

## Geographic Distribution of Hired Farmworkers

Demand for hired farmworkers varies by type of crop and livestock, length of growing and harvesting seasons, extent of mechanization, and scale of production. As a result, the number of hired farmworkers varied significantly among the census regions in 1996 (table 11). The West had more hired farmworkers (344,000) than the other regions; the Northeast had the fewest (65,000).

During the 1990's, patterns of employment have varied by region. The number of hired farmworkers in the Northeast and South has remained stable while the number of hired farmworkers in the Midwest and West has fluctuated. Employment in the Midwest in 1994 was significantly lower than in 1990, 1991, 1992, and 1996, and the number in 1996 was significantly higher than in 1995. Employment in the West in 1995 and 1996 was significantly higher than in 1992, 1993, and 1994.

The demographic characteristics of hired farmworkers vary by region (table 12). More females were report-

ed in the hired farm workforce in the Northeast than in the West. There was a large percentage of white laborers in the hired farm workforce in the Northeast and Midwest than in the West. Hispanic workers accounted for more of the hired farmworkers in the West than in the Northeast and Midwest. In the South, there were more black and "other" workers in the hired farm workforce than in other regions. Hired farmworkers in the Midwest were younger, and those in the West were older. A larger percentage of western workers had lower education levels, probably a reflection of the local hired farm workforce, which was almost two-thirds Hispanic.

In the West, more hired farmworkers were employed in crop production and less in livestock production than in the other regions. A significantly higher percentage of hired farmworkers in the Northeast and Midwest had average weekly earnings of less than \$100 per week, and the Midwest had a significantly lower percentage earning \$600 and over per week than in other regions.

**Table 11—Number of hired farmworkers by region, 1990 to 1996**

Region	Annual averages													
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994 <sup>1</sup>	1995	1996	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995 <sup>1</sup>	1996
	<i>Thousands</i>							<i>Percent</i>						
Total	886	884	848	803	792	849	906	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Northeast	62	54	52	49	47	60	65	6.9	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.0	7.1	7.2
South	315	328	320	301	312	274	280	35.6	37.1	37.8	37.5	39.4	32.3	30.9
Midwest	214	206	201	172	146	170	217	24.1	23.3	23.7	21.4	18.4	20.0	23.9
West	295	296	275	281	287	345	344	33.4	33.5	32.4	35.0	36.2	40.6	38.0

Note: Data for 1994 and later years are not directly comparable with data for 1993 and earlier years because of changes to survey design.

<sup>1</sup>Revised.

Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the Current Population Survey earnings microdata file.

**Table 12—Demographic and earnings characteristics of hired farmworkers by census region, 1996**

Characteristics	Annual averages			
	Northeast	South	Midwest	West
			<i>Thousands</i>	
Total	65	280	217	344
			<i>Percent</i>	
Gender:				
Male	71.9	85.1	84.3	85.8
Female	28.1	14.9	15.7	14.2
Racial/ethnic group:				
White	92.3	53.5	96.5	33.2
Hispanic	7.1	35.0	2.6	63.3
Black and other	0.6	11.5	0.9	3.4
Age (years):				
Less than 20	28.2	13.4	34.0	7.4
20-24	9.1	9.9	10.5	12.0
25-34	13.8	22.3	20.3	29.8
35-44	24.4	22.0	15.1	25.7
45-54	6.2	18.7	10.9	12.5
55 and older	18.3	13.7	9.2	12.6
Median age	32	36	27	35
Schooling completed: <sup>1</sup>				
0-4 years	0.5	12.0	0.6	24.4
5-8 years	10.9	18.8	11.0	28.2
9-11 years	30.7	27.8	30.0	16.2
12 years	44.9	26.0	35.6	14.9
13 years or more	13.0	15.4	22.8	16.3
Establishment:				
Crop production	42.2	47.4	28.3	66.6
Livestock production	51.4	43.3	66.0	20.8
Other establishments <sup>2</sup>	6.4	9.3	5.7	12.6
Weekly earnings:				
Less than \$100	20.3	13.4	23.9	7.7
\$100-\$199	22.4	17.8	19.4	14.8
\$200-\$299	24.2	35.8	21.4	38.6
\$300-\$399	17.6	14.5	14.2	16.0
\$400-\$499	5.5	8.8	12.7	11.3
\$500-\$599	1.8	3.5	3.3	4.7
\$600 and over	8.2	6.2	4.9	6.9
Median weekly earnings	\$225	\$240	\$225	\$260

<sup>1</sup> Educational attainment levels, beginning January 1992, were revised to reflect degrees or diplomas received rather than years of school completed. Therefore, to be included under "12 years of education completed," a diploma, GED, or equivalent degree must have been granted.

<sup>2</sup> Other establishments include agricultural services, forestry, fishing, hunting, trapping, landscape and horticultural services, and other agriculture-related establishments.

Note: Data for 1994 and later years are not directly comparable with data for 1993 and earlier years because of changes in survey design.

Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the Current Population Survey earnings microdata file.