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Summary

An issue before Congress is whether to change immigration policy to increase the number of legal foreign agricultural workers in the United States. In 2001, approximately 3.4 million persons were employed in the agriculture industry in the United States, or about 2.4% of the total U.S. labor force. Most persons in the agricultural labor force are native-born, while most foreign-born persons in the agricultural labor force are Mexican-born.

From 1996 to 2001, the total U.S. labor force increased by an estimated 7.9 million persons, or 5.9%. During the same period, the agricultural labor force declined by an estimated 340,000 persons, from 2.8% to 2.4% of the total labor force. In 2001, the number of Mexican-born persons in the agricultural labor force was approximately the same as in 1996 (530,000 and 533,000, respectively). Nevertheless, from 2000 to 2001 the number of Mexican-born persons in the agricultural labor force fell from an estimated 611,000 to 533,000.

Compared to the overall labor force, men make up a greater share of the agricultural labor force, and an even greater share of the Mexican-born agricultural labor force. The Mexican-born agricultural labor force is significantly younger than the native-born agricultural labor force.

From 1996 to 2001, unemployment was greater among Mexican-born persons in the agricultural labor force than among native-born persons. From 2000 to 2001, while the national unemployment rate increased from 4.1% to 4.9%, the unemployment rate among Mexican-born agricultural workers increased from 10.7% to 14.5% and from 4.0% to 4.8% among native-born agricultural workers.

In 2001, full-time wage and salary agricultural workers had median weekly earnings of $365, compared to $597 for all full-time wage and salary workers. The median weekly earnings of native-born agricultural workers ($400) were greater than the median weekly earnings of Mexican-born workers ($300).

An analysis of changes in employment and median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers suggests that, from 1996 to 2000 (i.e., before the decline in employment from 2000 to 2001), the relative supply of and demand for labor in farmworker and technical occupations were essentially unchanged. In managerial and farming occupations, the analysis suggests that both the supply of and demand for labor increased.

Compared to workers in all industries, agricultural workers are (a) more likely to be self-employed (native-born workers are more likely than Mexican-born workers to be self-employed), (b) less likely to have finished high school or graduated from college, (c) more likely to be employed in production, service, and operator occupations, (d) less likely to work year-round, (e) more likely to have annual money income below the official poverty thresholds, (f) less likely to have health insurance, (g) less likely to be unionized, and (h) less likely to hold multiple jobs.

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Introduction

An issue before Congress is whether to change immigration policy to increase the number of legal foreign agricultural workers in the United States. Some proposals would increase the number of legal immigrants by allowing a number of undocumented immigrants to become legal permanent residents, while other proposals would increase the number of legal nonimmigrants by creating a new guestworker program or by making changes in the existing temporary guestworker (H-2A) program for agricultural workers.[1]

The purpose of this report is to provide information to policymakers considering a new, smaller, or larger agricultural guestworker program.[2] The report examines selected labor market, social, and demographic characteristics of the agricultural labor force in the United States for each year from 1996 through 2001. The analysis examines differences among native-born, foreign-born, and Mexican-born workers. The characteristics examined include age, education, earnings, occupation, union membership, weeks worked per year, poverty status, and health insurance coverage.

The report analyzes data on wage and salary workers in both the agriculture industry and for all industries combined. The data are from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS), which is the main source of labor force information for the United States. A detailed description of the data and methods used in the report is provided in *Appendix A*.

In this report, native-born persons are defined as individuals who were born in the United States, Puerto Rico, or other U.S. territory or who were born in a foreign country to at least one parent who was a U.S. citizen. All other persons are defined as foreign-born. Foreign-born persons include both naturalized citizens and noncitizens. The CPS does not ask noncitizens if they are legal or undocumented immigrants or whether they are nonimmigrants who are in the United States

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[1] For a history of temporary foreign worker programs in the United States, see U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on the Judiciary. *Temporary Worker Programs: Background and Issues*. Committee Print, 96th Cong., 2nd Sess. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1980.

[2] For a discussion of the labor market effects of temporary agricultural worker programs in the U.S., see CRS Report 95-712 E, *Immigration: The Labor Market Effects of Temporary Alien Farm Worker Programs*, by Linda Levine. p. 1-6.

temporarily (e.g., on business or as students).[3] Therefore, in this report the definition of foreign-born persons includes legally admitted immigrants, refugees, and temporary residents, as well as undocumented immigrants.

