

**Agricultural Workers Minimum Wage Committee Meeting**  
**November 13, 2023, 1:00 – 3:30 p.m.**

**Maine A&B Conference Rooms, DHHS Building, 109 Capitol Street, Augusta**

Zoom Link: <https://mainestate.zoom.us/j/86802231722>

Website: <https://www.maine.gov/labor/mwaw/>

**Desired Outcomes** - By the end of this meeting, we will have:

- Reminded ourselves of the Working Agreements guiding the Committee’s work and grounded Committee discussion on direct relevance to the Governor’s Executive Order
- Heard report-outs on agricultural worker feedback and farmer listening sessions
- Outlined some initial options for addressing the Executive Order’s directive
- Provided an opportunity for public input

<b>What</b>	<b>When</b>
Opening Remarks – McBrady, Moyer-Lee Review of Working Agreements and Agenda Review - Saffeir	1:00 - 1:10
Report-out of Agricultural Worker Feedback and Farmer Listening Sessions	1:10 – 1:40
Discussion focused on outlining initial options for addressing Executive Order’s directive	1:40 – 2:50
Public Input	2:50 – 3:05
Focus of Nov. 27 meeting, extend to 1-4 pm One additional meeting: Dec. 11, 1-4 pm Next Steps	3:05 – 3:30

# **Agricultural Workers Minimum Wage Committee Membership**

## **Committee Co-Chairs**

- Commissioner Laura Fortman, Maine Department of Labor
- Deputy Commissioner Nancy McBrady, Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

## **Committee Membership**

1. The Speaker of the House of Representatives or her designee
  - Speaker Talbot Ross
  - Thom Harnett (alternate)
2. The President of the Senate or his designee
  - Senate President Jackson
  - Sen. Tipping (alternate)
3. A representative of the Maine Farm Bureau
  - Penelope Jordan
4. A representative of the Maine Potato Board
  - Jeannie Tapley
5. A representative of the Wild Blueberry Commission
  - Eric Venturini
6. A representative of the Maine Dairy Industry
  - Heath Miller
7. A representative of the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
  - Heather Spalding
8. A representative of the Passamaquoddy Wild Blueberry Co.
  - Darren Paul
  - J.D. Newell (alternate)
  - Holli Francis (alternate)
9. A representative of the Maine AFL-CIO
  - Matt Schlobohm
10. A representative of the Pine Tree Legal Assistance Farm Worker Unit
  - Mike Guare
11. A representative of the Maine Center for Economic Policy
  - Arthur Phillips
12. A representative of a statewide organization dedicated to supporting farmworkers and immigrants Downeast
  - Juana Rodriguez, Mano en Mano
  - Sean Douglas, Mano en Mano (alternate)
13. A representative of a statewide land trust dedicated to protecting farmland and supporting farmers
  - Shelley Megquier, Maine Farmland Trust

# **Agricultural Workers Minimum Wage Committee**

## **Working Agreements**

The *Committee to Develop and Implement a Minimum Wage Bill for Agricultural Workers* established by Executive Order 1 23/24 is an advisory committee. Discussions and deliberations will be conducted in accordance with the Working Agreements determined by the co-Chairs in consultation with the members of the Committee. In accordance with those Working Agreements, Committee members will strive to achieve a common understanding of the subjects and outcomes of the Committee's work, including the resulting final summary of its assessment process, findings, and any corresponding recommendations to the Governor. The Committee's work will be guided by an aspiration to achieve consensus. Decisions regarding the final summary, findings, and recommendations will be made by the co-Chairs with input from Committee members and will be submitted to the Governor by the co-Chairs on behalf of the Committee.

- Meetings will start and end on time.
- When meetings are held in person, Committee members will make every effort to attend in person to maximize learning, communication, and collaboration.
- Cameras will remain on during virtual meetings to facilitate communication and understanding.
- Meeting materials will be shared in advance of meetings with sufficient time for review.
- Come prepared, having read meeting materials and completed assignments.
- Be present and engaged.
- Strive for equal airtime, enabling all to participate fully.
- Listen with curiosity and an openness to learning and understanding.
- Adopt a creative problem-solving orientation.
- Name the tension, kindly.
- Humor is welcome.



