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MIGRATORY FARM WORKERS IN 1949

BY LOUIS J. DUCOFF



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This report is based mainly on the results of an enumerative survey made for the Bureau of Agricultural Economics by the Bureau of the Census.

Carl C. Taylor and Raymond C. Smith advised in the planning of this study.

MIGRATORY FARM WORKERS IN 1949

By LOUIS J. DUCOFF, Labor Economist
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INTRODUCTION

For the first time significant comparisons can now be made between migratory hired farm workers and other workers on farms in the United States. Phases that can be compared are the population characteristics, the employment, and the earnings at farm and non-farm work. In a national cross-section survey of a sample of households visited in December 1949, information was obtained regarding those individuals in the household who were migratory farm workers during 1949.^{1/}

The collected information provides a picture of the current migratory farm working force and gives other types of information not previously available on a national basis. Because the information was obtained as part of a sample survey of individuals who did any farm-wage work in 1949, comparisons between migratory and nonmigratory farm workers are possible, and they are presented in this report.

Many people who work on farms for wages also do other kinds of work during the year. This is true of both the migrant and nonmigrant farm laborers. In this survey the migrant status of the individual was ascertained only with respect to his or her farm work. Migratory hired farm workers were identified as those who left their homes to work in the cultivation or harvest of crops in some other county and did not nightly return to their homes.

The detailed information in this report on migratory farm workers relates to a sample which represents approximately 420,000 persons, 14 years of age and over, in our civilian population at the end of 1949 (and not in institutions) who did migratory farm work in 1949. This is not the total number of migratory workers who worked on farms in the United States at some time during 1949. Some are excluded by the definitions used in this survey; others failed to be included because of the difficulties of sampling the population of migrant workers. Also, a very important reason was that many Mexican nationals had left the country before the survey was made in December.^{2/}

From various sources, it is estimated that there were approximately 1 million migratory farm workers in the United States at some time during the year, not including an unknown number of Mexican nationals who had entered illegally and were still in the country in December when the survey was made. (It is believed that persons residing illegally in the

^{1/} See appendix for a statement of the sample and schedule used in this survey.

^{2/} See appendix for appraisal of the coverage of this survey.

country would not have been reported to the survey enumerators.) This total involved a little more than 500,000 domestic workers and a little under 500,000 Mexican nationals, who were not in this country in December of that year. The Mexican nationals included 60,000 legally contracted workers who were not held over for work in the next year, approximately 300,000 (excluding duplications) who left after being apprehended by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and a roughly estimated 100,000 whose departures were not recorded by the Immigration Service.

Among the domestic migratory workers, the survey provided data relating to 422,000 workers. It is estimated that an additional 100,000 were not covered by the survey. Some of these were children under 14 years of age excluded by definition; others were of the very mobile group that are difficult to locate in a survey of dwelling places. Despite the incompleteness in the count of all types of migratory farm workers, domestic and foreign, the data here shown are believed to present a reasonably reliable picture for the domestic migratory farm workers 14 years of age and over.^{3/}

By 1948 and 1949, the total number of migratory workers in the United States had increased materially over the low level prevailing at the end of World War II. Increases after 1945 occurred among both domestic migrants and illegal entrants from Mexico. In 1948 and 1949, however, the illegal inflow of Mexican nationals increased to such an extent that, even with the business recession in the first half of 1949, accompanied by an upward trend in unemployment, there apparently was no significant increase from 1948 to 1949 in the number of domestic migratory workers who got farm jobs.^{4/}

Although it is probable that the average duration of employment and the amount of earnings of migratory farm workers were somewhat lower in 1949 than in 1948, no national data are available to reveal the differences.^{5/} It is known that for all domestic hired farm workers (who increased in numbers from 1948 to 1949) the average amount of farm-wage work done in the year decreased from 104 to 90 days.^{6/} The presence of large numbers of illegal entrants from Mexico undoubtedly discouraged

^{3/} See appendix for an appraisal of the coverage of domestic migratory farm workers.

^{4/} See appendix for a discussion of the relation of the 1945 and 1948 estimates of the numbers of migratory farm workers to the estimates in the report for 1949.

^{5/} For information on duration of employment of migratory workers in the San Joaquin Valley in 1948, see Metzler, William H., The Agricultural Labor Force in the San Joaquin Valley, California, 1948, 73 pp., illus. Bur. Agr. Econ. February 1950. [Processed.]

