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DIRECT AND CONTRACT HIRING OF SEASONAL FARM LABOR
SELLERS, W. E., JR. 1 OF 1

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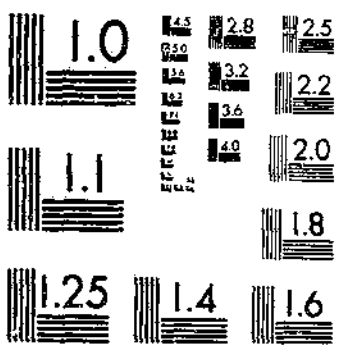

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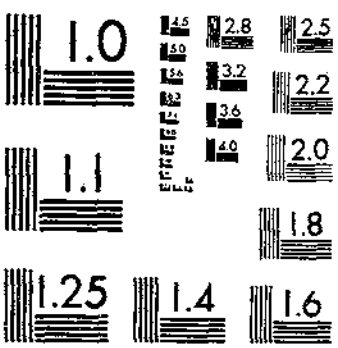

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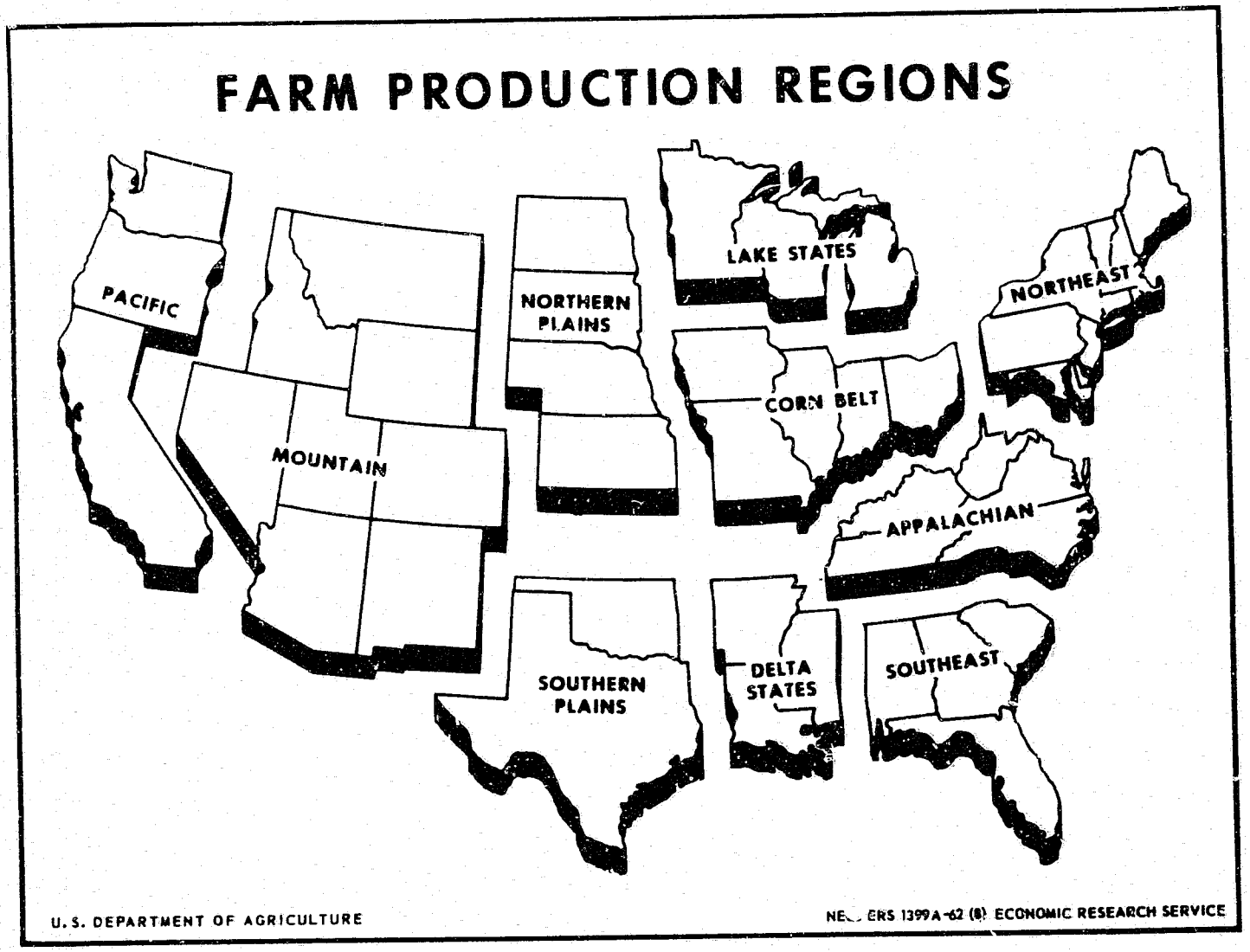

Figure 1

ABSTRACT

Methods used to obtain seasonal workers in 1966, number of seasonal workers per farm, and hours of such labor per farm varied by type of farm and production region. More tobacco and "other field crop" farmers hire seasonal workers directly than any other farmers. Although 84 percent of fruit farms and nearly two-thirds of vegetable farms use seasonal workers, less than 40 percent contracted to obtain them. In contrast, cash grain and livestock farmers were least likely to use seasonal workers, but when they did, they often used contract labor. Most farmers in the three Southern regions preferred the direct-hire method over contracting, whereas in the midcontinent, contracting is often used. Hiring practices also vary by size of farm--31 percent of the smaller vegetable farms hired contract labor, compared with 50 percent of the largest such farms. The same pattern occurred on tobacco farms, but the percentage of cash grain and livestock farms contracting for labor decreased on the larger farms. Vegetable and fruit farms had larger crews and used more hours of seasonal labor per farm than any other type of farm.

Keywords: Hired labor, seasonal labor, regional distribution, contract labor, and farms by type.

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SUMMARY

Most farmers who rely on seasonal labor hire workers directly rather than through contractors. The amount of seasonal labor hired in 1966 and the method used to obtain it varied by farm type, production region, and, in some instances, farm size. Tobacco and "other field crop" farms have a greater need for seasonal workers than any other types of farms. Cash grain and livestock (including dairy and poultry) farms were least likely to use seasonal labor. Yet operators of these two types of farms were more likely to contract than to hire directly, although many farms used both methods. Eighty-four percent of fruit farms and nearly two-thirds of vegetable farms hired some labor, but less than two-fifths of them used contract workers. Most vegetable farmers hired seasonal labor directly, even in areas where most other types of farmers used contract labor.