Office of  
The Governor

No. 1 FY 23/24  
DATE July 23, 2023

**AN ORDER ESTABLISHING A COMMITTEE TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A  
MINIMUM WAGE BILL FOR AGRICULTURAL WORKERS**

**WHEREAS**, Maine's agriculture sector fuels our economy, contributing more than \$3.6 billion in economic impact, employing over 27,000 people, and supporting approximately 1.3 million acres of farmland; and

**WHEREAS**, Maine's agricultural workers, including farmers and farm workers, are the foundation for a vibrant food system that ensures the availability of high-quality farm products year-round; and

**WHEREAS**, all those who make their living in the agricultural sector deserve fair wages for their labor; and

**WHEREAS**, L.D. 398, *An Act To Make Agricultural Workers and Other Related Workers Employees Under Wage and Hour Laws*, was passed by the 131<sup>st</sup> Legislature; however, due to concerns about its potential scope, terminology, and potential unintended consequences, the bill was vetoed;

**WHEREAS**, legislation implementing a minimum wage bill for agricultural workers should be enacted with a clear understanding of the resulting impacts on State or Federal labor, employment, and other relevant laws;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Janet T. Mills, Governor of the State of Maine, pursuant to Me. Const. Art V, Pt. 1, §§ 1 & 12, do hereby Order as follows:

**I. ESTABLISHMENT AND PURPOSE**

The Committee to Develop and Implement a Minimum Wage Bill for Agricultural Workers is hereby established. The purpose of the Committee is to develop legislation for introduction in the second session of the 131<sup>st</sup> Legislature that will implement a minimum wage for agricultural workers, identify

the impacts the bill will have through other laws interconnected with Federal and State wage and hour laws, and ensure the full range of impacts are thoroughly understood by both agricultural employers and their workers.

The Committee shall:

- A. Identify what State or Federal labor laws and regulations may apply to seasonal and full-time farm workers if deemed employees for the purpose of minimum wage payment, including but not limited to unemployment requirements, independent contractor status, recordkeeping, piecework compensation, overtime maximum limitations, wage calculation and housing, and other relevant employment-related criteria;
- B. Review terminology in State law and regulation related to agricultural labor and agricultural workers and its application, if any, related to minimum wage legislation;
- C. Identify other topical issues of concern related to minimum wage and agricultural employment that can be readily analyzed as necessary;
- D. Gather data, to the extent practicable, on wages and benefits currently paid to agricultural workers, including migrant workers; and
- E. Identify any guidance from the Department of Labor necessary to assist employers regarding a proposed minimum wage bill.

## **II. Membership**

The Co-Chairs of the Committee shall be the Commissioner of Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry and the Commissioner of Department of Labor, or their designees. The Attorney General is requested to provide legal assistance to the Committee, within available resources. The following are invited to be on the Committee:

1. The Speaker of the House of Representatives or her designee;
2. The President of the Senate or his designee;
3. A representative of the Maine Farm Bureau;
4. A representative of the Maine Potato Board;
5. A representative of the Wild Blueberry Commission;
6. A representative of the Maine Dairy Industry;
7. A representative of the Maine Organic Farm Gardeners Association;
8. A representative of the Passamaquoddy Wild Blueberry Co.;
9. A representative of the Maine AFL-CIO;
10. A representative of the Pine Tree Legal Assistance Farm Worker Unit;
11. A representative of the Maine Center for Economic Policy;
12. A representative of an statewide organization dedicated to supporting farmworkers and immigrants Downeast; and
13. A representative of a statewide land trust dedicated to protecting farmland and supporting farmers.

### **III. Proceedings**

The Departments shall co-chair, set the agenda for, and schedule the Committee meetings. The Committee may conduct its work in part by using subcommittees to be established at the discretion of the co-chairs. The Committee shall meet as often as necessary to complete its duties. The Committee shall seek feedback from interested parties in a manner that accommodates time constraints and seasonal considerations affecting individuals' ability to participate.