^{6/} See a forthcoming report of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, The Hired Farm Working Force - 1948 and 1949.

many domestic farm workers from migrating into certain areas where migratory workers are commonly used, as they may have done in other years. Many of these domestic farm workers consequently confined their job-seeking and employment to their own counties. The effect in these areas was an increase in the number of local seasonal workers as well as a lowering of the average duration of employment of the seasonal farm workers. A similar depressing effect on employment and earnings of domestic seasonal farm workers occurred in the areas which received inflows of illegal entrants from Mexico.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRATORY FARM WORKERS

Sex and Age

Several characteristics of these migratory workers that were revealed in the course of the survey, when taken together, give a fair, composite impression of this somewhat elusive segment of our population. Female workers in 1949 made up a larger proportion of the migratory farm workers (31 percent) than of the nonmigrants (27 percent). Forty-five percent of the migratory workers, males and females combined, were under 25 years of age with nearly half of these in the age group of 14 to 17 years. Another 45 percent were in the 25-to-54 age brackets. Only 2 percent, all men, were 65 years of age or over. The age composition of migratory farm workers was about like that of the nonmigrants except for a slightly larger proportion of those under 25 and a considerably smaller proportion of those 65 years of age and over among the migrants. (See table 1.)

Table 1. - Percentage distribution of migratory and nonmigratory farm-wage workers by age, United States, 1949 ^{1/}

Age group	Migratory workers Percent	Nonmigratory workers Percent
All ages (years)	100	100
14 - 17	22	21
18 - 24	23	20
25 - 34	16	18
35 - 44	16	16
45 - 54	13	12
55 - 64	8	8
65 and over	2	5

^{1/} Data relate to persons 14 years of age and over in the civilian noninstitutional population at time of the survey. For description of the survey and estimates of the excluded groups see the appendix.

The age composition of the female migrants differed greatly from that of the male migrants. The proportion of boys 16 to 17 and 18 to 19 was more than twice as large as girls of these ages, and the proportion of men 20 to 54 was substantially smaller than of women. The preponderance of men among the migrants shows up again in age groups 55 years of age and over (table 2).

Table 2. - Percentage distribution of migratory and nonmigratory farm-wage workers by sex and age, United States, 1949

Age group	Migratory workers			Nonmigratory workers		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
All ages (years)	100	100	100	100	100	100
14 - 15	10	10	11	9	8	12
16 - 17	11	14	6	12	12	11
18 - 19	12	14	6	7	8	4
20 - 24	11	10	15	13	14	11
25 - 34	16	14	21	18	18	20
35 - 44	16	14	20	16	15	18
45 - 54	13	11	16	12	12	14
55 - 64	9	10	5	8	8	7
65 and over	2	3	--	5	5	3

See footnote to table 1.

The differences in the age distribution of the two sexes were much more marked among the migratory than among the nonmigratory farm workers.

These age distributions mean that the migratory farm worker is, on the average, younger than the nonmigrant, and that the male migrant is substantially younger than the female migrant. The median age of the migratory male workers was 26.6 years, compared with 29.4 years for nonmigratory males.

Race, Residence, and Veteran Status

The survey showed that 4.1 million persons did some farm-wage work in the course of 1949.^{7/} Of this total, 2.8 million (68 percent) were white (including Mexicans), 1.3 million (32 percent) were of Negro or of other nonwhite races. (Negroes made up almost all of the nonwhite farm-wage workers.) Among the migrant workers, Negroes and Orientals made up 28 percent, as compared with 32 percent among the nonmigratory workers.

^{7/} Excluding persons under 14 and others not covered in the survey. Allowance for these groups that were not covered brings the total to 5.1 million. For an analysis of the employment, annual earnings, and other data relating to the entire hired farm working force of 1949 see footnote 6, p. 2.

Of the migratory farm workers covered, the proportion who were living in urban and rural-nonfarm localities at the end of the year was much greater than was true among the nonmigrants. Urban residents accounted for 27 percent of all migratory workers compared with only 12 percent of nonmigrants. Farm residents made up 67 percent of the nonmigratory workers but constituted only 44 percent of the migratory workers.

The relative distribution of veterans of World War II differed little as between the migrants and the nonmigrants. Altogether there were nearly a half-million veterans in the entire hired farm working force of 1949.

Chief Activity During 1949

Farm-wage work was the chief activity during the year of a third of the male migratory persons who worked on farms for wages in 1949, and 40 percent of the male nonmigratory. The chief activity of the remainder was either working on a farm as the operator or as unpaid family workers, or doing work not on farms, or being out of the labor force (table 3).^{8/} The proportion of females for whom farm wage

Table 3. - Percentage distribution of migratory and nonmigratory farm-wage workers by chief activity in 1949 and by sex, United States, 1949

Chief activity	Migratory workers			Nonmigratory workers		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
All activities	100	100	100	100	100	100
Farm work	41	49	24	55	67	23
Farm-wage work	29	34	18	32	40	10
With nonfarm work	7	9	5	7	9	3
Without nonfarm work	22	25	13	25	31	7
Other farm work ^{1/}	12	15	6	23	27	13
Nonfarm work	16	20	8	12	13	9
Nongainful activity	43	31	68	33	20	68

See footnote to table 1.

