

2012 Agricultural Wage and Benefit Survey

Introduction to the Reports

This note accompanies tabulated summary results of the 2012 Wage and Benefit Survey conducted by the Farm Employers Labor Service (FELS®) and eight other organizations in collaboration with the University of California Cooperative Extension. The survey provides a reference for estimating pay rates and understanding pay structures in California agricultural firms.

We appreciate the participation of respondents and managers from:

Agricultural Personnel Management Association	Sonoma County Winegrape Commission
California Association of Winegrape Growers	Ventura County Agricultural Association
California Farm Bureau Federation	Western Growers
California Grower Foundation	Western United Dairymen
Farm Employers Labor Service	

Thanks to Quan Nguyen (UCB Graduate Student) for database management and report programming and to Howard Rosenberg, PhD (UCB Cooperative Extension Specialist Emeritus) for survey analysis. Terms used and aspects of data treatment in producing the reports are explained below.

Wages Section

The survey form briefly defines each of fourteen job types to facilitate reporting wage rates relative to similar work. Some of the pay variation within a given job, however, is attributable to differences in the duties for which people with the same job title are responsible in different firms. The form allows for reporting pay in eight of the job types per hour, per month, or both. The tables in this report of findings include columns showing the overall average, the average low and high, and the absolute low and high wages reported for each job by respondents in the subgroup specified at top of the page (by crop for each association, and by crop, region, and size for the overall sample). They also indicate the total number (N) of respondents reporting any wage for each respective job-pay type and the number (n) who pay at a single rate (lowest = highest) for a given job. The standard deviation (sd) is of the midpoint between each respondent's lowest and highest wage rates for the job. The smaller the standard deviation, the closer that wages paid for the job by all responding firms tend to cluster around their average.

Since 2006 the survey has included questions about hiring FLCs and other contract firms for production services. In each table of wage results, statistics on wage rates for general laborers employed by these contractors are distinguished from those referring to direct employees on the respondent's payroll. Below the wages table are two statistics indicating the extent of FLC use within a class of respondents: (1) the percentage of respondent firms that hire any contractors, and (2) the average share of their total labor expense that they pay for contracted work.

Benefits Section

The survey form provides check-boxes only for indicating "yes" to the question of whether employees receive each respective benefit. The "% providing" result on these reports is calculated as the number of respondents checking that box divided by the number of all (N) within the crop, region, or size group specified in the report title. Because this method treats all respondents who did not check a given benefit box the same, whether they would have checked a "no" box or would have simply left no entry for the item, it may understate the share of those who actually provide each benefit.

We hope you find these reports helpful and would welcome any suggestions to improve the survey.

L. George Daniels, III
Executive Vice President
Farm Employers Labor Service (FELS®)
(800) 753-9073
gdaniels@fels.net

2012 CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURAL WAGE AND BENEFIT SURVEY

FELS/UC and Western Growers

This survey is conducted annually to provide a market reference for California growers making wage and benefit decisions. Your cooperation in completing the form (anonymously) will make the tabulated results more useful for everybody. Please base your responses on what you are now paying or expect to pay during calendar year 2012 in California only, even if you also operate in other states. Thank You!

I. Company Classification (for use in summarizing survey results)

- A. In what California county do you employ the greatest number of employees? _____
- B. How many people do you employ when fully staffed? 1. _____ Year-round (10 or more months of employment/year)
(on your own payroll, not through contractors) 2. _____ Seasonal (additional employees at peak activity)
- C. Do you hire FLCs or other contract firms for production services? No Yes
If yes, about what share (to the nearest 10%) of your total labor expenses do you pay through them? _____ %
- D. Is a union certified to represent any of your employees? No Yes
If yes ---> Name of union: _____ Is a contract in effect? No Yes
- E. Commodities produced. Please check as many as apply, and circle the number next to one in which your labor expense is highest.
- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetable Crops | 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Crops | 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Dairy/Livestock | 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Horticultural |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Other Field/Row Crops | 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Grapes | 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Poultry | 8. <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

II. Wages. What are the highest and lowest wages you pay for each job listed below in which you employ people?

- If all employees in a job category earn at the same rate, please enter it only in the "highest" column.
- If pay is by piece rate, please estimate the equivalent earnings per hour worked.
- * Please do **not** enter a bi-weekly salary. To convert to monthly, multiply by 2.174.

