



**Washington State
Employment Security Department**

Labor Market and Economic Analysis
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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

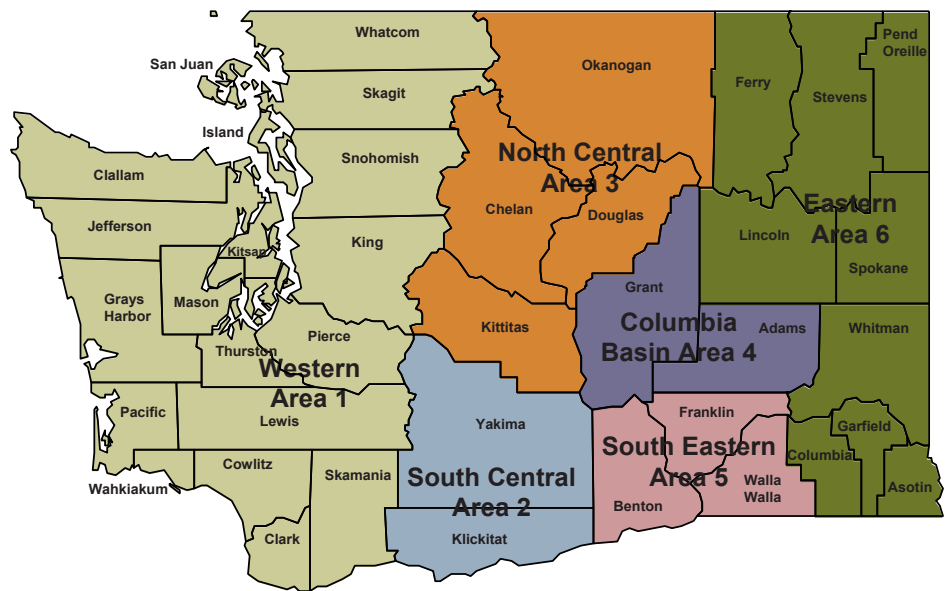
February 2008

Executive Summary

The 1.8 percent decline in statewide seasonal employment from February 2007 to February 2008 was due to fewer cherry pruners. This over-the-year decrease 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 cherry production employment led the over-the-year crop decrease (-790) by 4.7 percent.
- Over-the-year declines were led by North Central (Area 3) seasonal employment at 36.8 percent, caused by an employment decrease of 1,210 in apple work.

Agricultural Reporting Areas in Washington State



Total Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide total agricultural employment inched ahead by 1.1 percent from February 2007 to February 2008. Over-the-month total employment grew by 11.0 percent. Over-the-year regionally, Western (Area 1) total

employment fell by 3.0 percent. South Central (Area 2) total employment rose by 1.1 percent. North Central (Area 3) total employment declined by 2.0 percent. Columbia Basin (Area 4) total employment advanced by

9.3 percent. South Eastern (Area 5) total employment increased by 11.0 percent. Eastern (Area 6) total employment nudged ahead by 0.9 percent.

Seasonal Agricultural Employment Summary

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment declined by 1.8 percent from February 2007 to February 2008. Agricultural activities displaying over-the-year losses were:

- cherry work (-790)
- apple work (-600)
- onion work (-160)
- blueberry work (-130)
- pear work (-80)
- wheat/grain work (-50)
- hops work (-40)
- miscellaneous vegetables work (-20)

- asparagus work (-10)
- other seasonal work (-10)

Activities displaying gains were:

- grapes work (850)
- other tree fruit work (640)
- raspberry work (70)
- potato work (60)
- nursery work (1)

Across the state, Western area seasonal employment declined by 17.6 percent, caused by a decline in nursery work (-190). South Central seasonal employment moved forward by 35.1

percent due to an increase in apple work (840). North Central seasonal employment fell by 36.8 percent due to a decline in apple work (-1,210). Columbia Basin seasonal employment decreased by 2.8 percent caused by a dip in potato work (-80). South Eastern seasonal employment expanded by 0.9 percent due to a growth in grapes work (330). Eastern seasonal employment fell by 26.2 percent, due to a drop in other seasonal work (-60).

Statewide and Regional Wage Trends

Statewide real (inflation-adjusted) seasonal agricultural wages grew by 1.8 percent from February 2006 to February 2008. Washington state real minimum wages expanded by 0.6 percent during this same time period. From February 2007 to February 2008, statewide real agricultural seasonal wages showed no change. The real state minimum wage decreased by 0.2 percent during this same time period. Western real seasonal wages grew by 3.0 percent. South

Central and North Central seasonal wages fell by 0.2 and 2.8 percent, respectively. Columbia Basin seasonal wages contracted by 0.3 percent; and South Eastern rose by 2.2 percent.