To the extent practicable, all meetings shall be open to the public and held in locations determined to by the Committee, or will be held virtually, but the proceedings of the Committee are not otherwise "public proceedings" within the meaning of 1 M.R.S. § 402(2)(F). The Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry and the Department of Labor shall staff the Committee as resources permit.

### **IV. Recommendations**

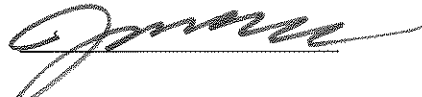
The Committee shall submit a summary of its assessment process, findings, and any corresponding recommendations to the Governor on or before December 1, 2023, after which the authority of this Executive Order shall dissolve.

### **V. Compensation**

Members of the Committee shall serve without compensation.

### **VI. Effective Date**

The Effective Date of this Order is July 25, 2023.

  
Janet T. Mills, Governor



# Piecework and the Maine Wild Blueberry Industry

## Outline:

1. Definition
2. Piece Work in New England
3. Benefits of Piece Work
4. Piece Work in Wild Blueberry
5. A Cultural Tradition



# Piecework Defined

*“Work for which the amount of pay depends on the number of things finished rather than on the time spent making them.”*

– Cambridge Dictionary  
([dictionary.cambridge.org/](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/))

# Piecework in New England

An estimated 10% of Maine agricultural workers are paid piece rate. Sectors using piece rate include but are not limited to strawberries, wild blueberries, apples, and peas<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Maine Farmer Resource Network. (2021) Maine Farm Worker Compensation Survey, March 1 to April 2, 2021. University of Maine Cooperative Extension.  
(<https://extension.umaine.edu/maine-farmer-resource-network/2021-maine-farm-worker-compensation-survey/#piece>)

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	<u>Piece Rate Min. Hourly Earnings</u>	<u>Reference</u>
<b>Maine</b>	\$7.25	<a href="#">26 M.R.S. § 664(1)</a>
<b>New Hampshire</b>	\$7.25	<a href="#">N.H. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 279:21</a>
<b>Vermont</b>	\$7.25	<a href="#">21 V.S.A. § 383(2)(A)</a> <a href="#">21 V.S.A. § 384(a)</a>
<b>Rhode Island</b>	\$7.25	<a href="#">R.I. Gen. Laws § 28-12-3</a> <a href="#">R.I. Gen. Laws § 28-12-4.3(9)</a>
<b>Connecticut</b>	\$15.00 (\$12.75 for ag. workers 14-18 yo)	<a href="#">Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-58(i)</a>
<b>Massachusetts</b>	\$8.00	<a href="#">Mass. Gen. Laws Ann. ch. 151, § 2A</a>

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# Why Use Piece Rate?

## Dramatically increases earning potential

- Workers prefer piece rate over hourly because they can make more money in less time.<sup>1,2</sup>

## Reduces Risk in a Risky Profession

- Ensures producers are paying for harvested product, not just time spent in the field.

## Supports worker autonomy

- Rakers work at their own pace and minimizes the need for constant oversight and supervision.

## Maximize hand crew production efficiency

- Enables producers to get berries harvested during short harvesting windows and minimizes losses from berries not harvested on time.

<sup>1</sup>Guthman, J. (2017). Paradoxes of the border: Labor shortages and farmworker minor agency in reworking California's strawberry fields. *Economic Geography* 93(1):24-43.

<sup>2</sup>Soper, R. (2020). How wage structure and crop size negatively impact farmworker livelihoods in monocrop organic production: Interviews with strawberry harvesters in California. *Agriculture and Human Values* 37(2):325-36.



# How it Works

Company hires Harvest Supervisors - these supervisors hire their crew

- Supervisors are responsible for ensuring their crew fills out hiring paperwork, completes trainings, etc.