A greater proportion of farmers in the midcontinent (Northern Plains, Southern Plains, Mountain, and Lake States Regions) used contract labor than farmers in other production regions. Midcontinent farms take advantage of the large migrant stream composed mainly of Texan family crews who do hand labor. Also, highly mechanized combines with skilled crews move from Texas to the Canadian Provinces harvesting grain crops. Much of the seasonal labor in the Southeast was hired directly by the farm operator, except for Southeast fruit and vegetable farms, where contract seasonal labor was preferred.

Size of farm also affected hiring practices--31 percent of the vegetable farms with sales of less than $5,000 used contract workers, in contrast with 50 percent of the largest farms. Use of contract labor also increased with size of tobacco farms, but the proportion of cash grain and livestock farms using contract workers decreased as sales increased.

Peak seasons for hired workers varied by type of farm, farm production region, and method of hiring labor. Southeast fruit growers used contract seasonal workers from November to May, while cash grain and livestock farmers used seasonal workers (mostly contract workers) in June and July. Tobacco farmers who used direct-hire labor used it mostly in the fall, while more cotton and vegetable farmers using direct-hire labor had earlier seasons--May and June. Cotton and vegetable farmers using contract labor generally had a later season than similar farmers with direct-hire labor.

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DIRECT AND CONTRACT HIRING OF SEASONAL FARM LABOR

by

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most important problems facing the farmer is that of obtaining a sufficient supply of farm labor when he needs it. The very seasonal nature of farming makes this an annually recurring problem. Even with mechanization and family labor available, most farmers still need to hire some help. The proportion of farmers hiring labor varies from 58 percent of livestock farmers to 84 percent of fruit and nut growers.

Data in this report are taken from the 1966 Pesticide and General Farm Survey. About 9,600 farmers in the 48 contiguous States were enumerated. Although the data relate to 1966, the findings and relationships continue to be valid. Later data with similar detail are not available and are not expected to be available in the near future. Survey methods, data reliability, and information on all hired workers are discussed in a report issued earlier. 1/

For labor-intensive, short-term crops, many farmers need workers only during the peak season. Nearly two-thirds of all farms that hire labor use seasonal labor (table 1). 2/ Therefore, recruitment of labor for a short term is of major importance to these farmers.

Two main methods used by farmers to obtain seasonal labor are direct hiring and contracting. Each method has advantages.

In direct hiring, the farmer hires, supervises, and pays his workers. Farmers use this method when local labor is available. Under this method, the farmer has a better grasp of the worker's productivity and is able to closely supervise the work.

Contracting appeals to farmers who prefer not to be bothered with paperwork, recruiting, supervising workers, and handling payrolls. Labor contractors, crew leaders, and custom machine specialists provide contract labor to plant, cultivate, harvest, and haul crops.

1/ Walter E. Sellers, Jr. Family and Hired Labor Used on U.S. Farms in 1966. U.S. Dept. Agr. Statis. Bul. No. 459, 42 pp. Dec. 1970.

2/ Only farms that used seasonal labor are discussed in this report. Farms hiring only regular workers or those that used only family labor are excluded. Seasonal laborers are defined as workers who did less than 150 days of farmwork during the year for the farmer enumerated.

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Table 1.--Farms studied, by type of farm and labor recruiting practices, United States, 1966

Type of farm	Total farms studied 1/	Farms that hired any labor	Farms with seasonal labor hired by: 2/	
			Operator	Labor contractor
	Number	Number	Percent	Percent
Cash grain	2,972	1,878	53	58
Tobacco	1,700	1,267	88	44
Cotton	656	509	77	42
Other field crops	209	143	85	34
Vegetable	233	155	78	39
Fruit and nut	387	327	71	35
Livestock	9,044	5,222	60	60
All types 3/	15,201	9,501	64	55

1/ Numbers of farms, classified by type, region, and value of farm products sold, are in app. tables 1 and 2.

2/ Last two columns are percentages of farms that hired any labor. The percentages are not additive because some farms hired by both methods.

3/ Excludes general, miscellaneous, and unclassified farms.

Three major reasons for using contract labor are: (1) The inability of many seasonal workers to speak English. Much of the contract labor used in the midcontinent 3/ is composed of Texas family workers, many of whom do not speak English. Hence, bilingual labor contractors are needed for operators to communicate with workers. (2) The inexperience of farmers in hiring labor. For farmers who seldom enter the hired labor market, a labor contractor provides an easy one-step service of recruitment, supervision, payment, and dismissal. (3) The capital expenditures required for equipment. For example, grain, hay, and corn harvesting equipment is expensive. Some custom service contractors furnish both equipment and labor for a fee to harvest these crops.

Many farmers have sufficient family or local labor available and are not concerned with problems of intrastate and interstate labor supplies. However, many farmers grow labor-intensive crops in areas where the local labor supply is insufficient. These farmers depend heavily upon labor contractors to recruit crews from labor-surplus areas.

The practice of contracting farmwork has been significant for certain crops and in certain regions for many years. Contract labor has been paramount in satisfying the heavy demands for hand labor for cultivating

3/ Midcontinent refers to Northern Plains, Southern Plains, Mountain, and Lake States Regions.

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sugarbeets, thinning fruit, and harvesting cotton, fruit, vegetables, and grain.

The activities of farm labor contractors are regulated by comprehensive legislation--the Federal Farm Labor Contractor Registration Act. 4/ At present, there are about 3,000 registered labor contractors and 2,600 crews totaling an estimated 80,000 to 100,000 workers. 5/ Two major labor supply areas furnish most of these workers. About 45 percent of the workers are based in Florida and work along the eastern seaboard on row crops, vegetables, and fruit. The other major supply area is Texas, from which approximately 45 percent of the contract workers migrate north to do handwork on sugarbeets, vegetables, and fruits.

This report shows the extent to which farmers use direct hiring and contracting of labor by size and type of farm and farm production region. 6/

VARIATION BY TYPE OF FARM

Background

Hiring Methods

For some types of farms--such as those that grow small grain crops and need harvest labor for only a few days a year--it appears advantageous for many of them to custom-harvest their crops, because labor comes with the machine. For other types of farms--such as dairy, where seasonal labor is needed for 6 to 10 weeks of forage harvesting--operators generally hire labor directly. The method of obtaining seasonal labor varies considerably by type of farm (table 1). Twice as many tobacco, vegetable, fruit and nut, and other field-crop farmers hired seasonal labor directly

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4/ Public Law 88-582, enacted September 1964. This act requires the contractor to obtain a certificate of registration from the U.S. Department of Labor if the crew he supervises or controls includes 10 or more workers not related to him and will be used in interstate agricultural employment. The act prescribes certain duties for the contractor and prohibits certain undesirable labor practices. In addition, 8 States--California, Colorado, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Washington--have laws or regulations applying specifically to farm labor contractors or crew leaders who recruit, transport, control, or supervise migratory farm laborers. Source: Status of Agricultural Workers Under State and Federal Labor Laws, Fact Sheet No. 2, Bur. Labor Standards, U.S. Dept. Labor.