In this report, agricultural workers are persons working in the agriculture industry. The agriculture industry includes crop (e.g., fruits, vegetables, and tobacco) and livestock (e.g., cattle, poultry, and hogs) production as well as landscaping, veterinary, and other agricultural services. The agriculture industry includes the same range of occupations found in the economy at large. Thus, an analysis of the labor market characteristics of workers in the agriculture industry includes persons employed as managers, sales workers, mechanics, machine operators, security guards, laborers, and other occupations. A data source other than the CPS may include a narrower range of occupations. For example, the National Agriculture Workers Survey (NAWS) is a survey of crop workers (see footnote 3).[4] Data from the CPS allow comparisons among groups within the agriculture industry as well as comparisons between agriculture and other industries.

Because the focus of this report is on the U.S. labor market, it does not examine other social, political, or demographic issues related to guestworker programs. Nor does the report examine the benefits and costs of guestworker programs – to the U.S. government or to state and local governments. Finally, the analysis examines data covering a 6-year period. A study covering a longer, or different, time period may yield different results.

Proposed Policy Changes

Proposals to change U.S. agricultural worker immigration policy focus on two broad issues: (a) whether to provide some kind of amnesty (i.e., legalization) for undocumented workers in the agriculture industry who are already in the United States and (b) whether to create a new temporary guestworker program to increase the availability of legal agricultural workers. In addition, many policymakers favor changes in the existing temporary agricultural worker program, which is known as the H-2A program and is the only program for legal temporary foreign agricultural workers in the United States.[5] Proposals to change U.S. immigration policy include

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[3] According to the results of the U.S. Department of Labor's National Agriculture Workers Survey (NAWS) for FY1998, 52% of U.S. farm workers were undocumented workers. The survey defines farm workers as crop workers who are engaged mainly in growing and harvesting farm crops. (Harvest workers are defined to include workers employed in tasks such as field packing, sorting, and grading.) U.S. Department of Labor. *Findings from the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) 1997-1998.* p. 2, 22, 30.

[4] For an analysis of the labor market for hired farmworkers (i.e., farmworkers employed by growers or by farm labor contractors) that uses data from the NAWS and other sources see CRS Report RL30395, *Farm Labor Shortages and Immigration Policy*, by Linda Levine. p. 7-15. [Hereafter cited as: CRS Report RL30395, *Farm Labor Shortages and Immigration Policy*.]

[5] H-2A visas are one of several temporary visas granted under the Immigration and (continued...)

recommendations to expand as well as proposals to reduce the amount of immigration to the United States.

President George Bush and Mexican President Vicente Fox met twice in 2001 and again in 2002, with immigration among the major topics of discussion. In 2001, the two presidents established a working group to develop immigration proposals, including options for a new or expanded guestworker program.[6] Undocumented immigrants in the United States reportedly could be eligible for a new guestworker program. Debate about whether to create a new guestworker program or to make changes in the H-2A program lost momentum, however, after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.[7] In November 2002, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell and Mexican Foreign Secretary Jorge Costenada reaffirmed the intention of the two countries to continue talks to reach an agreement on immigration.[8]

In the 107th and prior Congresses, various proposals were introduced that would have created a new guestworker program, alter the existing H-2A program, or allow undocumented workers in the United States to adjust to legal status.[9]

Organizations and individuals hold different views on U.S. immigration policy. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce supports a new temporary worker program as well

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[5] (...continued)
Nationality Act (INA). The H-2A program allows employers to hire foreign agricultural workers to perform temporary work, provided there are no U.S. workers available. An H-2A visa may be issued for a period of up to a year. Extensions may be granted for up to a total of 3 consecutive years. No limits are imposed on the number of H-2A visas granted each year. In FY1999 the U.S. Department of State issued 28,560 H-2A visas. CRS Report RL30852, *Immigration of Agricultural Guest Workers: Policy, Trends, and Legislative Issues*, by Ruth Ellen Wasem and Geoffrey K. Collver. p. 1-5. [Hereafter cited as: CRS Report RL30852, *Immigration of Agricultural Guest Workers: Policy, Trends, and Legislative Issues*.]

[6] The U.S.-Mexico High Level Working Group on Migration includes Secretary of State Colin Powell and Attorney General John Ashcroft of the United States and Foreign Secretary Jorge Castaneda and Interior Minister Santiago Creel of Mexico. Bush Says Plan for Immigrants Could Expand. *New York Times*, July 26, 2001. p. 1; Compromise 245(i) Bill Passes Judiciary; Bush Considering Earned Citizenship Program. *Daily Labor Report*, no. 144, July 27, 2001. p. A-5.