^{1/} Includes work as farm operator or unpaid family worker.

work was the year's chief activity was nearly twice as high among female migratory as among nonmigratory workers - 18 percent compared with 10 percent. However, because the nonmigratory workers include more farm operators and unpaid family workers (who engage in farm-wage work on other farms), the proportion of females for whom farm work (on a paid or unpaid basis) is the major activity during the year is practically the same for migrants as for nonmigrants.

^{8/} Chief activity is defined as the type of activity in which the person spends the longest time during the year.

Nonfarm work was the major activity during 1949 of a larger proportion of the migratory farm workers than of the nonmigratory - 16 percent compared with 12 percent. An additional 7 percent of the migratory and nonmigratory workers did some work off the farms even though their chief activity was farm-wage work.

The proportion of female farm-wage workers covered in the survey who did not report gainful work as their chief activity in 1949 was the same for the migratory as for the other workers - 68 percent. In contrast, a much larger proportion of the male migratory workers did not report gainful work as their chief activity than was true of the nonmigratory males - 31 percent compared with 20 percent. Considering that migratory male farm workers are predominantly in the younger age groups - their median age being 26.6 - the high proportion of them that had no gainful employment for a major part of 1949 attests to the substantial waste of manpower incident to their pattern of work as migratory laborers.

Labor-Force Status in December 1949

In the week when the survey was made, December 4 to 10, 35 percent of the migratory farm workers were working on farm jobs, 23 percent on nonfarm jobs, and 13 percent were unemployed and looking for work. The remaining 29 percent were not in the labor force that week (table 4). Of those not in the labor force, housewives doing their own housework made up 12 percent of all migratory farm workers, youths attending school accounted for 13 percent, and the remaining 4 percent were not in the labor force for other reasons.

Table 4. - Percentage distribution of migratory and nonmigratory farm-wage workers by their labor-force status in December 1949, United States, 1949

Labor-force status in December 1949	Migratory workers	Nonmigratory workers
	Percent	Percent
Total	100	100
In the labor force	71	72
Employed in agriculture	35	51
Employed in nonagriculture	23	16
Unemployed	13	5
Not in the labor force	29	28
Keeping house	12	13
In school	13	11
Other	4	4

See footnote to table 1.

The proportion of migratory farm workers who were unemployed during the survey week was much greater than the unemployed proportion of the nonmigratory workers. For those who were employed, the proportion at farm jobs was smaller and at nonfarm jobs was greater than was the case among the nonmigrants. Unlike the situation for the year as a whole, the proportions of migratory and nonmigratory farm workers who were not in the labor force in the week surveyed, were virtually the same. This was also true of the several categories of those not in the labor force, for example, persons 14 years of age and over who were attending school.

EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS

Distribution by Duration of Employment

Migratory farm workers are employed at seasonal farm jobs which generally do not last very long on any one farm. Continuous employment at farm wages throughout the year or the greater part of the year is found only in the unusual situations in which workers are able to piece together a number of jobs on different farms to make a long period of employment during the year. That few migrants could do this in 1949 is indicated by the data in table 5; only 5 percent of them did farm-wage work for 250 days or more during the year. On the other hand, 70 percent of these workers had less than 75 days at farm jobs in 1949.^{9/}

The wholly seasonal nature of their farm jobs makes it necessary for a greater proportion of migratory than of nonmigratory workers to obtain nonfarm jobs during the part of the year when they are not working on farms. When both kinds of wage work are taken into account, the proportion of migratory workers with employment for 250 days and over was 8 percent in 1949. Details are given in table 6.

Because the regular and year-round hired farm workers are in the nonmigratory group, it is to be expected that a larger proportion of that group would have 250 days or more of work in the year. In 1949, the proportion of nonmigrants who had farm jobs lasting a total of this many days was 15 percent, and the proportion who had farm and nonfarm jobs yielding this much employment was 20 percent. The nonmigratory group, however, includes a very large number of very short-term seasonal workers, consisting mostly of housewives and school youths who work on farms at harvest time, and are in the labor market for only short periods.

^{9/} Because of limitations of coverage of the survey it is probable that the percentage with less than 75 days is understated somewhat and the percentage with more than 250 days overstated.