5/ It is estimated each crew averages 30 to 40 workers. Source: Division of Labor Contractor's Activities, Manpower Admin., U.S. Dept. Labor.

6/ The 1966 Pesticide and General Farm Survey separated seasonal labor hired and paid by the operator from that hired and paid by a crew leader, contractor, buyer, processor, cooperative, or customwork operator. For purposes of this report, all labor hired by anyone other than the operator will be referred to as contract labor. Thus, this term will refer to persons hired on written and oral contracts. These include custom combine crews on cash grain farms, Texas family crews, other types of domestic crews who do handwork on field crops, and contract offshore British West Indians brought in under Public Law 82-414.

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as contract labor. In contrast, a greater proportion of livestock and cash grain farmers used contract labor than any other types of farmers. Among all types of farms, only cash grain farms used contracting more than direct hiring.

Hours Worked

Not only did the method of obtaining workers vary by type of farm, but the magnitude of their use per farm also varied. Regardless of how workers were obtained, vegetable and fruit and nut farms had larger crews and used more hours of seasonal labor per farm than other types of farms (tables 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, and 15). Cotton farms, particularly in the Southern Plains, 7/ used more workers and more hours of contract labor per farm than tobacco and "other field crop" farms.

Tobacco farmers differed from cash grain and livestock farmers in their hiring practices. The proportion using contract labor generally increased with size of tobacco farms, but the proportion of cash grain and livestock farms using contract workers decreased as sales increased (app. table 2). Tobacco farmers generally used more direct-hire workers, who worked more hours per farm than similar workers on livestock or cash grain farms (tables 3 and 13).

Seasons

Peak employment of contract and direct-hire labor varied among the types of farms. Fruit and tobacco farmers used seasonal labor much later in the year than all other farmers. Fruit and tobacco farmers who used contract workers generally used seasonal labor earlier than farmers who hired labor directly. Cash grain and livestock farmers used both direct-hire and contract-hire labor during the same peak months--June and July. Cotton, "other field crops", and vegetable farmers who hired directly usually had earlier seasons than farmers who used contract labor. The primary reasons for peak-season variations in other field crop farms with different hiring methods were location and crops grown. For example, peanuts were grown on direct-hiring farms in the Appalachian Region, whereas sugarbeets and potatoes were grown on Mountain Region farms where contract labor was more prevalent. Also, region was a major factor in the variation of seasonal labor peaks among cotton and vegetable farms that have different hiring arrangements.

Tobacco Farms

Most tobacco farms are in the Appalachian and Southeast Regions (app. table 1). In general, tobacco farms are among the smallest of all farms--in terms of both receipts and acreage (app. table 2). But tobacco is a labor-intensive crop and 75 percent of these farms hired labor. Tobacco farmers also have a greater propensity to use seasonal workers than any other type of farmer. The small acreage allotments and the sharply peaking seasonality of labor needs on tobacco farms make it necessary to hire mostly seasonal workers.

Most tobacco farms used both methods--direct-hire and contracting--to obtain workers. Nearly nine-tenths of the tobacco farmers hired

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7/ For States and regions, see map inside front cover.

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workers directly, but almost half used some contract labor. The practice of hiring workers directly was more widespread among tobacco farmers than among any other farmers. This also appears to be a regional practice, because direct-hiring was common on most Southeastern farms. This reflects the greater availability of local labor in an area that traditionally has had a great labor surplus.

Generally, farmers who hired labor directly used more workers and more hours of seasonal labor per farm than farmers who used contract labor.

Use of seasonal labor varied by economic size of farm. The greater the value of farm products sold, the greater the number of seasonal workers and hours of labor per farm (table 2). This occurred on both direct-hire and contract-hire farms.

Table 2.--Tobacco farms: Seasonal labor and hours of seasonal work per farm, by region and value of farm products sold, 1966

Region and value of farm products sold	Seasonal labor hired by farm operator		Seasonal labor hired by labor contractor	
	Largest number per farm	Annual hours per farm	Largest number per farm	Annual hours per farm
	Workers	Hours	Workers	Hours
Appalachian:				
$50-$2,499	4	467	3	129
$2,500-$4,999	5	1,270	2	123
$5,000-$9,999	5	978	1	126
$10,000-$19,999	9	2,479	5	389
$20,000-$39,999	12	5,674	3	748
$40,000 and over	1/	---	1/	---
Southeast:				
$50-$2,499	12	335	1	14
$2,500-$4,999	11	868	2	30
$5,000-$9,999	11	1,647	2	66
$10,000-$19,999	15	2,587	8	1,196
$20,000-$39,999	1/	---	1/	---
$40,000 and over	1/	---	1/	---
All regions:				
$50-$2,499	4	462	3	124
$2,500-$4,999	5	1,201	2	114
$5,000-$9,999	5	1,082	1	117
$10,000-$19,999	9	2,495	5	4,339
$20,000-$39,999	12	5,372	3	657
$40,000 and over	1/	---	1/	---

1/ Fewer than 10 farms surveyed hired seasonal workers by method indicated.

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Table 3.--Tobacco farms: Number, seasonal labor, and hours of seasonal work per farm, by month, Appalachian and Southeast Regions, 1966

Month	Seasonal labor hired by operator			Seasonal labor hired by labor contractor		
	Farms 1/	Largest number per farm	Hours per farm	Farms 1/	Largest number per farm	Hours per farm
	Number	Workers	Hours	Number	Workers	Hours
January	50	3	70	14	3	31
February	35	3	79	13	1	10
March	54	3	90	39	1	10
April	140	7	122	59	12	23
May	303	5	95	114	2	9
June	333	12	130	181	2	10
July	472	16	367	133	3	17
August	609	15	307	98	5	9
September	710	15	154	91	8	37
October	223	8	165	110	5	47
November	180	15	94	55	3	36
December	109	4	113	11	2	13
All months, 1966 2/	1,098	16	579	560	12	34

1/ Data in this table refer only to farms hiring seasonal labor.
2/ Data are not sums of the 12 months, but comprise the total number of individual farms that reported any seasonal labor during the year, the largest number of workers on any individual farm, and the average annual hours of seasonal labor for farms reporting.

