10,716 local, 146 intrastate, 304 interstate, 1,518 foreign, 888 unknown origin)

Apple Harvester	10,805	\$ 8.75/hr or \$14.00 - \$33.00 per bin
Misc Peppers Harvester	476	Not Available
Grapes Harvester	361	\$ 8.00/hr
Apple Tractor Operator	261	\$10.92/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 15,007 (8,610 local, 114 intrastate, 150 interstate, 807 foreign, 5,326 unknown origin)

Apple Harvester	13,730	\$ 9.43/hr or \$ 8.00 - \$45.00 per bin
Pear Sorter/Grader/Packer	411	\$ 8.54/hr
Apple Sorter/Grader/Packer	351	\$ 8.33/hr
Apple Worker	97	\$10.69/hr

Columbia Basin (Adams and Grant counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 9,798 (5,772 local, 24 intrastate, 440 interstate, 10 foreign, 3,553 unknown origin)

Apple Harvester	7,561	\$ 8.23/hr or \$10.00 - \$33.00 per bin
Potato Sorter/Grader/Packer	909	\$ 8.46/hr
Misc Onion Sorter/Grader/Packer	416	\$ 8.07/hr
Potato Vehicle Operator	188	\$11.09/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 8,462 (2,864 local, 10 intrastate, 46 interstate, 367 foreign, 5,174 unknown origin)

Apple Harvester	6,514	\$ 8.26/hr or \$10.00 - \$30.00 per bin
Grapes Harvester	850	\$ 8.71/hr
Pumpkin Sorter/Grader/Packer	207	\$ 8.25/hr
Apple Pruner	157	\$ 7.93/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 369 (117 local, 197 intrastate, 0 interstate, 18 foreign, 37 unknown origin)

Beef Cattle Worker	85	\$10.00/hr
Wheat Tractor Operator	56	\$12.00/hr
Bulbs Mechanized Harvester	52	\$ 9.89/hr
Wheat Vehicle Operator	42	\$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												



October 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	1,750	190	1,380	10	380	3,710	6,490	10,200
2. South Central	10,720	150	300	1,520	890	13,570	17,180	30,750
3. North Central	8,610	110	150	810	5,330	15,010	8,930	23,930
4. Columbia Basin	5,770	20	440	10	3,550	9,800	6,280	16,080
5. South Eastern	2,860	10	50	370	5,170	8,460	9,780	18,240
6. Eastern	120	200	0	20	40	370	1100	1470
State Totals	29,830	680	2,320	2,730	15,360	50,920	49,760	100,680
% State Seasonal	58.6%	1.3%	4.6%	5.4%	30.2%	100%		

Total Agricultural Employment

				Change		Percent Change	
	Oct 07	Sept 07	Oct 06	Sept 07- Oct 07	Oct 06- Oct 07	Sept 07- Oct 07	Oct 06- Oct 07
State	100,680	104,170	95,570	-3,480	5,120	-3.3%	5.4%
Western	10,200	10,980	10,520	-780	-320	-7.1%	-3.0%
South Central	30,750	32,940	30,330	-2,190	420	-6.6%	1.4%
North Central	23,930	25,550	23,100	-1,620	830	-6.3%	3.6%
Columbia Basin	16,080	14,950	14,690	1,130	1,390	7.6%	9.5%
South Eastern	18,240	18,270	15,540	-30	2,700	-0.2%	17.4%
Eastern	1,470	1,480	1,380	-10	90	-0.7%	6.5%

Seasonal Agricultural Employment

				Change		Percent Change	
	Oct 07	Sept 07	Oct 06	Sept 07- Oct 07	Oct 06- Oct 07	Sept 07- Oct 07	Oct 06- Oct 07
State	50,920	54,080	49,120	-3,160	1,800	-5.8%	3.7%
Western	3,710	4,660	3,840	-950	-130	-20.3%	-3.3%
South Central	13,570	16,040	12,880	-2,470	690	-15.4%	5.3%
North Central	15,010	16,200	15,360	-1,200	-360	-7.4%	-2.3%
Columbia Basin	9,800	9,080	9,440	720	360	7.9%	3.8%
South Eastern	8,460	7,680	7,190	780	1,270	10.2%	17.7%
Eastern	370	420	400	-50	-30	-12.4%	-8.4%

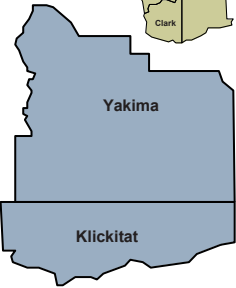
For more data and a sample of the Agricultural Labor Report survey, go to [October 2007 Agricultural Labor Employment and Wages Tables on Workforce Explorer](#)

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



Western (Area 1)

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal for the reporting period. U-Pick pumpkin farms reported excellent sales. Christmas tree growers were busy harvesting Noble Fir boughs. Cranberry growers completed post-harvest cleanup.



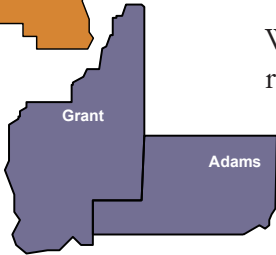
South Central (Area 2)

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal for the reporting period. Vegetable production in the Yakima Valley stopped due to sub-freezing temperatures down to the lower 20s. Apple harvest continued with producers scrambling to get their remaining Fuji and Pink Lady varieties picked.



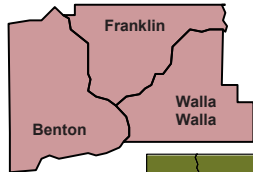
North Central (Area 3)

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal for the reporting period. Apple harvest neared completion. The weather was cool, but not damaging to the fruit. Hay was still being baled.



Columbia Basin (Area 4)

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal for the reporting period. Apple and potato harvests were winding down. Late planted dry beans were finishing up.



South Eastern (Area 5)

Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal for the reporting period. Apples, potatoes, beans, the fifth cutting of hay, field and sweet corn, as well as other row crops were being harvested. Some alfalfa was harvested, dug up, and being replaced with wheat.



Eastern (Area 6)

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