

LOUISIANA FARM LABOR

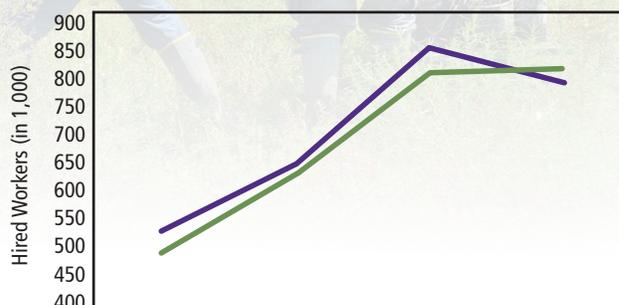


Delta States Region: Hired Labor

The agricultural labor markets are tight, and producers rely on hired labor to meet their demand. This report provides information on hired labor for the U.S. and the Delta region for the calendar year 2019. The data are from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Labor Survey and pertain to four quarterly referenced weeks. These weeks for the 2019 calendar year were Jan. 6-12, April 7-13, July 7-13 and Oct. 6-12, 2019.

Demand for hired workers has increased in recent years, and we observed a similar pattern in hiring per reference week (Figure 1). The average gross wage rate for all hired workers in 2019 was \$14.91 per hour. Compared with \$14.17 per hour in 2018, this is an increase of about 5%. Field workers were paid on average \$14.11 per hour in 2019 versus \$13.32 per hour in 2018. The average combined gross wage for field and livestock workers was \$13.99 per hour in 2019 versus \$13.25 per hour in 2018.

Figure 1: Hired Workers in the U.S.



	Jan.	April	July	Oct.
2018	534	648	843	784
2019	499	629	802	809

October 2018 Versus October 2019

A 3% increase in the number of hired workers was reported in October 2019 compared with the October 2018 reference week, with a total of 809,000 hired workers in 2019 versus 784,000 hired workers in 2018. This is mainly driven by an increase in the number of hired workers that were employed for 150 days or more, a 4.7% increase. The number

of hired workers employed for 149 days or fewer was lower by less than 1% (Table 1).

Farm operators paid hired workers an average gross wage of \$15.02 per hour in 2019, up 3.8% from \$14.47 in the 2018 reference week. Field workers received on average \$14.38, up 4.7% from 2018, and livestock hired workers received on average \$13.77, up 2.9% from the reference week of 2018 (Table 1).

Table 1. Hired Workers and Gross Wage Rates, U.S. Total

Variables	Oct. 7-13, 2018	Oct. 6-12, 2019	Percentage Change
Hired Workers (in 1,000)	784	809	+3%
149 days or fewer	208	206	-0.9%
150 days or more	576	603	+4.7%
Gross Wage Rates (in \$ per hour): Total	\$14.47	\$15.02	+3.8%
Gross Wage Rates (in \$ per hour): Field	\$13.74	\$14.38	+4.7%
Gross Wage Rates (in \$ per hour): Livestock	\$13.38	\$13.77	+2.9%

Delta Region

The USDA provides information on the Delta region. Data from 2018 show that farm operators in the Delta region employed 27,500 hired workers. In 2019, the annual average number of hired workers was 27,300 — down by 0.7%. When we look at the reference weeks in October, we see an increase by 33% in the

number of people employed for 150 days or more and a decrease by 20% in the number of people employed for 149 days or fewer. With respect to gross wage rates, the region has lower gross wage rates compared with the U.S. Gross wage rates for the total hired labor and for field workers decreased compared to the October 2018 reference week, whereas the gross wage rate for livestock hired workers increased (Table 2).

Table 2. Hired Workers and Gross Wage Rates, Delta States

Variables	Oct. 7-13, 2018	Oct. 6-12, 2019	Percentage Change
Hired Workers (in 1,000)	28	32	+14%
149 days or fewer	10	8	-20%
150 days or more	18	24	+33%
Gross Wage Rates (in \$ per hour): Total	\$11.83	\$11.74	-0.76%
Gross Wage Rates (in \$ per hour): Field	\$11.32	\$11.14	-1.56%
Gross Wage Rates (in \$ per hour): Livestock	\$11.46	\$12.20	+6.46%
Gross Wage Rates (in \$ per hour): Field & Livestock combined	\$11.35	\$11.35	0%

Examining in more detail the combined field and livestock worker gross wage rates by type of farm, field crop laborers were paid on average a gross wage rate of \$11.05 per hour. Laborers working with other crops were paid on average \$11.13 per hour, and livestock and poultry laborers were paid \$12.27 per hour in 2019. In 2018, we saw

\$11.13 per hour paid for field crop laborers, \$12 per hour for other crops, and \$11.23 per hour for livestock and poultry laborers.

Note: Data used for this report are from the Farm Labor, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), USDA, ISSN: 1949-0909. The report was released Nov. 21, 2019.

Authors:

Maria Bampasidou, Assistant Professor, Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness Department, Telephone: 225-578-2367; email: mbampasidou@agcenter.lsu.edu



William B. Richardson, LSU Vice President for Agriculture
Louisiana State University Agricultural Center
Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station
Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service
LSU College of Agriculture

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