Seasonal labor needs in tobacco farming occur later than in most other types of farming. Most other types of farms used seasonal labor in late spring and early summer. In contrast, the largest number of tobacco farms to hire workers directly did so in August and September for harvesting. The greatest number of tobacco farms to use contract labor hired in June for suckering and topping (table 3).

Other Field Crop Farms 8/

Although only 68 percent of "other field crop" farms hired any labor, those that did relied heavily upon seasonal labor. On 85 percent of farms hiring labor, the seasonal workers were hired directly by the operator. A greater proportion of other field crop farmers hired seasonal labor directly than operators on any type of farm except tobacco (app. table 1).

Other field crop farms were generally larger in acreage than most other types of farms, even though 56 percent of these farms in the three major production regions sold less than $10,000 worth of farm products (app. table 2). Farms in the Southeast and Mountain Regions had about equal total land area per farm, but more of the Mountain Region land was cultivated. Farms in the Appalachian and Southeast Regions grew mostly peanuts and grain. In contrast, Mountain Region farms produced mostly sugarbeets, potatoes, and grain.

Among Mountain Region farms using hired labor, 83 percent of the operators hired seasonal help directly and over half of them used contract labor too.

Only three-fifths of Southeast other field crop farmers hired labor, but on farms that did, some 95 percent of the operators hired seasonal workers directly. Contracting was virtually nonexistent in the Southeast--a traditional labor surplus area.

In the Appalachian Region, hired labor was used on most farms, and about 95 percent of the hiring farms hired seasonal workers directly. Farms in the Appalachian and Southeast Regions used fewer contract workers at the peak of hiring and fewer hours of contract labor per farm than farms in the Mountain Region (table 4). The largest number of seasonal workers per farm was on farms that hired such labor directly. On Mountain Region farms, contract workers were used mostly to weed and thin sugarbeets.

Seasonality of work on other field crop farms differed appreciably by hiring methods. Most farms hiring directly were in the early-crop Appalachian and Southeast Regions, while most of those using contract labor were located in the late-crop Mountain Region (table 5).

8/ Other field crop farms included in this study are those for which the major source of farm income was derived from production of peanuts, potatoes, sugarcane, broom corn, and sugarbeets. For other crops included in this type of farm, see the report cited in footnote 1.

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Table 4.--Other field crop farms: Seasonal labor and hours of seasonal work per farm, by region, 1966

Region	Seasonal labor hired by farm operator		Seasonal labor hired by labor contractor	
	Largest number per farm	Annual hours per farm	Largest number per farm	Annual hours per farm
	Workers	Hours	Workers	Hours
Appalachian	6	1,114	2	59
Southeast	11	1,988	1/	---
Mountain	6	1,453	9	796
Other regions	18	4,148	10	1,077
All regions 2/	11	2,236	8	703

1/ Fewer than 10 farms surveyed in the Southeast reported hiring contract seasonal workers.
2/ Average of all farms reporting.

Table 5.--Other field crop farms: Number, seasonal labor, and hours of seasonal work per farm, by month, Appalachian, Southeast, and Mountain Regions, 1966

Month	Seasonal labor hired by operator			Seasonal labor hired by labor contractor		
	Farms 1/	Largest number per farm	Hours per farm	Farms 1/	Largest number per farm	Hours per farm
	Number	Workers	Hours	Number	Workers	Hours
January	10	2	126	2	1	7
February	11	2	169	--	--	--
March	12	2	102	--	--	--
April	18	6	129	--	--	--
May	39	13	269	3	50	1,034
June	51	17	273	2	4	34
July	38	16	323	3	3	26
August	29	20	564	7	7	47
September	24	28	154	3	5	12
October	20	7	227	13	9	147
November	4	3	199	13	3	15
December	4	3	76	5	3	9
All months, 1966 2/	91	28	1,518	28	50	372

1/ Data in this table refer only to farms hiring seasonal labor.
2/ Data are not sums of the 12 months, but comprise the total number of individual farms that reported any seasonal labor during the year, the largest number of workers on any individual farm, and the average annual hours of seasonal labor for farms reporting.

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Vegetable Farms

Although commercial vegetable farms are located in every region, four regions contained 63 percent of the vegetable farms in this study (table 6). The average vegetable farm that hired labor consisted of 29 acres of vegetables and 71 acres of other crops. The kinds of vegetables most frequently grown were snap beans, tomatoes, and sweet corn. Three regions--Southeast, Southern Plains, and Pacific--are noted for furnishing most of the Nation's fresh winter vegetables. The Lake States are most noted for field production of sweet corn, cucumbers, snap beans, and tomatoes.

More of the farms surveyed were in the Southeast than in any other region, and over three-fourths sold less than $10,000 worth of farm products during the year. 9/ Thus, the majority were small farms.

Table 6.--Vegetable farms: Seasonal workers and hours of seasonal work per farm, by region, 1966

Region	Seasonal labor hired by farm operator		Seasonal labor hired by labor contractor	
	Largest number per farm	Annual hours per farm	Largest number per farm	Annual hours per farm
	Workers	Hours	Workers	Hours
Southeast	14	1,894	33	3,362
Lake States	10	1,497	1/	---
Southern Plains	4	230	1/	---
Pacific	150	32,785	1/	---
Other regions	13	4,546	23	7,441
All regions 2/	32	6,993	22	4,868

1/ Fewer than 10 farms surveyed in the Lake States, Southern Plains, and Pacific Regions reported hiring contract seasonal workers.
2/ Average of all farms reporting.

9/ This compares with the 1964 Census of Agriculture, in which 79 percent of the vegetable farms had sales under $10,000.

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Size of vegetable farm seemed to have some effect on hiring practices--only 31 percent of the hiring farms with less than $5,000 worth of sales hired contract labor, in contrast to 50 percent of the largest farms (app. table 2).

Vegetable farms are major users of seasonal hired labor, yet only 30 percent of vegetable farmers hiring labor in the four regions used contract labor (probably because of the small size of farms). Only 7 percent of these vegetable farmers in the Lake States used contract labor, yet most other types of farmers in that region used such labor. Most vegetable farmers hired labor directly; the proportion varied from 70 to 93 percent among regions.