Each raker determines their own start time depending on their abilities and preference

- Some rakers prefer starting at sunrise, raking until it gets too hot, some rakers prefer starting later
- Flexible scheduling supports worker autonomy

Supervisors complete tallies each day as boxes are stacked and loaded onto trucks

- Tallies are brought to bookkeeper each night and entered manually into payroll



Crew: CHAD			Daily Tally Sheet							Day:	Page		
Land:			DATE: AUGUST 3, 2023							Rate:			
Empl Numbr	First Name	Last Name	Stations							Total Boxes	Hrs.	Ded 1 Rakes	Adv.
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7				



## Hand-raking: Piece Rate Pay

Pay varies from **\$2.75-\$3.00/box** depending on if the berries were organic or not

On average, it takes 10 minutes to harvest 1 box of blueberries (6 boxes/hour → \$16.50/hour)

2023 harvest: paid an average of **\$955/raker**

- If paid hourly at state of Maine minimum wage (\$13.80):  
**\$755 gross wages**
- **Highest earner:** \$7,327 gross (average of 95 boxes/day)
- **Lowest earner:** \$55 gross (total of 20 boxes)

Hand raked fields are yielding 2.24 times as much fruit per acre than mechanical harvested fields



## Hand-raking: Tradition

Tradition of the Wabanaki Tribes traveling to hand-rake wild blueberries - we have enrolled members of Passamaquoddy, Penobscot, Mi'kmaq and Maliseet raking each year with us

Many come to partake in the millennia-old tradition, spend time with their families, enjoy communal living

Elders join the tradition for a day or two, sharing stories and memories in the field with the next generation

If PWBC wanted to harvest **faster** and in the **least expensive** way possible, we would eliminate rakers but the tradition is too important



## What Would Change?

If base were doubled to match the state of Maine minimum wage, company would need to impose a strict quota/raker to ensure productivity over tradition

Negatively impacts elders who travel to participate but do not have the stamina to meet or exceed quota

Company wouldn't hire the less productive employees

Not hiring these employees could impact other families and their ability to travel to harvest



“To impose strict quotas would harm people who don’t have the stamina to meet or exceed quotas. Specifically, our elders who have seen, in their lifetimes, brothers, sisters, friends removed from their communities and stripped of their heritage.

Harvesting wild blueberries is one of the traditions that has endured.”

- *Sipayik Tribal Member*





*“There are two kinds of rakers, those that come for the tradition and those that come to make money.”*

**Lisa Hanscom**

Owner and Farmer, Welch Farm

# Welch Farm

## Roque Bluffs, Maine

### *A Case Study (2022, estimated)*

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	<u>Raker there for the tradition and culture</u>	<u>Raker there to earn money</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>2022 Payroll</b>	\$5,120	\$11,200	\$16,320
<b>Boxes Harvested (%)</b>	20%	80%	100%
<b>Piece Rate</b>	\$2.00 (smaller boxes for fresh pack)	4.00 (includes \$0.50/box end of season bonus)	-
<b>Hours Worked (total)</b>	70	110	180
<b>No. of Workers</b>	4	2	6
<b>Gross/day (av)</b>	\$64	\$280	-

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*“Sometimes raking blueberries is not about raking blueberries. It’s about being there with your friends, being there with your family, being outside. The culture and the tradition. Learning what hard work is.”*

*“If I had to pay state minimum wage as the floor for piece rate, I estimate that I wouldn’t be able to hire 50% of my rakers.”*

*“There will be no kids who will experience raking and being out there and being part of the farm.”*

*“...removes those here for the experience of raking and changes it solely into a business transaction.”*

*“...could hire a migrant crew and a crew boss and have the whole field raked in a day or two, but that’s not why I’m in business.”*

*“A crew boss would cost thousands of dollar per season, just for someone to stand there and keep people working.”*

*“My farm would lose its ability to carry on the tradition and culture, letting people come back, old family friends. Anyone who wants to rake and experience the tradition now, can.”*

# **Welch Farm**

## **Roque Bluffs, Maine**

### *A Case Study*



**Lisa Hanscom**

**Owner and Farmer, Welch Farm**

# Giving Agricultural Workers Minimum Wage While Maintaining a Functioning Piece Rate System

## MRS TITLE 26

### §664. MINIMUM WAGE; OVERTIME RATE

Except as otherwise provided in this subchapter, an employer may not employ any employee at a rate less than the rates required by this section.

