



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

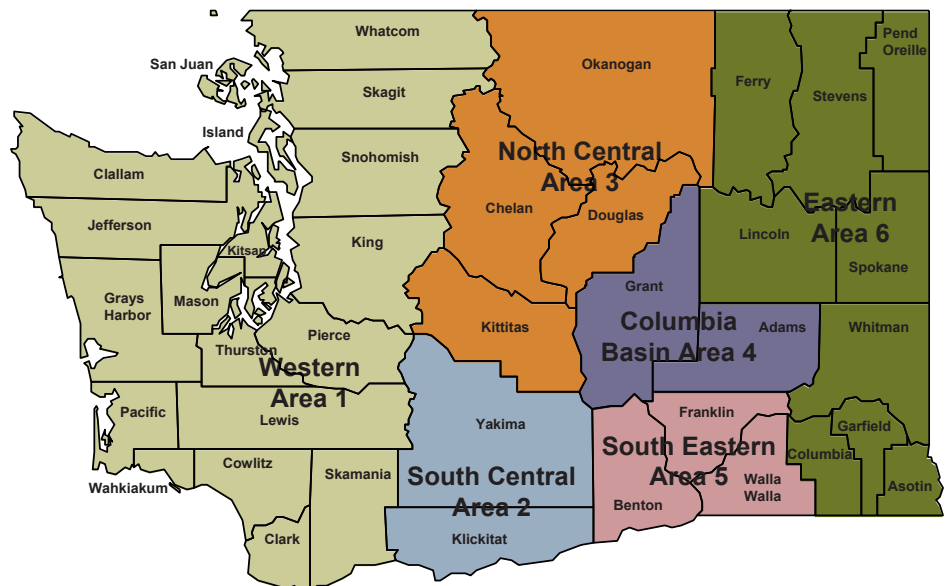
September 2007

Executive Summary

The growth in statewide seasonal employment from August 2007 to September 2007 (11.8 percent) can be attributed to the beginning of the apple harvest. This over-the-year advance 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 (3,355) by 10.6 percent.
- Regionally, North Central (Area 3) experienced the largest annual growth rate of 26.6 percent, due to the arrival of the apple harvest (4,740).
- Western (Area 1) seasonal employment showed the greatest over-the-year loss at 4.1 percent, caused by a decline in nursery work (-731).

Agricultural Reporting Areas in Washington State



Total Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide total agricultural employment expanded by 7.4 percent from September 2006 to September 2007. Over-the-month total employment grew by 9.2 percent. Over-the-year regionally, Western (Area 1)

total employment decreased by 2.0 percent. South Central (Area 2) total employment grew by 3.8 percent. North Central (Area 3) total employment moved ahead by 7.3 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) total employ-

ment advanced by 13.4 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) total employment expanded by 16.6 percent. Eastern (Area 6) total employment jumped ahead by 4.6 percent.

Seasonal Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment leaped ahead by 11.8 percent from September 2006 to September 2007. Agricultural activities displaying over-the-year gains were:

- apple work (3,355)
- other tree fruit work (2,281)
- blueberry work (827)
- other seasonal work (684)
- potato work (522)
- cherry work (180)
- bulb work (84)
- asparagus work (53)
- onion work (33)
- wheat/grain work (12)

Activities displaying losses were:

- nursery work (-1,033)
- pear work (-913)
- raspberry work (-661)
- hops work (-552)
- grapes work (-157)
- cucumber work (-152)
- miscellaneous vegetables work (-98)
- strawberry work (-9)

Across the state, Western area seasonal employment dropped by 4.1 percent, caused by a decrease in nursery work (-731). South Central seasonal employment expanded by 8.6 percent,

due to an increase in other tree fruit work (1,510). North Central seasonal employment expanded by 26.6 percent, due to an increase in apple work (4,740). Columbia Basin seasonal employment moved forward by 9.1 percent, caused by an uptick in apple work (555). South Eastern seasonal employment sped ahead by 6.9 percent, caused by a bump up in other tree work (598). Eastern seasonal employment lagged by 1.2 percent, due to a decline in nursery work (-128).