Statewide nominal seasonal agricultural wages grew by 7.1 percent from February 2006 to February 2008. Washington state nominal minimum wages rose by 5.8 percent during this same time period. Statewide nominal agricultural seasonal wages moved ahead by 2.0

percent from February 2007 to February 2008. The state minimum wage moved ahead by 1.8 percent during this same time period. Western and South Central seasonal wages increased by 5.0 and 1.8 percent, respectively. North Central seasonal wages fell by 1.0 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal wages inched ahead by 1.6 percent; and South Eastern expanded by 4.1 percent.

Statewide and Regional Employment Trends

Statewide seasonal agricultural employment fell by 4.6 percent from February 2006 to February 2008. Statewide seasonal agricultural employment contracted by 1.8 percent from February 2007 to February 2008. Western seasonal employment contracted by 17.5 percent during that same time period. South Central seasonal employment grew by

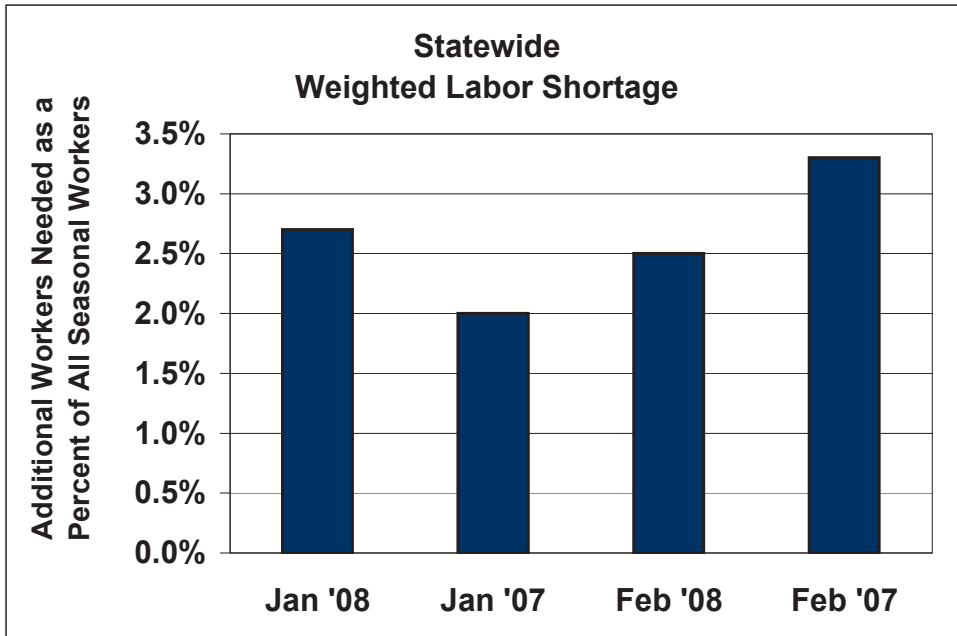
35.1 percent. North Central seasonal employment declined by 36.6 percent. Columbia Basin seasonal employment slipped by 2.6 percent. South Eastern seasonal employment inched up by 0.8 percent. Eastern seasonal employment contracted by 23.5 percent.



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 February, 424 usable surveys were returned. The chart below estimates additional workers needed as a percent of all seasonal workers.



In February, 424 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 February 2008

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: 1,645 (1,227 local, 75 intrastate, 75 interstate, 151 foreign, 117 unknown origin)

Potato Sorter/Grader/Packer	437	\$ 8.76/hr
Raspberry Pruner	222	\$ 8.07/hr
Nursery Sorter/Grader/Packer	106	\$ 8.10/hr
Raspberry Trainer	105	\$ 8.07/hr

South Central (Klickitat and Yakima counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 6,079 (4,771 local, 0 intrastate, 0 interstate, 546 foreign, 762 unknown origin)

Apple Pruner	2,266	\$ 8.07/hr or \$ 0.40 - \$ 6.00 per tree
Grapes Pruner	1,073	\$ 8.22/hr or \$ 0.12 - \$ 0.40 per vine
Pear Pruner	573	\$ 0.80 - \$ 4.50 per tree
Cherry Pruner	382	\$ 8.17/hr or \$ 0.80 - \$6.00 per tree

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 2,415 (2,277 local, 8 intrastate, 0 interstate, 0 foreign, 130 unknown origin)

Apple Pruner	1,503	\$ 8.11/hr or \$ 0.30 - \$ 3.50 per tree
Apple Sorter/Grader/Packer	423	\$ 8.52/hr
Cherry Pruner	308	\$ 9.02/hr or \$ 1.40 - \$ 3.75 per tree
Apricot Pruner	42	\$ 8.07/hr

Columbia Basin (Adams and Grant counties)