1. **Minimum wage.** The minimum hourly wage is ... and starting January 1, 2020, the minimum hourly wage is \$12.00 per hour. On January 1, 2021 and each January 1st thereafter, the minimum hourly wage then in effect must be increased by the increase, if any, in the cost of living. The increase in the cost of living must be measured by the percentage increase, if any, as of August of the previous year over the level as of August of the year preceding that year in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers, CPI-W, for the Northeast Region, or its successor index, as published by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics or its successor agency, with the amount of the minimum wage increase rounded to the nearest multiple of 5¢. If the highest federal minimum wage is increased in excess of the minimum wage in effect under this section, the minimum wage under this section is increased to the same amount, effective on the same date as the increase in the federal minimum wage, and must be increased in accordance with this section thereafter.

As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, the minimum wage provision of this section applies to:

A. Individuals employed in agriculture as defined in the Maine Employment Security Law and the Federal Unemployment Insurance Tax Law, except when such individuals are paid by piece rate.



THANK YOU

# Maine Employment Law

## Maine Department of Labor

Bureau of Labor Standards  
Wage and Hour Division

**Scott Cotnoir, Director**



*The Maine Department of Labor provides equal opportunity in employment and programs. Auxiliary aids and services are available to individuals with disabilities upon request.*

**MAINE**  
DEPARTMENT OF  
**LABOR**  
*Labor Standards*

## What is piece-rate?

Employee(s) are paid by the unit produced rather than pay solely on the basis of time spent on the job.

True and accurate daily time records are still required.

Piece-rate is not unique to agriculture. It became popular during the industrial revolution for factory workers.

Industries currently using piece-rate method:

Manufacturing; call centers; writing/translation services; truck driving; data entry; cleaning; garment; and manufacturing.

Employers may pay piece rates but must be able to show that employees received at least minimum wage for all hours worked – this requires that employers track the actual hours worked.

Examples:

1. Apple Farm pays \$1.50 per bushel picked.

Jane works for 5 hours and picks 50 bushels.

$50 \times \$1.50 = \$75 \div 5 \text{ hrs} = \$15/\text{hr}$  – minimum wage met

2. Blueberry Farm pays \$2 per pint.

Tim picks 80 pints in a day for a gross wage of \$160, but there is no record of his hours – minimum wage may not be met

- Strawberry Farm pays \$1.00 per pound picked. Avery picks 60 pounds and works for 4 hours.
  - What is Avery's hourly rate that day?  
 $\$1.00 \times 60\text{lbs} = \$60 \div 4 \text{ hours} = \$15 \text{ per hour.}$
- Over the week, Avery works 30 hours total and picks 420 pounds
  - What is Avery's hourly rate for the week?  
 $\$1.00 \times 420\text{lbs} = \$420 \div 30 \text{ hours} = \$14 \text{ per hour.}$
- What if Avery only picked 390 pounds?
  - What is Avery's hourly rate now?  
 $\$1.00 \times 390\text{lbs} = \$390 \div 30 \text{ hours} = \$13 \text{ per hour.}$
- What can Strawberry Farm do?
  - If the total piece-rate wages earned at the end of the week does not equal at least minimum wage, the employer would pay the difference.  
 $.80\text{¢} \times 30 \text{ hours} = \$24.00 + \$390 = \$414.00 \text{ total wages due.}$
  - Ensure that employee's daily time records are a true and accurate reflection of the actual time worked.