Table 5. - Percentage distribution of migratory and nonmigratory farm-wage workers by days of farm-wage work, United States, 1949

Farm-wage work	Migratory workers Percent	Nonmigratory workers Percent
Total (days)	100	100
Under 25	25	41
25 - 74	45	22
75 - 149	15	12
150 - 249	10	10
250 - 299	2	4
300 and over	3	11

See footnote to table 1.

About 1.5 million of the 1949 nonmigratory hired farm workers, or 41 percent of the total covered in the survey, worked less than 25 days for farm wages. This contrasts markedly with the migratory farm workers, as only 25 percent of the latter were employed at farm-wage work for so short a period. Because migrants are in the labor market more continuously than many of the nonmigrants and because seasonal farm jobs are much more often the main kinds of employment of the migrants, they are likely to seek employment for longer periods than do the seasonal non-migrant workers.

Table 6. - Percentage distribution of migratory and nonmigratory farm-wage workers by days of farm- and nonfarm-wage work, United States, 1949

Farm- and non- farm-wage work	Migratory workers Percent	Nonmigratory workers Percent
Total (days)	100	100
Under 25	15	30
25 - 74	34	21
75 - 149	25	14
150 - 249	18	15
250 - 299	4	7
300 and over	4	13

See footnote to table 1.

A significant difference between the distribution of migratory and nonmigratory workers by duration of employment may be summarized by saying that the migratory group contains smaller proportions employed

on farms for very short periods or at jobs which provide work throughout the year or for the greatest part of it. The migratory group is more heavily concentrated in jobs of a farm or nonfarm character which provide, in the whole year, employment in excess of 25 days and less than 250 days.

Distribution by Annual Earnings

The differences in the distribution of migratory and nonmigratory farm workers, with respect to their cash-wage earnings during 1949 from farm and nonfarm jobs, follow in broad outline the differences observed with respect to duration of employment in the year. A smaller proportion of the migrants than of the others had annual cash earnings from farm-wage jobs of less than \$100 in the year, and a smaller proportion had earnings of more than \$1,000 (table 7). Thus, in the group earning less than \$100 a year, there were 28 percent of the migratory workers, compared with 44 percent of the nonmigratory.

Table 7. - Percentage distribution of migratory and nonmigratory farm-wage workers by cash wages earned at farm work and by sex, United States, 1949

Cash wages from hired farm work	Migratory workers			Nonmigratory workers		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Total (dollars)	100	100	100	100	100	100
Under 25	6	3	11	16	11	30
25 - 99	22	19	27	28	24	36
100 - 199	29	28	33	15	15	15
200 - 399	14	10	23	13	13	12
400 - 599	11	14	4	9	11	6
600 - 999	10	14	2	7	9	1
1,000 - 1,399	4	6	-	7	10	1/
1,400 - 1,999	1	2	-	3	4	1/
2,000 and over	3	4	-	2	3	-

See footnote to table 1.

1/ Less than 0.5 percent.

Female workers are prominent in the categories of low earnings in the year, reflecting their very short periods of employment. Migratory workers with earnings of \$1,000 or more in 1949, from farm wages, made up only 8 percent of the total, as compared with 12 percent of the nonmigratory group. Only a negligible percentage of female workers among either the migratory or the nonmigratory farm workers had earnings of \$1,000 or more in the year, from farm and nonfarm jobs. When earnings from nonfarm jobs are taken into consideration, workers with annual earnings of \$1,000 or more in cash wages made up only 17 percent of the total number of migrants (table 8).

Table 8. - Percentage distribution of migratory and nonmigratory farm-wage workers by total cash wages earned and by sex, United States, 1949

Total cash wage income ^{1/}	Migratory workers			Nonmigratory workers		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Total (dollars)	100	100	100	100	100	100
Under 25	5	3	8	12	7	27
25 - 99	10	7	18	20	16	30
100 - 199	22	18	32	14	13	16
200 - 399	22	18	31	13	12	14
400 - 599	11	12	9	10	11	8
600 - 999	13	17	2	11	14	4
1,000 - 1,399	8	11	-	10	13	1
1,400 - 1,999	4	6	-	6	8	^{2/}
2,000 and over	5	8	-	4	6	^{2/}

See footnote to table 1.

^{1/} From farm and nonfarm jobs.

^{2/} Less than 0.5 percent.

Average Annual Earnings and Employment

Male migratory farm workers averaged fewer days of employment on farms than did nonmigratory males, but the opposite was the case for migrant female workers. In the case of nonfarm jobs, however, male migrants averaged a slightly higher number of days of employment than did nonmigrant males; but female migrants had a slightly shorter average duration of employment at nonfarm jobs than did nonmigrant females. Migrant workers of both sexes, combined, averaged a total of 101 days of employment in 1949, consisting of 70 days at farm-wage work and 31 days at other jobs (table 9).