The Michigan State Employment Service takes a very active role in recruiting labor to work on fruit crops, so when vegetable harvesting is at its peak, farmers are able to acquire most of their labor from workers already in the area. This is considered one of the major reasons so few vegetable farmers in the Lake States reported using contract workers. In other vegetable producing areas, day-haul 10/ and local workers are used extensively.

On farms with contract labor, an average of nearly 4,900 hours of such labor, were used with a maximum of 22 contract workers during peak months (table 6). In contrast, direct-hire seasonal labor supplied an average of 7,000 hours of work annually and as many as 32 workers per farm at peak harvest.

The difference in seasonal peaks and the method of obtaining seasonal labor varied directly with farm production region. Demand for contract workers occurred earlier in the year than for direct-hire labor. This reflects the greater use of contract labor on Southeast farms, where the harvest season is early--May and June. Both numbers of contract workers and hours of contract work per farm were greatest during these 2 months (table 7). However, farmers in the Southeast who hired labor directly used more hours of labor during the December harvest of winter vegetables. Vegetable farms in the Pacific Region used more workers and hours of work per farm than vegetable farms in any other region (table 6).

Cotton Farms

Some 87 percent of the cotton farms were located in the Southeast, Delta States, and Southern Plains Regions. In these regions, most cotton farms that hired labor sold less than $10,000 worth of farm products and averaged 51 acres of cotton.

Cotton farms rely heavily on hired help to meet their labor needs. The extent of reliance on hired help varies by region--97 percent of Southern Plains cotton farms hired some labor, compared with only 59 percent of Southeast farmers.

Methods of obtaining seasonal labor differed on cotton farms by region. Contract labor, a much-used method of obtaining seasonal labor

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10/ Day-haul--seasonal farmworkers who are transported by the farm employer from predesignated areas to the farm and returned when the day's work is done.

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Table 7.--Vegetable farms: Number, seasonal labor, and hours of seasonal work per farm, by month, Southeast, Lake States, Southern Plains, and Pacific Regions, 1966

Month	Seasonal labor hired by operator			Seasonal labor hired by labor contractor		
	Farms 1/	Largest number per farm	Hours per farm	Farms 1/	Largest number per farm	Hours per farm
	Number	Workers	Hours	Number	Workers	Hours
January	3	10	581	--	--	--
February	3	10	606	--	--	--
March	10	25	1,177	5	1	10
April	14	25	1,315	2	20	464
May	42	50	705	9	160	5,216
June	30	100	2,135	7	400	13,605
July	30	117	1,430	13	120	2,814
August	22	373	4,833	6	145	7,694
September	18	62	3,304	5	31	2,384
October	19	37	1,743	5	13	204
November	15	63	1,921	1	25	4,000
December	3	128	10,831	--	--	--
All months, 1966 2/	56	373	7,688	33	400	7,389

1/ Data in this table refer only to farms hiring seasonal labor.
2/ Data are not sums of the 12 months, but comprise the total number of individual farms that reported any seasonal labor during the year, the largest number of workers on any individual farm, and the average annual hours of seasonal labor for farms reporting.

in most of the midcontinent farming area, was the method most often used on Southern Plains cotton farms. In that area, medium-size farms averaged 2,150 hours of contract labor (table 8). 11/ Almost no contract labor was used in the old Cotton Belt (the Southeast). Farmers there did their own hiring. As mentioned earlier, the direct-hire method is used in the Southeast because of the general availability of local workers in that region. In the Delta States, a substantial percentage of cotton farmers used both methods to obtain workers.

Cotton farmers in the three regions used seasonal labor mainly from May through October. But on many cotton farms, no seasonal labor was used during August--the traditional lay-by period. Contract labor was used by more farmers during July and September. However, the largest number of contract workers (choppers) per farm worked in June, while the largest number of workers paid directly by the operator (pickers) worked in November (table 9).

Fruit and Nut Farms

Although commercial fruit and nut farms are located throughout the country, only farms in the three regions that had major shares of production and seasonal labor are discussed. The Northeast, Southeast, and Pacific Regions contained 85 percent of the survey farms hiring some labor.

The method of obtaining seasonal labor for work on fruit farms varied greatly by production region (app. table 1). Nationally, it appears that about the same percentage of farms in each economic size category used contract workers (app. table 2). However, on a regional basis, use of contract labor increased with size of farm.

Nationally, fruit growers averaged nearly 3,700 hours of contract seasonal labor per farm. The average size of contract crew per farm was 23 workers. In contrast, on farms where the operator did his own hiring, an average of 14 workers contributed 3,900 annual hours of seasonal labor per farm.

Most fruit and nut farms surveyed were in the Pacific Region. The average farm there had 81 acres of land, of which 14 were in fruit trees. Farms that were large users of seasonal labor--those that sold $40,000 or more of farm products--generally had large acreages. They averaged 241 acres, including 50 acres of fruit trees. Orange groves and apple orchards occupied about equal acreage among fruit and nut farms.

Most fruit farms in the Pacific Region used hired labor. The operator himself did the hiring on nearly three-fourths of those farms. Even though only a third of that region's fruit growers hiring labor used contract labor, considerable input was supplied by these workers. For instance, Pacific Region fruit farms averaged over 2,500 hours of contract labor and as many as 27 workers during peak workdays (table 10). On farms where the operator hired seasonal labor directly, nearly 4,000 hours of seasonal labor and as many as 16 persons were employed per farm at the height of the season.

11/ Medium-size farms--$20,000 to $39,999 in sales. Smallest farms--less than $2,500 in sales.

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Table 8.--Cotton farms: Seasonal labor and hours of seasonal work per farm, by region and value of farm products sold, 1966

Region and value of farm products sold	Seasonal labor hired by farm operator		Seasonal labor hired by labor contractor	
	Largest number per farm	Annual hours per farm	Largest number per farm	Annual hours per farm
	Workers	Hours	Workers	Hours
Southeast:				
$50-$2,499	4	962	1/	---
$2,500 and over	9	2,519	1/	---
Delta States:				
$50-$2,499	6	1,409	4	53
$2,500-$4,999	12	2,063	2	84
$5,000-$19,999	14	2,350	1/	---
$20,000 and over	25	7,105	1/	---
Southern Plains:				
$50-$2,499	6	237	1	40
$2,500-$4,999	6	750	2	118
$5,000-$9,999	4	1,239	6	760
$10,000-$19,999	6	1,010	17	2,926
$20,000-$39,999	8	2,239	10	2,150
$40,000 and over	1/	---	1/	---
All regions:				
$50-$2,499	6	1,158	4	474
$2,500-$4,999	9	1,336	2	101
$5,000-$9,999	7	1,127	6	5,750
$10,000-$19,999	10	1,712	17	2,421
$20,000-$39,999	7	2,657	10	1,814
$40,000-$99,999	26	5,410	1/	---
$100,000 and over	1/	---	1/	---

1/ Fewer than 10 farms surveyed hired seasonal workers by method indicated.