Statewide and Regional Wage Trends

Statewide real (inflation-adjusted) seasonal agricultural wages advanced by 5.4 percent from September 2005 to September 2007. Washington state real minimum wages expanded by 4.4 percent during this same time period. Statewide real agricultural seasonal wages increased by 3.6 percent from September 2006 to September 2007. The real state minimum wage increased by 0.8 percent during this same time period. Western real seasonal wages expanded by 4.3 percent. South Central

seasonal wages gained 3.5 percent. North Central seasonal wages grew by 4.4 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal wages increased by 2.1 percent. South Eastern seasonal wages moved forward by 4.7 percent.

Statewide nominal seasonal agricultural wages expanded by 11.5 percent from September 2005 to September 2007. Washington state nominal minimum wages grew by 7.9 percent during this same time period. Statewide nominal agricultural seasonal wages increased by 6.9 percent

from September 2006 to September 2007. The state minimum wage advanced by 3.9 percent during this same time period. Western seasonal wages ramped up by 7.6 percent. South Central seasonal wages swung upward by 6.9 percent. North Central seasonal wages picked up by 7.7 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal wages moved forward by 5.3 percent. South Eastern seasonal wages also advanced upward by 8.0 percent.

Statewide and Regional Employment Trends

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment expanded by 8.0 percent from September 2005 to September 2007; and moved forward by 11.8 percent from September 2006 to September 2007. Western seasonal employment declined by 4.1 percent from September 2006 to September 2007. South Central

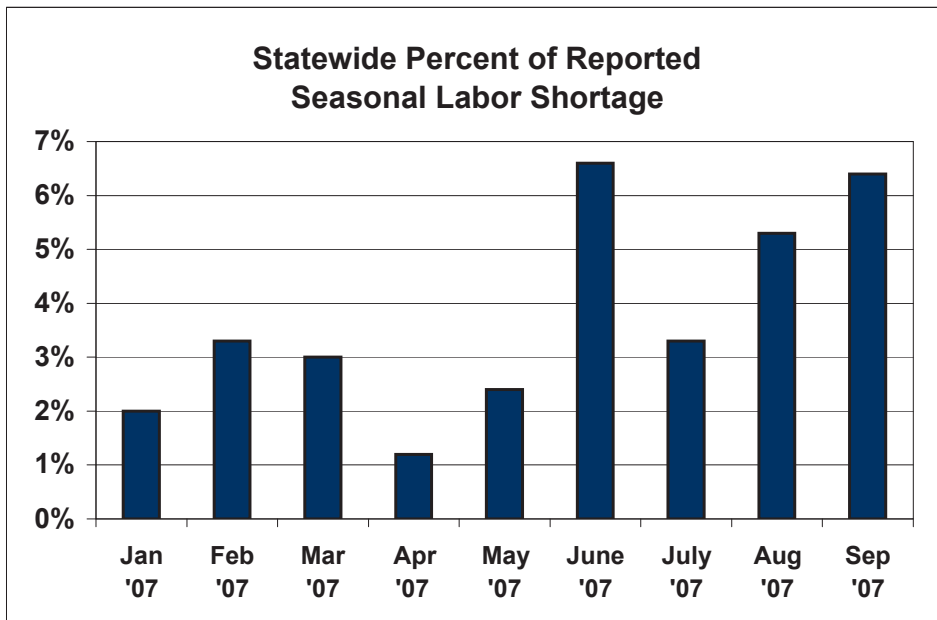
seasonal employment grew by 8.6 percent during that same time period. North Central seasonal employment advanced by 26.6 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal employment expanded by 9.1 percent. South Eastern seasonal employment pulled ahead by 7.0 percent. Eastern seasonal employment slipped by 2.3 percent.




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 September, 296 usable surveys were returned. The chart below measures additional workers needed as a percent of all seasonal workers.