United States Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Statistics Service



# NASS Ag Labor Survey/ Farm Labor Report

Pam Hird, New England State Statistician  
October 16, 2023



# About the Ag Labor Survey



- The Agricultural Labor Survey (ALS) is conducted twice a year, April (for the January and April quarters) and October (for the July and October quarters)
- Requests data for:
  - Number of directly hired workers on the farm
  - Total number of hours worked
  - Total wages paid each reference week
- Data for 2023 October Survey will be published in the Farm Labor Report on November 22, 2023 and will include annual average estimates at regional and U.S. levels, as well the number of hired workers, hours worked weekly, and wage rates by type of worker for the July and October reference weeks
- Information on the survey, including previous releases, is online at: [USDA - National Agricultural Statistics Service - Surveys - Farm Labor](#)



# Sampling



- The USDA-NASS farm population consists of all operations that produce, or would have produced, at least \$1,000 in agricultural products in a given calendar year
- The Agricultural Census, conducted every five years, "surveys" all known population units
- The semi-annual Agricultural Labor Survey (the survey supporting the NASS Farm Labor program), is a sample survey
- For the Farm Labor Methodology and Quality Measures document (including sampling methodology specifics), the ALS report form, and other survey information, go online at:  
[USDA - National Agricultural Statistics Service - Surveys - Farm Labor](#)



# Agricultural Labor Defined



- Agricultural labor is any activity performed on a farm or ranch in connection with the production of agricultural commodities. This includes, for example:
  - Bookkeeping, supervision of employees, banking, and other activities related to handling the farm business
  - Trips to purchase farm inputs, delivering crops and livestock to market
  - Building maintenance and equipment repair
  - Work at roadside stands - if the operation produces more than 50% of the products sold at the stand  
Non-farm activities Sometimes operations will derive a portion of their income from non-farm activities. If the entire operation is treated as one business, include all workers. If the enterprise is operated as two separate businesses (production and marketing), workers should be counted for the production operation only. For example: Packing Sheds. If the crop production and packing shed operate as a single operation, all work should be counted. If the packing shed and the fruit/vegetable production are maintained as two separate businesses, only workers employed in raising the crop should be counted as agricultural workers. Income and activities associated with non-farm production should be excluded from the Agricultural Labor Survey. This includes:
    - Boarding, training or caring for pleasure, recreation, or amusement animals. For equine operations, exclude this income when operation does not own, raise, or market any horses (basically when an equine operation is mis-identified as a farm).



# Data Collection for Ag Labor Survey



- Conducted in every state except Alaska
- Survey is mailed in April and October
- All states use the same version questionnaire except California
- Approximately 18,000 operations
- Information is requested for 4 one week periods
  - April Survey: January 8-14 and April 9-15 2023
  - October Survey: July 9-15 and October 8-14 2023
- Producers may respond two ways:
  - Online at [www.agcounts.usda.gov](http://www.agcounts.usda.gov)
  - By mail in a prepaid envelope
- NASS representatives will call if no response and/or send a reminder email



# Who Uses Data from Ag Labor Survey



- The agricultural wage rate is a component of the Parity Index and certain rates are used in the establishment of minimum wage rates for domestic and foreign agricultural workers
- Farm worker data are an important component of the agricultural sector of the Gross Domestic Product
- NASS field & livestock annual average wage rates (published in November) are used by DOL to set the AEWRs (the Adverse Effect Wage Rates) for each region
- NASS labor estimates impact the entire agriculture community. Federal, state, and local government agencies as well as educational institutions, farm organizations, and private sector employers all use these data
- The Department of Labor uses the data to establish minimum wage rates for agricultural workers and assist legislators in determining labor policies
- USDA and the Department of Labor use these data to estimate the demand for and availability of seasonal agricultural workers
- Agencies responsible for administering farm labor recruitment and placement programs use these statistics in their planning and evaluation



# Foreign Guest (H-2A) Agricultural Workers



- Federal regulations that determine minimum wage rates for foreign agricultural workers in the U.S. (H-2A workers) also use Agricultural Labor Survey data as an input into the calculations. The H-2A Program is the provision of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 which allows admission of foreign national agricultural workers to perform agricultural labor or services of a temporary or seasonal nature in the United States.
- To hire H-2A workers, the employer must apply to the Department of Labor (DOL) for an H-2A labor certificate. Employers are required to provide amenities such as housing, transportation, meals or cooking facilities, and pay at a minimum the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR). The Regional annual average rate for field and livestock workers as published in the November Farm Labor release serves as a component used to set the AEWR.