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Table 9.--Cotton farms: Number, seasonal labor, and hours of seasonal work per farm, by month, Southeast, Delta States, and Southern Plains Regions, 1966

Month	Seasonal labor hired by operator			Seasonal labor hired by labor contractor		
	Farms 1/	Largest number per farm	Hours per farm	Farms 1/	Largest number per farm	Hours per farm
	Number	Workers	Hours	Number	Workers	Hours
January	11	2	99	1	10	600
February	15	1	79	5	1	6
March	22	1	161	26	44	52
April	33	3	112	31	64	276
May	137	30	190	24	75	291
June	211	32	308	20	110	465
July	108	24	353	41	62	510
August	60	25	324	27	17	318
September	151	26	236	37	5	42
October	197	27	298	25	30	143
November	76	40	244	26	6	91
December	17	10	133	2	7	293
All months, 1966 2/	346	40	790	189	110	341

1/ Data in this table refer only to farms hiring seasonal labor.
2/ Data are not sums of the 12 months, but comprise the total number of individual farms that reported any seasonal labor during the year, the largest number of workers on any individual farm, and the average annual hours of seasonal labor for farms reporting.

Table 10.--Fruit and nut farms: Seasonal workers and hours of seasonal work per farm, by region, 1966

Region	Seasonal labor hired by farm operator		Seasonal labor hired by labor contractor	
	Largest number per farm	Annual hours per farm	Largest number per farm	Annual hours per farm
	Workers	Hours	Workers	Hours
Northeast	12	4,169	1	137
Southeast	5	1,350	28	9,281
Pacific	16	3,966	27	2,522
Other regions	16	4,318	9	221
All regions 1/	14	3,853	23	3,670

1/ Average of all farms reporting.

Only a few Southeast fruit farms sold over $40,000 worth of farm products, and they were exceptionally large. They averaged over 1,300 acres of land, with nearly 700 acres in fruit trees--mostly orange and peach. The average orange grove contained 525 acres. Peach orchards averaged 75 acres per farm. Both crops are heavy users of seasonal labor. Fruit growers in the Southeast differ from other types of farmers in this region in their methods of obtaining seasonal workers. A greater proportion used contract labor rather than hiring workers directly (app. table 1). Also, many groves are completely maintained by contract grove management services.

Northeast fruit farms were larger than those in the Pacific but considerably smaller than those in the Southeast. Large Northeast fruit farms averaged over 300 acres, with 117 acres of fruit trees. These farms primarily grow apples but also have a few acres of peaches.

Although 86 percent of Northeast fruit growers hired labor, most of them did their own hiring. Less than a fourth used contract labor. Contract crews were very small, with no more than two workers on a farm; they worked only a few hours. On farms with operator-hired labor, such labor averaged about 4,200 hours and 12 workers per farm.

Farms growing oranges were a large proportion of the fruit and nut farms surveyed. Thus, the seasonal pattern of labor use for all fruit and nut farms was heavily influenced by that of orange groves. Extensive use of contract labor from November through May reflects the heavy demand for harvest labor for orange groves. On fruit farms where the operator

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Table 11.--Fruit and nut farms: Number, seasonal labor, and hours of seasonal work per farm, by month, Northeast, Southeast, and Pacific Regions, 1966

Month	Seasonal labor hired by operator			Seasonal labor hired by labor contractor		
	Farms 1/	Largest number per farm	Hours per farm	Farms 1/	Largest number per farm	Hours per farm
	Number	Workers	Hours	Number	Workers	Hours
January	25	16	438	23	75	1,199
February	20	8	359	12	50	1,065
March	19	11	315	9	50	1,353
April	44	14	274	13	125	1,602
May	34	20	390	23	275	2,167
June	58	92	967	22	50	639
July	64	22	865	13	18	85
August	77	20	691	20	18	125
September	81	30	928	23	40	398
October	91	31	856	17	50	674
November	31	12	374	11	45	1,276
December	13	13	554	8	50	2,249
All months, 1966 2/	192	92	2,011	101	275	1,916

1/ Data in this table refer only to farms hiring seasonal labor.
2/ Data are not sums of the 12 months, but comprise the total number of individual farms that reported any seasonal labor during the year, the largest number of workers on any individual farm, and the average annual hours of seasonal labor for farms reporting.

did his own hiring, peach and apple growers' seasonal labor patterns are reflected. More of these farms used seasonal labor during June through October, with the largest number of workers employed during June (table 11).

Cash Grain Farms

Most cash grain farms in this study were in the Corn Belt, Lake States, and Northern Plains Regions. Although 63 percent of all cash-grain farmers hired some labor during the year, a much smaller proportion than other crop farmers used seasonal help. (app. table 1). More cash grain farmers contracted to obtain seasonal labor than hired directly.

Use of contracting varied by region. Only 42 percent of Corn Belt farmers who hired some labor used contract seasonal labor, while most Lake States and Northern Plains grain farmers used this method. In these two regions, nearly twice as many farms used contracting as used direct hiring.

Contract workers used on cash grain farms are likely to be members of combine crews. Although these crews migrate with the grain harvest, they are not crew labor in the same context as the Texas family crews or other contract laborers who do handwork on sugarbeets, vegetables, and fruit.

More than half of all cash grain farms that hired labor in the three regions sold less than $10,000 worth of farm products (app. table 2). The number of workers and the annual hours of labor varied by size of farm. The smallest farms, with sales of $50 to $2,499, used more seasonal labor than farms with sales of $2,500 to $4,999. But in general, hours of seasonal labor per farm increased substantially for farms that had sales of $10,000 and over (table 12). Although 58 percent of the grain farmers who hired some labor used contract labor, most of the large grain farmers ($40,000 worth of sales or more) hired seasonal help directly. Even though there were fewer seasonal workers on farms that hired directly, these farms used many more hours of seasonal labor than farms that contracted labor (table 13).

The highly seasonal nature of labor needs on cash grain farms is indicated in table 13. Cash grain farms in the North-Central area (Corn Belt, Lake States, and Northern Plains Regions) hired seasonal labor in June and July more than at any other time. In only 3 consecutive months did a large number of cash grain farms use contract labor. During this time, custom combine crews harvested the grain crops, while the operator hired workers directly to work on other crops. Cash grain farms in this study had considerable acreage in hay and crops other than grain. For these crops, the operator hired labor directly. Most of this hired seasonal labor was used from May through August (table 13).