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 September 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: 4,661 (2,023 local, 399, intrastate, 1,511 interstate, 80 foreign, 648 unknown origin)

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|------------|
| Potato Sorter/Grader/Packer | 854 | \$ 8.39/hr |
| Blueberry Harvester | 426 | \$10.00/hr |
| Blueberry Sorter/Grader/Packer | 363 | \$ 8.13/hr |
| Broccoli Harvester | 323 | \$ 8.00/hr |

South Central (Klickitat and Yakima counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 16,038 (13,278 local, 1083 intrastate, 775 interstate, 371 foreign, 531 unknown origin)

| | | |
|----------------------------|-------|---|
| Apple Harvester | 7,825 | \$ 8.42/hr or \$14.00 - \$30.00 per bin |
| Pear Harvester | 2,220 | \$ 7.93/hr or \$13.20 - \$20.00 per bin |
| Peach Harvester | 777 | \$10.00/hr |
| Apple Sorter/Grader/Packer | 742 | \$ 7.95/hr |

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 16,204 (8,102 local, 78 intrastate, 458 interstate, 1,755 foreign, 5,811 unknown origin)

| | | |
|----------------------------|--------|---|
| Apple Harvester | 13,294 | \$ 9.05/hr or \$ 7.50 - \$50.00 per bin |
| Apple Sorter/Grader/Packer | 929 | \$ 8.17/hr |
| Pear Sorter/Grader/Packer | 717 | \$ 8.49/hr |
| Pear Harvester | 552 | Not Available |

Columbia Basin (Adams and Grant counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 9,080 (5,876 local, 160 intrastate, 464 interstate, 906 foreign, 1,674 unknown origin)

| | | |
|---------------------------------|-------|---|
| Apple Harvester | 5,864 | \$ 8.33/hr or \$ 9.00 - \$28.00 per bin |
| Apple Pruner | 646 | \$ 8.56/hr |
| Potato Sorter/Grader/Packer | 627 | \$ 8.16/hr |
| Misc Onion Sorter/Grader/Packer | 398 | \$ 8.09/hr |

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 7,678 (3,736 local, 0 intrastate, 55 interstate, 434 foreign, 3,453 unknown origin)

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-------|---|
| Apple Harvester | 4,773 | \$ 8.43/hr or \$ 9.00 - \$28.00 per bin |
| Peach Sorter/Grader/Packer | 502 | \$ 9.75/hr |
| Nectarine Sorter/Grader/Packer | 502 | \$ 9.75/hr |
| Grapes Harvester | 343 | \$ 8.50/hr |

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 421 (393 local, 7 intrastate, 0 interstate, 21 foreign, 0 unknown origin)

| | | |
|------------------------|-----|------------|
| Wheat Tractor Operator | 109 | \$11.80/hr |
| Bulbs Worker | 55 | \$ 9.00/hr |
| Wheat Worker | 44 | \$10.00/hr |
| Nursery Worker | 33 | \$ 8.50/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 | | | | | | | | | | | | |



September 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 | 2,020 | 400 | 1,510 | 80 | 650 | 4,660 | 8,420 | 13,080 |
| 2. South Central | 13,280 | 1,080 | 770 | 370 | 530 | 16,040 | 12,250 | 28,290 |
| 3. North Central | 8,100 | 80 | 460 | 1,760 | 5,810 | 16,200 | 6,520 | 22,720 |
| 4. Columbia Basin | 5,880 | 160 | 460 | 910 | 1,670 | 9,080 | 3,900 | 12,980 |
| 5. South Eastern | 3,740 | 0 | 50 | 430 | 3,450 | 7,680 | 8,570 | 16,250 |
| 6. Eastern | 390 | 10 | 0 | 20 | 0 | 420 | 1,650 | 2,070 |
| State Totals | 33,410 | 1,730 | 3,260 | 3,570 | 12,120 | 54,080 | 41,310 | 95,390 |
| % State Seasonal | 61.8% | 3.2% | 6.0% | 6.6% | 22.4% | 100% | | |