Job	Typical Work Performed	Or			
		Hourly Rate		Monthly Salary	
		Lowest	Highest	Lowest	Highest
1. Supervisor	Manages or coordinates work of foremen who directly lead crews.				
2. Foreman	Under managerial guidance, directs, leads, and supports a crew of workers.				
3. Shop Mechanic I	Independently repairs machinery, welds, and performs other shop functions.				
4. Shop Mechanic II	Under supervision, repairs machines and performs other shop functions.				
5. Equipment Operator	Operates trucks, planting/harvest machines, forklifts, or other heavy equipment.				
6. Tractor Driver I	Prepares and drives tractor for precision planting, listing, leveling, spraying, and similarly skilled functions.				
7. Tractor Driver II	Uses tractor to disc fields, carry loads, and perform other basic work not requiring possession of a driver's license.				
8. Milker	Milks cows using milking machine; examines cows for injuries/diseases.				
9. Irrigator - Flood/Row	Sets up and applies ditch or flood irrigation in fields or orchards.				
10. Irrigator - Lines	Assembles, moves, and operates pipe sprinkler or drip systems.				
11. Pruner-Tree or Vine	Prunes fruit/nut trees or grape vines, using hand tools.				
12. Nursery Propagator	Transplants or propagates plants from cuttings, stems or seeds.				
13. General Laborer I	Performs various tasks requiring some developed manual or mental skills ("semi-skilled").	*	*		
				←On your payroll	
				←FLC employees*	
14. General Laborer II	Performs tasks requiring only skills readily learned; typically hired seasonally.	*	*		
				←On your payroll	
				←FLC employees*	

(* Farm Labor Contractor and/or Custom Harvester employees)

III. Benefits - Which of these fringe benefits do more than half of your (a) year-round and (b) seasonal employees receive without having to co-pay more than 25% of the cost? Please check all that apply, except provide number of days in #4.

	Year-round	Seasonal		Year-round	Seasonal
1. Health care - employee only	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Yearly profit-sharing or bonus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Health care - employee & family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Retirement pay/pension	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Vacation pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Holiday pay (days per year)	days	days	9. Utilities in housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Sick-leave pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10. Farm products	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

RETURN TO: Western Growers, Attn: Karen Hansen, P. O. Box 2130, Newport Beach CA 92658

All Associations
2012 Agricultural Wage and Benefit Survey Report

Report based on All Commodities producer data

I. Wages

Job Title	Avg	Low-est	Avg Low	Avg High	High-est	sd	n	N
Hourly Wages								
Supervisor	19.29	8.75	17.77	20.81	41.25	6.32	33	56
Foreman	15.46	8.25	14.35	16.57	45.00	4.71	38	88
Shop mechanic 1	17.83	8.00	17.04	18.62	37.50	6.10	50	80
Shop mechanic 2	13.42	8.00	12.67	14.17	22.50	3.25	29	58
Equipment operator	13.54	8.00	12.28	14.80	40.00	4.08	34	90
Tractor driver 1	12.68	8.00	11.84	13.53	25.00	3.20	40	107
Tractor driver 2	11.26	8.00	10.67	11.86	20.50	2.30	25	68
Milker	10.13	8.00	9.53	10.73	14.25	1.59	3	11
Irrigator - flood/row	10.76	8.00	10.07	11.46	21.00	2.25	23	53
Irrigator - lines	11.38	8.00	10.64	12.12	18.00	2.59	18	50
Pruner - tree or vine	11.00	8.00	10.18	11.82	25.00	2.69	28	67
Nursery propagator	10.14	8.00	9.44	10.83	17.50	2.36	8	16
General laborer 1 (own employee)	10.19	8.00	9.58	10.80	16.54	1.75	38	101
General laborer 1 (FLC employee)	9.88	8.00	9.48	10.29	20.05	2.52	19	43
General laborer 2 (own employee)	9.58	8.00	9.30	9.87	20.00	2.19	33	72
General laborer 2 (FLC employee)	9.83	8.00	9.61	10.05	16.61	2.29	18	26
Monthly Salaries								
Supervisor	4,845	830	4,344	5,346	9,300	1,616	30	66
Foreman	4,009	850	3,591	4,428	6,896	1,079	11	32
Shop mechanic 1	4,224	2,000	4,047	4,400	5,261	1,016	5	8
Shop mechanic 2	4,124	4,124	4,124	4,124	4,124	0	1	1
Equipment operator	2,382	1,350	2,321	2,444	3,899	1,053	2	4
Tractor driver 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tractor driver 2	2,367	2,000	2,333	2,400	2,500	231	2	3
Milker	2,676	1,662	2,475	2,877	4,500	625	3	8

Contract Production Services

Respondents who hire any contractors for production	44.59 %
Average share of total labor expenses paid through contractors	40.17 %

II. Benefits

Benefits Provided	% providing to yr-round	N	% providing to seasonal	N
Health care - employee only	44.85 %	165	3.64 %	165
Health care - employee & family	38.18 %	165	2.42 %	165
Vacation pay	63.03 %	165	4.24 %	165
Holiday pay (days per year)	55.15 %	165	10.91 %	165
Average days	8.13	91	5.27	15
Sick-leave pay	23.64 %	165	1.21 %	165
Yearly profit-sharing or bonus	47.88 %	165	7.27 %	165
Retirement pay/pension	21.21 %	165	2.42 %	165
Housing	24.85 %	165	3.64 %	165
Utilities in housing	15.15 %	165	3.03 %	165
Farm products	12.12 %	165	3.64 %	165

See notes on introductory page. Report produced at UCB College of Natural Resources.