Livestock Farms

A majority of the farms surveyed were livestock farms. For this report, poultry and dairy farms, livestock ranches, and other livestock farms were combined into one farm type--livestock.

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Table 12.--Cash grain farms: Seasonal labor and hours of seasonal work per farm, by region and value of farm products sold, 1966

Region and value of farm products sold	Seasonal labor hired by farm operator		Seasonal labor hired by labor contractor	
	Largest number per farm	Annual hours per farm	Largest number per farm	Annual hours per farm
	Workers	Hours	Workers	Hours
Corn Belt:				
$50-$2,499	3	159	2	115
$2,500-$4,999	2	45	1	41
$5,000-$9,999	2	816	2	125
$10,000-$19,999	2	1,004	7	625
$20,000-$39,999	3	1,061	8	1,445
$40,000 and over	3	1,570	18	1,664
Lake States:				
$50-$2,499	1/	---	1	89
$2,500-$4,999	3	330	1	124
$5,000-$9,999	2	248	6	300
$10,000-$19,999	8	901	11	978
$20,000-$39,999	4	1,083	3	325
$40,000 and over	1/	---	1/	---
Northern Plains:				
$50-$2,499	8	508	2	39
$2,500-$4,999	1/	---	3	79
$5,000-$9,999	3	532	3	268
$10,000-$19,999	4	1,449	3	370
$20,000-$39,999	2	1,418	4	412
$40,000 and over	2	1,660	9	742

1/ Fewer than 10 farms surveyed hired seasonal workers by method indicated.

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Table 13.--Cash grain farms: Number, seasonal labor, and hours of seasonal work per farm, by month, north-central area, 1966 1/

Month	Seasonal labor hired by operator			Seasonal labor hired by labor contractor		
	Farms 2/	Largest number per farm	Hours per farm	Farms 2/	Largest number per farm	Hours per farm
	Number	Workers	Hours	Number	Workers	Hours
January	8	4	99	6	8	56
February	8	4	105	10	4	25
March	21	4	126	13	3	16
April	99	8	99	18	1	15
May	210	15	120	53	15	46
June	360	15	133	214	18	46
July	363	15	128	195	10	62
August	262	15	128	140	11	64
September	144	2	110	95	9	71
October	120	3	115	181	9	39
November	68	4	102	70	3	35
December	15	2	78	19	3	17
All months, 1966 3/	651	15	315	756	18	68

1/ Includes farms in the Corn Belt, Lake States, and Northern Plains Regions.
2/ Data in this table refer only to farms hiring seasonal labor.
3/ Data are not sums of the 12 months, but comprise the total number of individual farms that reported any seasonal labor during the year, the largest number of workers on any individual farm, and the average annual hours of seasonal labor for farms reporting.

A smaller proportion of livestock farms hired some labor than any other type of farm (app. table 1). Even though 60 percent of hiring farms used seasonal labor, this was the lowest use of seasonal labor of any type of farm except cash grain.

Nationally, about 60 percent of the farms that hired labor used both methods of recruitment to obtain seasonal labor. However, nearly three-fourths of the Lake States and two-thirds of the Northern Plains farmers that hired labor used contract workers. In contrast, a majority of the Corn Belt livestock farmers hired directly; less than half (44 percent) used contract labor. Most of the survey farms in the Corn Belt were hog and beef operations that used seasonal labor for calving, farrowing, and planting and cultivation of crops. For this work, they mostly hired local workers directly. In the Lake States, where dairy farms also grow a lot of hay and grain, farmers used contract labor to custom-harvest these crops. In the Northeast, about half of the livestock farms used both recruitment methods to obtain seasonal workers.

Nearly half of all livestock farms that hired labor were relatively small, selling less than $10,000 worth of farm products in 1965 (app. table 2). Because most farms of this size do not provide sufficient receipts to hire a full-time worker, they rely heavily on seasonal labor during peak work periods.

The percentage of farms using contract labor varied directly with size of operation. About two-thirds of the farms with sales of less than $10,000 used contract labor and only 44 percent hired labor directly The reverse was true on large farms ($40,000 and over in sales). The largest number of direct-hire workers on livestock farms at any one time differed little by farm size (table 14).

Peak contract crew size varied directly with size of farm in the Corn Belt and Northern Plains. In the Corn Belt, most livestock farms with sales of less than $100,000 used two to four workers. However, large-scale farms used as many as 16 workers. In the Northern Plains, small farms used two-man crews and large-scale farms used five-man crews.

Annual hours of seasonal labor use varied directly by farm size and whether a worker was paid directly by the operator or by a labor contractor. At every level of sales, Northeast and Lake State livestock operators hired more hours of seasonal labor directly than they obtained through contractors (table 14). Even though numbers of seasonal workers varied little by size of farm in the Northeast, hours of labor on large farms were about double those worked on the smallest farms. Except for a few large-scale Corn Belt farms, livestock farms hired more seasonal labor directly than through contractors.

In the north-central area, only a few farms used seasonal workers hired by the operator from December through March; the slack season extended through April for contract workers. More farms used seasonal workers in June than during any other month, whether the workers were paid directly by the operator or by a contractor. July and August were also months of heavy activity for seasonal workers. After forage harvesting was completed in August, the number of farms with workers hired by the operator declined sharply, but this did not happen on farms with contract labor until November.

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Table 14.--Livestock farms: Seasonal labor and hours of seasonal work per farm, by region and value of farm products sold, 1966

Region and value of farm products sold	Seasonal labor hired by farm operator		Seasonal labor hired by labor contractor	
	Largest number per farm	Annual hours per farm	Largest number per farm	Annual hours Per farm
	Workers	Hours	Workers	Hours
Northeast:				
$50-$2,499	3	594	1	42
$2,500-$5,999	1/	---	2	45
$5,000-$9,999	1	382	2	71
$10,000-$19,999	2	801	2	158
$20,000-$39,999	2	1,384	2	146
$40,000-$99,999	3	1,437	2	427
$100,000 and over	1/	---	1/	---
Corn Belt:				
$50-$2,499	4	374	1	98
$2,500-$4,999	3	466	2	122
$5,000-$9,999	2	485	4	175
$10,000-$19,999	2	638	2	244
$20,000-$39,999	2	828	2	279
$40,000-$99,999	2	1,275	2	623
$100,000 and over	3	2,355	16	6,348
Lake States:				
$50-$2,499	3	777	1	76
$2,500-$4,999	2	661	2	78
$5,000-$9,999	1	1,004	3	154
$10,000-$19,999	2	918	1	195
$20,000-$39,999	1	920	2	324
$40,000-$99,999	3	1,816	2	270
$100,000 and over	1/	---	1/	---
Northern Plains:				
$50-$2,499	4	502	2	46
$2,500-$4,999	1/	---	2	158
$5,000-$9,999	3	946	3	232
$10,000-$19,999	1	1,128	5	361
$20,000-$39,999	2	1,166	4	327
$40,000-$99,999	2	1,690	3	725
$100,000 and over	3	1,855	5	1,316

1/ Fewer than 10 farms surveyed hired seasonal workers by method indicated.