# Additional Information



- The Agricultural Labor Survey is designed to estimate the number of directly hired workers, hours worked, and wage rates for each of four quarterly reference weeks. Contract labor data is excluded, and the use of the reference week provides a snapshot of directly hired labor usage
- The Agricultural Labor Survey does not measure the total labor expenditures for agricultural production. The Agricultural Resource Management Study (ARMS) conducted by NASS each year provides an estimate of total expenditures for farm labor
- Reported wages do not include the value of benefits such as housing, meals, or insurance. Information on total value of benefits provided to agricultural workers is obtained during the ARMS
- Workers could work on more than one farm during the survey week, and thus be counted more than once.. However, the Agriculture Labor Survey collects data from a sample population vs the entire population, and duplication is minimized
- Demographic data about the workers are not collected on the Agricultural Labor Survey. Surveys of employees, such as the Bureau of Census Current Population Survey provide some of this information





# US May 24 Ag Labor Survey Release



## April Hired Workers Up 3 Percent; Wage Rate Increased 5 Percent from Previous Year

- There were 651,000 workers hired directly by farm operators on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of April 9-15, 2023, up 3 percent from the April 2022 reference week.
- Workers hired directly by farm operators numbered 511,000 during the week of January 8-14, 2023, up 1 percent from the January 2022 reference week.
- Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$18.08 per hour during the April 2023 reference week, up 5 percent from the April 2022 reference week.
- Field workers received an average of \$17.26 per hour, up 5 percent.
- Livestock workers earned \$16.48 per hour, up 4 percent.
- The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$16.99 per hour, was up 4 percent from the 2022 reference week.
- Hired laborers worked an average of 40.6 hours during the April 2023 reference week, up 2 percent from the hours worked during the April 2022 reference week.
- Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$18.55 per hour during the January 2023 reference week, up 5 percent from the January 2022 reference week.
- Field workers received an average of \$17.67 per hour, up 7 percent, while livestock workers earned \$16.71 per hour, up 4 percent from a year earlier.
- The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$17.26 per hour, was up 5 percent from the January 2022 reference week.



# May 24 Ag Labor Survey Release



- **Northeast Region I (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont)**
- There were 22,000 workers hired directly by farms during the week of January 8-14, 2023. All hired workers worked an average of
- 42.7 hours during the survey week. The average wage rate for all hired workers was \$18.50 per hour. Field workers earned an
- average of \$18.89 per hour and livestock workers averaged \$15.69 per hour. Field & livestock workers combined earned an average of
- \$17.08 per hour.
- There were 35,000 workers hired directly by farms during the week of April 9-15, 2023. All hired workers worked an average of 41.9
- hours during the survey week. The average wage rate for all hired workers was \$18.10 per hour. Field workers earned an average of
- \$17.69 per hour and livestock workers averaged \$15.71 per hour. Field & livestock workers combined earned an average of \$16.94 per hour.

*For the complete "Farm Labor" report, go to:  
<https://usda.library.cornell.edu/concern/publications/x920fw89s>*

*The Farm Labor report and all other NASS reports are available online at  
[www.nass.usda.gov](http://www.nass.usda.gov).*



# Ag Labor for Northeast Regions 1 & 2



Quarterly Agricultural Labor Wage Rates by Type of Farm and Economic Class — Northeast: 2018-2022<sup>1</sup>