Total Agricultural Employment

| | | | | Change | | Percent Change | |
|-----------------------|---------|-----------|---------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| | Sept 07 | August 07 | Sept 06 | August 07- Sept 07 | Sept 06- Sept 07 | August 07- Sept 07 | Sept 06- Sept 07 |
| State | 104,165 | 95,390 | 97,020 | 8,775 | 7,145 | 9.2% | 7.4% |
| Western | 10,983 | 13,080 | 11,210 | -2,097 | -227 | -16.0% | -2.0% |
| South Central | 32,944 | 28,290 | 31,750 | 4,654 | 1,194 | 16.5% | 3.8% |
| North Central | 25,547 | 22,720 | 23,800 | 2,827 | 1,747 | 12.4% | 7.3% |
| Columbia Basin | 14,951 | 12,980 | 13,190 | 1,971 | 1,761 | 15.2% | 13.4% |
| South Eastern | 18,265 | 16,250 | 15,660 | 2,015 | 2,605 | 12.4% | 16.6% |
| Eastern | 1,475 | 2,070 | 1,410 | -595 | 65 | -28.7% | 4.6% |

Seasonal Agricultural Employment

| | | | | Change | | Percent Change | |
|-----------------------|---------|-----------|---------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| | Sept 07 | August 07 | Sept 06 | August 07- Sept 07 | Sept 06- Sept 07 | August 07- Sept 07 | Sept 06- Sept 07 |
| State | 54,080 | 42,330 | 48,360 | 11,750 | 5,730 | 27.8% | 11.8% |
| Western | 4,660 | 6,590 | 4,860 | -1,930 | -200 | -29.3% | -4.1% |
| South Central | 16,040 | 10,590 | 14,770 | 5,450 | 1,270 | 51.5% | 8.6% |
| North Central | 16,200 | 11,870 | 12,800 | 4,340 | 3,400 | 36.5% | 26.6% |
| Columbia Basin | 9,080 | 7,080 | 8,320 | 2,000 | 760 | 28.3% | 9.1% |
| South Eastern | 7,680 | 5,480 | 7,180 | 2,200 | 490 | 40.2% | 6.9% |
| Eastern | 420 | 730 | 430 | -310 | -10 | -42.1% | -1.2% |

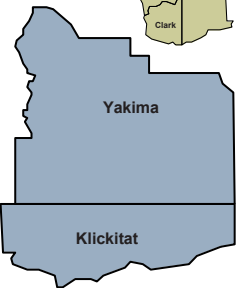
For more data and a sample of the Agricultural Labor Report survey, go to [September 2007 Agricultural Labor Employment and Wages Tables on Workforce Explorer](#)

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



Western (Area 1)

Weather conditions were warmer and drier than normal for the reporting period. Sweet corn harvest began. Various varieties of other vegetables, including pumpkins, were beginning to be picked.



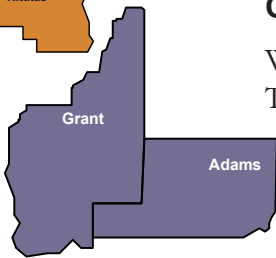
South Central (Area 2)

Weather conditions were warmer and drier than normal for the reporting period. Numerous varieties of apples were being harvested. No crop losses due to weather conditions were reported.



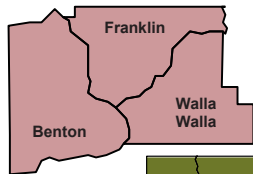
North Central (Area 3)

Weather conditions were warmer and drier than normal for the reporting period. Apple harvest proceeded at full speed. The crop appeared to be of excellent quality. Yields were predicted to be slightly lower than earlier estimates. Pear harvest was completed.



Columbia Basin (Area 4)

Weather conditions were warmer and drier than normal for the reporting period. The fourth cutting of alfalfa had not been baled yet. Apple harvest was in full swing, as was the potato harvest. Dry corn harvest began and dry bean harvest was winding down. Late planted sweet corn was also being harvested.



South Eastern (Area 5)

Weather conditions were warmer and drier than normal for the reporting period. Hay demand was high. Even poor quality hay was in demand. Bean and apple harvests continued. Sweet corn harvest was at the very beginning stages. Potato harvest continued. Winter wheat seeding was near completion.



Eastern (Area 6)

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