Table 9. - Average time worked and wages earned at farm and nonfarm work, by migratory status and sex of workers, United States, 1949

Status and sex of workers	Wage work								
	Total			Farm			Nonfarm		
	Aver-	Cash earned	Aver-	Cash earned	Aver-	Cash earned	Aver-	Cash earned	
	age		age		age		age		
	days	Per	days	Per	days	Per	days	Per	
	of	1949	of	1949	of	1949	of	1949	of
	work	: worked:	work	: worked:	work	: worked:	work	: worked:	
	Number	Dollars	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Dollars
Migratory workers	101	514	5.10	70	352	5.00	31	162	5.20
Male	116	655	5.65	79	442	5.60	37	213	5.75
Female	68	202	2.95	50	153	3.05	18	49	2.70
Nonmigratory workers	120	528	4.40	91	357	3.90	29	171	6.00
Male	143	659	4.60	111	446	4.00	32	213	6.75
Female	58	169	2.90	38	112	2.95	20	57	2.80

See footnote to table 1.

Nonmigratory farm workers of both sexes, combined, averaged 120 days of work in the year covered, consisting of 91 days of farm-wage work and 29 days of other work. Nonmigrant males averaged 143 days, which included 32 days of wage work off the farms. The nonmigratory female farm workers averaged 58 days of employment with 20 of those days at nonfarm work.

The wage structure in agriculture is such that male migratory workers average higher earnings per hour or per day than do nonmigratory workers. This arises from a combination of factors including the specialization of migratory workers in the more arduous hand-labor harvest jobs, which are paid at higher time rates, or, when paid at piece rates, yield higher hourly and daily earnings than do the jobs at which nonmigratory workers

are generally employed. As a result of specialization in specific harvest jobs, such as cutting asparagus and picking beans, some groups of migrants develop a proficiency in hourly output which is not matched by less experienced local workers. The higher cash hourly or daily earnings of the migrants also reflect, to some extent, the considerably lower average value of perquisites, or noncash remuneration that they receive. Generally speaking, earlier studies of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, have shown that nonmigratory workers are likely to receive, in addition to cash wages, a greater value of such items as housing, meals, garden space, and food products, than do the migrants. In 1949, migratory male workers averaged \$5.60 cash wages per day at farm work, or 40 percent more than the average \$4 earned by nonmigratory males. The difference was small in the case of females; in fact, national averages show only a slight difference in daily wages, although there may be differences within regions.

In contrast to the differential in the daily earnings between the migratory and nonmigratory male workers in agriculture that is favorable to the migratory worker, there apparently is a differential in the other direction with respect to the daily earnings of the migratory and nonmigratory workers at the nonfarm jobs at which they are customarily employed. At least this was the case in 1949, the year for which the data are available. While the migratory male worker averaged \$5.75 per day worked at nonfarm jobs, the nonmigratory males averaged \$6.75 wages at their nonfarm jobs.

The lower daily cash wages earned off the farms by migratory male farm workers than by the nonmigratory should be interpreted with caution. In the first place, we do not know from this survey, whether the employment at nonfarm jobs occurred in the county or counties to which the workers migrated for their temporary farm jobs or in their county of origin. The migratory status was ascertained only with respect to farm jobs. Second, the lower average daily cash earnings of migrants at nonfarm jobs could have been caused by the payment of lower wage rates to them for the same types of nonfarm jobs as were done by nonmigratory workers, or by the employment of the migrants at types of nonfarm jobs differing in character and generally paid lower wage rates than the types of jobs at which nonmigrants were largely employed. Or possibly other factors were involved such as shorter hours worked per day, less piece-rate work and more time rates, and less experience in the work. The information obtained did not permit an answer as to which of these factors or combination of factors was responsible for the observed difference.

Because the bulk of the earnings of the migrants came from agricultural work, the higher daily earnings of migratory farm workers than of nonmigratory offset, on the average, the fewer number of days worked by migratory workers in 1949. The result was annual cash earnings from farm and nonfarm jobs on the part of migratory workers which did not differ materially from the average of all nonmigratory workers - \$514 compared with \$528. Male migrants averaged \$655 in cash earnings, and

female migratory workers averaged \$202. In the case of nonmigratory males, the average annual cash wages from both kinds of work was \$659.

Comparisons of the average annual earnings or average duration of employment in the year, between migratory and nonmigratory agricultural workers, are somewhat distorted by the presence among nonmigrants of a large proportion of very short-time seasonal farm workers who are only temporarily in the labor force. Although some workers who fit this description are in the migratory group, they are relatively less important. Thus, for example, the proportion of nonmigrants who had less than 25 days employment that year, at farm and nonfarm work combined, was twice as large as of the migratory workers -- 30 percent compared with 15 percent.