Estimated seasonal workforce: 2,249 (1,907 local, 0 intrastate, 0 interstate, 64 foreign, 278 unknown origin)

Apple Pruner	1,415	\$ 8.32/hr or \$ 0.66 - \$ 3.75 per tree
Cherry Pruner	267	\$ 8.09/hr
Misc Onion Sorter/Grader/Packer	259	\$ 8.16/hr
Potato Sorter/Grader/Packer	124	\$ 8.07/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 2,520 (1,885 local, 8 intrastate, 34 interstate, 45 foreign, 548 unknown origin)

Apple Pruner	805	\$ 8.20/hr or \$ 0.35 - \$ 3.50 per tree
Grapes Pruner	762	\$ 8.22/hr
Cherry Pruner	231	\$ 8.45/hr or \$ 0.80 - \$ 3.50 per tree
Potato Sorter/Grader/Packer	229	\$ 8.20/hr

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

Estimated seasonal workforce: 127 (102 local, 0 intrastate, 0 interstate, 0 foreign, 25 unknown origin)

Nursery & Tree Planter	80	\$ 8.50/hr
Nursery & Tree Pruner	22	\$10.00/hr
Wheat Tractor Operator	19	\$12.00/hr
Dairy Harvester	3	\$ 8.07/hr

February 2008
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	Permanent	Total
						Area Total	Area Total	Area Total
1. Western	1,230	80	80	150	120	1,650	6,830	8,470
2. South Central	4,770	0	0	550	760	6,080	11,650	17,730
3. North Central	2,280	10	0	0	130	2,420	9,440	11,850
4. Columbia Basin	1,910	0	0	60	280	2,250	5,110	7,360
5. South Eastern	1,890	10	30	50	550	2,520	7,810	10,330
6. Eastern	100	0	0	0	30	130	1,030	1,160
State Totals	12,170	90	110	810	1,860	15,040	41,860	56,900
% State Seasonal	80.9%	0.6%	0.7%	5.4%	12.4%	100%		

Total Agricultural Employment

	Feb 08	Jan 08	Feb 07	Change		Percent Change	
				Jan 08-Feb 08	Feb 07-Feb 08	Jan 08-Feb 08	Feb 07-Feb 08
State	56,900	51,270	56,290	5,630	610	11.0%	1.1%
Western	8,470	7,630	8,470	-580	-250	-7.6%	-3.0%
South Central	17,730	16,000	17,970	750	200	4.7%	1.1%
North Central	11,850	10,380	12,060	240	-240	2.3%	-2.0%
Columbia Basin	7,360	6,720	7,010	480	650	7.1%	9.3%
South Eastern	10,330	9,450	9,620	570	1,060	6.0%	11.0%
Eastern	1,160	1,100	1,160	-110	10	-10.0%	0.9%

Seasonal Agricultural Employment

	Feb 08-Prel.	Jan 08-Rev.	Feb 07-Rev.	Change		Jan 08-Feb 08	Feb 07-Feb 08
				Jan 08-Feb 08	Feb 07-Feb 08		
State	15,040	12,690	15,310	2,350	-270	18.5%	-1.8%
Western	1,650	1,240	2,000	410	-350	33.1%	-17.5%
South Central	6,080	4,810	4,500	1,270	1,580	26.4%	35.1%
North Central	2,420	2,640	3,820	-230	-1,410	-8.7%	-36.9%
Columbia Basin	2,250	2,130	2,310	120	-70	5.6%	-3.0%
South Eastern	2,520	1,780	2,500	740	20	41.6%	0.8%
Eastern	130	90	170	40	-50	44.4%	-29.4%

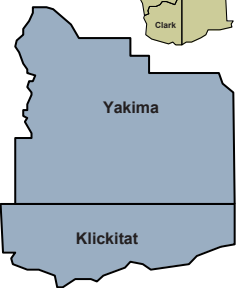
For more data and a sample of the Agricultural Labor Report survey, go to
[February 2008 Agricultural Labor Employment and Wages Tables on Workforce Explorer](#)

Agricultural Labor Report
Factors Affecting the Farm Labor Supply and Demand Situation
Crop, Market, and Weather Conditions by Area
Washington State, February 2008



Western (Area 1)

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



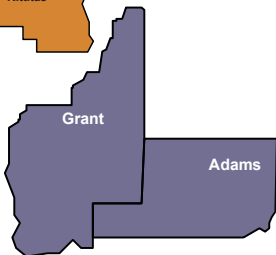
South Central (Area 2)

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



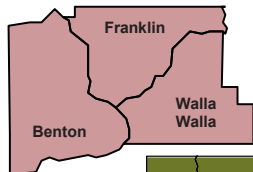
North Central (Area 3)

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



Columbia Basin (Area 4)

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



South Eastern (Area 5)

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



Eastern (Area 6)

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