Hours of seasonal labor hired by the operator were generally three to five times greater per farm than that of contract labor nearly every month of the year. The number of workers per farm and the total hours of seasonal labor on livestock farms were small compared with other farms (tables 7, 9, 11, and 15). Even so, seasonal workers made a substantial contribution to the Nation's livestock operations.

Table 15.--Livestock farms: Number, seasonal labor, and hours of seasonal work per farm, by month, north-central area, 1966 1/

Month	Seasonal labor hired by operator			Seasonal labor hired by labor contractor		
	Farms 2/	Largest number per farm	Hours per farm	Farms 2/	Largest number per farm	Hours per farm
	Number	Workers	Hours	Number	Workers	Hours
January	50	3	62	50	3	20
February	58	3	66	34	5	25
March	82	6	71	42	5	18
April	200	4	90	44	4	22
May	370	3	88	177	8	25
June	927	3	83	410	5	26
July	813	3	85	365	3	20
August	649	3	82	267	9	72
September	386	4	94	283	16	61
October	230	3	94	277	9	37
November	154	4	93	147	2	22
December	77	3	85	32	3	14
All months, 1966, 3/	1,346	6	254	1,440	16	53

1/ Includes farms in the Corn Belt, Lake States, and Northern Plains Regions.
2/ Data in this table refer only to farms hiring seasonal labor.
3/ Data are not sums of the 12 months, but comprise the total number of individual farms that reported any seasonal labor during the year, the largest number of workers on any individual farm, and the average annual hours of seasonal labor for farms reporting.

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APPENDIX TABLES

Appendix table 1.--Percentage of farms hiring seasonal labor, by direct and contract methods, by type of farm and region, 1966

Type of farm and production region	Total farms	Farms that hired any labor	Farms with seasonal labor hired by--1/	
			Farm operator	Labor contractor
	Number	Percent		
Cash grain:				
Corn Belt	1,211	53	61	42
Lake States	308	57	43	82
Northern Plains	701	69	38	71
All regions	2,972	63	53	58
Tobacco:				
Appalachian	1,494	75	89	45
Southeast	129	84	94	53
All regions	1,700	75	88	44
Cotton:				
Southeast	169	59	90	8
Delta States	287	81	82	45
Southern Plains	115	97	59	69
All regions	656	78	77	42
Other field crops:				
Appalachian	46	80	95	38
Southeast	66	59	95	5
Mountain	25	92	83	52
All regions	209	68	85	34
Vegetable:				
Southeast	61	61	70	41
Lake States	30	47	93	7
Southern Plains	32	88	86	29
Pacific	24	83	90	30
All regions	233	67	78	39
Fruit and nut:				
Northeast	58	86	88	24
Southeast	48	83	47	68
Pacific	213	87	70	34
All regions	387	84	71	35
All livestock:				
Corn Belt	2,175	55	65	44
Lake States	1,443	62	43	71
Northern Plains	856	61	50	64
Northeast	701	65	47	50
All regions	9,044	58	60	60

1/ The last two columns are a percentage of farms hiring any labor, whereas the second column is a percentage of all farms reporting in the given category in column 1.

Note: Regions shown represent the majority of farms surveyed: Cash grain, 3 regions comprised 75 percent of all cash grain farms surveyed; tobacco, 2 regions comprised 96 percent of all tobacco farms surveyed; cotton, 3 regions comprised 87 percent of all cotton farms surveyed; other field crops, 3 regions comprised 66 percent; vegetable farms, 4 regions comprised 63 percent; fruit and nut, 3 regions comprised 83 percent; and livestock, 4 regions comprised 66 percent.

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Appendix table 2.--Number and percentage of farms hiring seasonal labor, by type of farm, value of sales, and method of hiring, 1966

Type of farm and value of farm products sold	Farms that hired seasonal labor 1/	Farms with seasonal labor hired by--	
		Farm operator	Labor contractor
	Number	Percent	
Cash grain:			
$50-$4,999	320	26	74
$5,000-$9,999	344	47	65
$10,000-$19,999	289	58	55
$20,000-$39,999	256	69	43
$40,000 and over	91	69	30
All farms	1,300	50	58
Tobacco:			
$50-$4,999	740	86	41
$5,000-$9,999	320	96	48
$10,000-$19,999	122	93	63
$20,000-$39,999	36	92	58
$40,000 and over	2/	--	--
All farms	1,227	89	46
Cotton:			
$50-$4,999	332	80	39
$5,000-$9,999	28	71	43
$10,000-$19,999	41	66	61
$20,000-$39,999	27	74	59
$40,000 and over	16	94	50
All farms	444	78	43
Other field crops:			
$50-$4,999	28	100	29
$5,000-$9,999	28	100	14
$10,000-$19,999	21	95	29
$20,000-$39,999	2/	--	--
$40,000 and over	13	69	38
All farms	99	92	28
Vegetable:			
$50-$4,999	64	81	31
$5,000-$9,999	12	100	--
$10,000-$19,999	2/	--	--
$20,000-$39,999	2/	--	--
$40,000 and over	12	83	50
All farms	99	82	30
Fruit and nut:			
$50-$4,999	112	71	36
$5,000-$9,999	64	69	38
$10,000-$19,999	38	71	37
$20,000-$39,999	33	70	39
$40,000 and over	28	64	36
All farms	275	70	37
All livestock:			
$50-$4,999	680	41	68
$5,000-$9,999	704	47	63
$10,000-$19,999	727	58	55
$20,000-$39,999	635	61	47
$40,000 and over	314	67	38
All farms	3,060	53	56

1/ Farms that used only family labor or hired only regular labor are excluded from this study. The farms in this table relate only to the major production regions shown in app. table 1.

2/ Fewer than 10 farms surveyed used seasonal hired workers.

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