A better comparison may therefore be made of the experience in employment and earnings in 1949, of the more genuine farm workers in both the migratory and nonmigratory categories, if averages are compared that exclude those who worked for less than 25 days in the year at farm jobs. This comparison begins to show the more favorable average annual earnings of the nonmigratory group, (excluding those who had a very tenuous connection with the labor force). This is because a larger proportion of them had a fuller employment in the year. As indicated in table 10, the nonmigratory workers (excluding those with less than 25 days of work) averaged 173 days of employment and \$719 in cash wages in 1949, compared with 119 days and \$594 for the corresponding group among migratory workers. If allowances were made for the higher average value of perquisites received by the nonmigratory workers, the difference in total income, cash and noncash combined, between the two kinds of workers would be still larger.

Table 10. - Average time worked and wages earned at farm and nonfarm work by migratory status and sex of workers for farm wage workers with 25 days and over of farm wage work, United States, 1949

Status and sex of workers	Wage work								
	Total			Farm			Nonfarm		
	Aver-	Cash earned		Aver-	Cash earned		Aver-	Cash earned	
	age		Per	age		Per	age		Per
	days		day	days		day	days		day
	of	1949	worked	of	1949	worked	of	1949	worked
	work			work			work		
	Number	Dollars	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Dollars
Migratory workers	119	594	4.95	89	448	5.00	30	146	4.80
Male	135	739	5.50	98	549	5.60	37	190	5.20
Female	82	234	2.85	67	198	2.95	15	36	2.35
Nonmigratory workers	173	719	4.15	148	574	3.85	25	145	5.85
Male	190	818	4.30	165	655	3.95	25	163	6.65
Female	102	291	2.85	76	224	2.95	26	67	2.55

See footnote to table 1.

For certain analytical purposes, it is useful to view separately the three rather distinct groups that make up the entire hired farm working force in the United States. These are: (1) The year-round or regular workers who work on one farm or several nearby farms all or most of the year; (2) the local seasonal workers who do relatively short seasonal farm work and find it in the counties in which they live; and (3) the migratory workers who also do peak seasonal farm jobs but who temporarily leave their homes to seek work in other counties of the same or other States.

Some migratory farm workers resemble the regular hired farm workers in that they also have farm jobs for most of the year, but most of the migrants resemble the seasonal farm workers. Only one-seventh of the migrants had work on farms for 150 days or more during the year, in contrast with one-fourth of the other workers. The male migrants who did this much farm-wage work, averaged 232 days of it compared with 273 days for the regular male workers. The amount of nonfarm work done was negligible both for migratory or nonmigratory workers. Other details are found in the tables.

Employment and Earnings by Age and Sex

Average annual earnings and earnings per day show a characteristic pattern of rising with each higher age group, with the 20-to-34 year group earning the most; they progressively decline at each older age group with minor exceptions. This pattern shows up consistently for migratory as well as for nonmigratory workers and for their farm as well as their nonfarm work (table 11). A somewhat similar pattern is found in the average number of days worked by members of the different age groups.

Daily cash earnings of migratory workers from farm work were consistently higher than those of nonmigratory workers for each age group, and the reverse was generally the case for daily earnings from other work. Wages earned per day at other jobs by the nonmigrants were consistently higher than the cash daily farm wage for each age group. The other data in this table suggest that migratory farm workers are generally employed at lower paying nonfarm jobs than are the nonmigrants. More detailed information for children and youths under 20 years of age is given because many people have a special interest in the question of the employment of children who are not 16 years old (table 11).

Table 11. - Average time worked and wages earned at farm and nonfarm work by migratory status and age of workers, United States, 1949

Status and age of worker	Wage work								
	Total			Farm			Nonfarm		
	Aver-	Cash earned	Aver-	Cash earned	Aver-	Cash earned	Aver-	Cash earned	
	age		age		age		age		
	days	Per	days	Per	days	Per	days	Per	
	of	1949	of	1949	of	1949	of	1949	
	work	worked	work	worked	work	worked	work	worked	
	Number	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Dollars
Migratory workers (years)									
All ages	101	514	5.10	70	352	5.00	31	162	5.20
14 - 15	71	239	3.40	57	210	3.70	14	29	2.05
16 - 19	86	369	4.30	49	233	4.75	37	136	3.65
20 - 34	105	676	6.40	66	378	5.70	39	298	7.60
35 - 54	118	623	5.30	89	479	5.40	29	144	5.00
55 and over	110	400	3.65	90	349	3.90	20	51	2.55
Nonmigratory workers (years)									
All ages	120	528	4.40	91	357	3.90	29	171	6.00
14 - 15	44	113	2.60	36	91	2.55	8	22	2.85
16 - 19	91	321	3.50	72	234	3.25	19	87	4.55
20 - 34	157	747	4.75	115	462	4.00	42	285	6.80
35 - 54	125	598	4.75	94	411	4.35	31	187	6.00
55 and over	112	428	3.80	95	348	3.65	17	80	4.60

See footnote to table 1.