Month and Year	Field and Livestock Workers Combined By Type of Farm				All Hired Workers By Economic Class of Farm				
	Field Crops	Other Crops	Livestock and Poultry	All Farms	Gross Value of Sales in \$1,000's				All Farms
					<\$50	\$50-99	\$100-249	\$250-499	
	dollars per hour	dollars per hour	dollars per hour	dollars per hour	dollars per hour	dollars per hour	dollars per hour	dollars per hour	dollars per hour
<b>January</b>									
2018	14.79	13.45	13.19	13.36	(S)	(S)	13.80	14.56	14.47
2019	14.29	14.70	14.01	14.25	14.79	15.01	15.67	14.64	15.66
2020	16.80	15.00	13.89	14.43	16.04	14.06	16.46	13.23	15.80
2021	17.35	15.61	14.71	15.14	(S)	(S)	14.34	13.65	16.55
2022	18.19	17.34	15.99	16.82	(S)	(S)	(S)	14.34	18.06
<b>April</b>									
2018	14.61	13.02	13.22	13.18	(S)	(S)	13.41	13.89	14.20
2019	13.66	14.13	13.97	14.03	13.92	17.29	14.81	14.68	15.15
2020	16.42	15.09	13.75	14.54	15.61	13.19	16.39	13.58	15.65
2021	16.64	15.47	15.03	15.33	(S)	(S)	14.02	13.46	16.41
2022	17.56	17.37	15.59	16.89	(S)	(S)	14.82	18.47	17.97
<b>July</b>									
2018	9.61	12.89	13.12	12.83	11.67	12.80	11.95	13.96	13.58
2019	(S)	13.45	13.34	13.42	(S)	13.49	13.25	13.68	14.61
2020	16.58	14.48	13.78	14.40	16.71	(S)	14.29	13.42	15.38
2021	15.35	16.32	14.52	15.74	(S)	(S)	14.93	14.01	16.51
2022	17.44	16.49	16.10	16.46	(S)	(S)	(S)	15.45	17.39
<b>October</b>									
2018	12.81	14.01	12.97	13.51	10.86	12.88	13.13	14.15	14.19
2019	14.15	14.04	13.52	13.88	(S)	13.74	14.32	14.11	14.98
2020	16.50	15.05	14.05	14.84	17.36	(S)	14.70	13.03	15.84
2021	16.73	16.41	14.58	15.90	(S)	(S)	15.41	14.38	16.62
2022	17.43	17.24	16.28	16.98	(S)	(S)	(S)	15.83	17.98

<sup>(S)</sup>Insufficient number of reports to establish an estimate.

<sup>1</sup>Estimates reflect actual payroll data for the week which includes the 12th of the month. Excludes perquisites. Northeast includes Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.



# NASS Data Sources



- [2017 Census by State - Maine | 2017 Census of Agriculture | USDA/NASS](#)
  - Data is 5 years old
  - New Census data will be released February 2024
- [USDA - National Agricultural Statistics Service - Surveys - Farm Labor](#)
  - Most up to data information, bi-annual basis
  - Agriculture Labor Survey will be released November 22, 2023



**MAINE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF**  
**LABOR**

Commissioner Laura Fortman

**Occupational Employment  
and Wage Statistics  
(OEWS)**

## About OEWS

- Workers are classified into occupational categories based upon the work they perform and their skills, education, training, and credentials; and occupational classifications correspond to the federal [Standard Occupational Classification](#) (SOC) system that contains more than 800 detailed occupations.
- Employers in Maine are surveyed to produce sample-based job and wage estimates by occupation using the SOC system, a [federal statistical standard](#) used by state and federal agencies to classify workers into occupational categories for the purpose of collecting, calculating, or disseminating data
- The OEWS program is not designed to assess whether jobs in a particular occupation are going up or down from one year to the next because estimates are based on surveys of employers that are collected over different survey panels over many months.

# How often are these data collected? Are data available by county or region?

- Job and wage data are collected via survey throughout the year, and that structure does not enable a statistically valid comparison of how many jobs there are in an occupation from one year to the next as can be done with other time series data products. Data are available by county, metropolitan statistical area (MSA), workforce investment region and statewide.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics - May 2022 State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates for Maine

“These occupational employment and wage estimates are calculated with data collected from employers in all industry sectors in metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas in Maine.”

	<u>Median Hourly Wage</u>	<u>Mean Hourly Wage</u>	<u>Annual Mean Wage</u>
<u><a href="#">Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse</a></u>	\$18.55	\$18.86	\$39,240
<u><a href="#">Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch, and Aquacultural Animals</a></u>	\$17.31	\$17.78	\$36,980

Most recent BLS-OEWS Data Table: [Maine - May 2022 OEWS State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates \(bls.gov\)](#)