APPENDIX 10/

Method of Survey

The estimates in this report are based on information obtained for the Bureau of Agricultural Economics by the Bureau of the Census in its regular Current Population Survey in December 1949.^{11/} The survey was made on a national sample of approximately 25,000 households. As the estimates are based on a sample, they are subject to sampling variability. The smaller figures as well as the small differences between figures should be used with care. The information on time worked and wages earned during the year is subject to errors in memory of those who reported.

In addition to the regular questions asked each month by the Bureau of the Census as to personal characteristics, employment status, etc., special questions were asked for each person 14 years old and over in the households included in the survey, in both urban and rural areas. The special questions are here reproduced.

Information from these questions provided the basis for this report focused on migratory farm workers and for a more general report on the hired farm working force.^{12/} The last question on the schedule permitted the identification of migratory workers among those who had reported some farm-wage work in the year.

(42) "Some workers leave home to hoe or harvest crops in some other county. Did . . . do this in 1949?" The survey enumerators were given the following instructions with respect to this item:

For whom to ask

a. Ask for farm wage workers
(Yes in item 34).

Purpose of the question

b. The purpose of the question
is to get a count of the
number of migratory farm
wage workers.

10/ Margaret Jarman Hagood collaborated in the preparation of this appendix.

11/ Gertrude Bancroft and Robert Pearl of the Bureau of the Census handled the survey operations and tabulations.

12/ The Hired Farm Working Force - 1948 - 49, see footnote 6, p. 2. This report presents data obtained in the surveys made in December 1948 and in December 1949.

SPECIAL QUESTIONS ADDED TO SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER 1949 CURRENT POPULATION SURVEYS

MONTHLY REPORT OF THE LABOR FORCE, BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

During 1949 did . . .				If YES in 33 or 34	For farm wage workers (Yes in 34)				
Operate a farm?	Do any farm work for cash wages?	Do any nonfarm work for cash wages or salary?	Operate a business or profession?	What was... doing most of 1949? { working keeping house going to school or some- thing else?	FARM WORK Days worked and earnings in 1949		If YES in 35 NONFARM WORK Days worked and earnings in 1949		Some workers leave home to hoe or harvest crops in some other county. Did...do this in 1949?
(Yes or No) (33)	(Yes or No) (34)	(Yes or No) (35)	(Yes or No) (36)	(Enter one code) (37)	How many days did ... do farm work for cash wages in 1949? (Days) (38)	How much did... earn in cash wages from farm work in 1949? (Dollars) (39)	How many days did ... do nonfarm work for cash wages or salary during 1949? (Days) (40)	How much did ... earn in cash wages or salary at nonfarm work during 1949? (Dollars) (41)	

Codes for Column 37: Chief Activity

WK - FW - Doing farm work for CASH wages or salary

WK - FO - Doing any OTHER farm work

WK - NF - Doing NONFARM work

H - Keeping HOUSE

S - Going to SCHOOL

OT - Other

What is meant by
"hoe and harvest"

- c. The terms "hoe and harvest" were used because these are the principal types of work that migratory laborers do. Cotton chopping, sugar beet thinning, and ordinary weeding are examples of important types of hoeing work. Harvest work includes not only the cutting or picking of produce, but also loading, unloading, crew supervision and other types of work incidental to the harvest, when done by migratory farm workers. Also include work performed by sheep shearers if they did this work in more than one county during 1949. See Par. d. below.

When to enter YES

- d. Enter YES for a farm wage worker who left his home (definite living quarters, not just a "home state") or harvest crops in some other county or counties with the expectation of returning home. Also enter YES for a person who had no usual place of residence (no regular home, no regular living quarters elsewhere) if he did farm wage work in two or more counties in 1949.

When to enter NO

Person who worked
only in county where
he lives

For permanent moves

For daily commuters

- e. Enter NO for a person employed at farm wage work only in the county in which he lived. Enter NO for a person employed at farm wage work in one county for part of the year, who makes a more or less permanent move to another county during the year and also does farm wage work in the second county. Also enter NO, if a worker only commutes daily across a county line to do farm wage work, and returns home each night.

Coverage of Survey

The survey obtained information regarding persons 14 years old and over in the civilian noninstitutional population of the United States, in December 1949. Among such persons, the survey showed that 4,140,000 did farm-wage work that year. In addition, it is estimated that 950,000 other persons did farm-wage work at some time during the year, making a total of 5,090,000 workers. A list of types of workers not covered by the survey with rough estimates of their numbers follows:

Migratory and nonmigratory farm-wage workers in 1949 not covered in survey.....	950,000
Children under 14 years of age.....	320,000
Legally employed foreign workers (not held over for work in 1950).....	60,000
Persons entering armed forces during year.....	10,000
Persons who died during year.....	50,000
Persons in institutions.....	50,000
Highly mobile domestic migratory workers.....	60,000
Mexican nationals apprehended in 1949 by the Immigration and Naturalization Service and returned to Mexico.....	300,000
Other illegal entrants from Mexico who left the United States before December 1949.....	100,000

Among these workers not covered by the survey, approximately 560,000 are estimated to have been migratory workers, and of these, an estimated 460,000 were Mexican nationals who were no longer in this country. The 100,000 domestic migratory farm workers not covered in the survey include both children under 14 years of age, excluded from the survey by definition, and some of the more mobile workers not included because of the difficulties in sampling the migrant worker population. The 422,000 workers for whom estimates are given in the report probably make up about 85 percent of the domestic migratory farm workers 14 years old and over.

Appraisal of Data

Comparisons of the estimates relating to all farm-wage workers from a similar survey for 1945 with independent data available for that year were made in the appendix to a report issued in 1946.^{13/} These comparisons suggest that the average daily farm wages, as reported by hired farm workers or members of their households, tend to be somewhat lower than those reported by the employing farmers. For a fuller discussion of the comparisons, see the appendix of the report cited. No comparable independent enumerative survey data are available for 1949 to permit appraisal of the wages reported for that year.

The estimate derived from the 1949 survey of the total number of farm-wage workers in the United States at any time during the year are in line with a level that might be estimated from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics monthly series on farm employment, with allowances for the exclusion of children under 14 years old and certain other excluded groups. In the last week of September 1949, the BAE series showed 4,156,000 hired workers employed on farms.

^{13/} Ducoff, Louis J., and Hagood, Margaret Jarman, Employment and Wages of the Hired Farm Working Force in 1945, with Special Reference to its Population Composition. 40 pp. Bur. Agr. Econ. 1946. [Processed.]

With respect to the estimates regarding migratory workers, less precision is possible for several reasons: (1) The group is smaller and therefore its relative sampling error is greater than that for all farm-wage workers; (2) the group is unevenly dispersed over the United States to a much greater degree than all farm-wage workers and this fact also leads to a greater relative sampling error; (3) the group is more mobile than other farm-wage workers and members are more likely to be missed in a population survey; (4) Mexican nationals who were still in the United States illegally were probably not reported to the enumerators; and (5) there is no satisfactory basis for a precise estimate of the number of illegal Mexican nationals who had been migratory farm workers in the United States in 1949, but who had left the country by December without knowledge of the Immigration Service.

The only available data from national surveys on the number of migratory farm workers come from three national surveys made by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics in specified weeks of September 1945, July 1946, and September 1948. Estimates of the number of migratory workers developed from these surveys have been issued previously.^{14/} Comparisons with these earlier estimates are complicated by the fact that they were based on employers' reports in which Mexicans illegally in the country would have been more likely to have been included (although not identified as such) than in the population-type survey. Therefore, the 480,000 "domestic" migratory workers estimated for 1945 included some Mexican nationals illegally in the country. The number is not known but it is believed to be considerably larger than the number included in the 1949 population survey, which is assumed to be inappreciable. Possibly 380,000 of the workers included in the 1945 estimate were actually domestic workers.

Similarly, the estimate for the year 1948 was based on surveys of employing farmers. The estimate for 1948 was 830,000 migratory workers (excluding 50,000 imported Mexican workers not held over for the next year). On the basis of data from the Immigration and Naturalization Service on apprehensions of Mexicans in the country illegally, it can be estimated that approximately three times as many Mexican nationals would have been included in the BAE surveys in 1948 as in 1945, or a total of 300,000. This would imply a level of 530,000 domestic migratory workers in 1948, not significantly different from the 522,000 estimated for 1949 in this report. While both domestic and Mexican national migratory farm workers increased between 1945 and 1948, the rise during 1949 in migratory workers appears to have been due entirely to persons of Mexican origin who illegally entered the country.

^{14/} Ducoff, Louis J., Migratory Farm Workers in the United States, Jour. Farm Econ. 29:711-722, 1947, and Ducoff, Louis J., Socioeconomic Backgrounds of the Migratory Agricultural Labor Situation. 8 pp. Bur. Agr. Econ., 1949. [Processed.]