[7] For a description of prior reporting requirements for foreign students and of changes in these requirements enacted in the 107th Congress, see: CRS Report RL31146, *Foreign Students in the United States: Policies and Legislation*, by Ruth Ellen Wasem. p. 9-14. For a description of recent changes in the registration rules for nonimmigrants, see: CRS Report RL31570, *Immigration: Alien Registration*, by Andorra Bruno. p. 4-7.

[8] CRS Issue Brief IB10070, *Mexico-U.S. Relations: Issues for Congress*, by K. Larry Storrs. p. 6-9.

[9] For a description of immigration legislation enacted in the 107th Congress, see: CRS Report RS21438. *Immigration Legislation Enacted int eh 107th Congress*, by Andorra Bruno, p. 1-6. For a description of agricultural guestworker legislation introduced in the 107th and prior Congresses, see: CRS Report RL30852, *Immigration of Agricultural Guest Workers: Policy, Trends, and Legislative Issues*, p. 8-13.

as a legalization program that would allow undocumented workers to become permanent U.S. residents. According to the Chamber, nationals from Mexico and other nations should be allowed to participate in both programs.[10]

The AFL-CIO supports a legalization program for undocumented workers and favors changes in, but not an expansion of, existing guestworker programs. According to the AFL-CIO, undocumented workers and their families, regardless of country of origin, "who have been working hard, paying taxes and contributing to their communities" should be given the opportunity to become permanent legal residents of the United States.[11]

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) also opposes an expansion of the H-2A program. However, it is not opposed to a new guestworker program for agriculture and other industries, provided that workers who participate in such a program are covered by U.S. labor laws (e.g., laws relating to wages, working conditions, and the right to unionize). NCLR also favors a program to allow undocumented immigrants to earn permanent legal status.[12]

The Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) favors the reduction of both legal and illegal immigration to the United States. CIS also opposes a new guestworker program. The CIS argues that immigration increases the number of poor and uninsured persons in the United States and imposes fiscal burdens on federal, state, and local governments.[13]

An argument is also made that immigration should be reduced because of the environmental impact of a growing population. According to this viewpoint,

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[10] U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on the Judiciary. *U.S.-Mexico Migration Discussions: A Historic Opportunity*. Hearings, 107th Cong., 1st Sess, September 7, 2001. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 2002. p. 37.

[11] U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on the Judiciary. *U.S.-Mexico Migration Discussions: A Historic Opportunity*. Hearings, 107th Cong., 1st Sess, September 7, 2001. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 2002. p. 26-27; *Immigration*. Statement of AFL-CIO Executive Council, July 31, 2001. Available on the Internet at: [www.aflcio.org] (as of December 4, 2001); *Immigration*. Statement of AFL-CIO Executive Council, February 16, 2000. Available on the Internet at: [www.aflcio.org] (as of December 4, 2001).

[12] The NCLR is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is "to reduce poverty and discrimination and improve life opportunities for Hispanic Americans." U.S. Congress. House. Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims. *Guestworker Visa Programs*. Hearings, 107th Cong., 1st Sess, June 19, 2001. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 2001. p. 27-29.

[13] The CIS is an independent, nonprofit organization devoted to research on the impact of immigration on the United States. Krikorian, Mark. *Guestworker Programs: A Threat to American Agriculture*. Washington, Center for Immigration Studies, June 2001. p. 5. U.S. Congress. House. Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims. *Guestworker Visa Programs*. Hearings, 107th Cong., 1st Sess, June 19, 2001. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 2001. p. 16, 23-24. Camorata, Steven. *Immigration from Mexico: Assessing the Impact on the United States*. Washington, Center for Immigration Studies, July 2001. Center Paper 19. p. 8-10, 57.

population growth affects air and water quality, causes more land to be developed, and places greater demands on natural resources – in part, because of higher consumption levels in the United States.[14]

Labor Market Analysis

The issue of immigration can be examined from different perspectives. Changes in U.S. policy with respect to agricultural guestworkers would likely involve changes in the U.S. (i.e., aggregate) labor market and in local or regional labor markets for different occupations. This report analyzes selected labor market, social, and demographic characteristics of the agricultural labor force in the United States. Labor markets can be examined in terms of how changes affect the allocation of labor (i.e., economic efficiency) and the distribution of earnings (i.e., equity). This section describes the basic framework for labor market analysis used in this report.

According to standard economic analysis, competitive markets result in the most efficient allocation of resources (i.e., labor, capital, and natural resources). In turn, economic theory holds that an efficient allocation of resources provides the greatest output and consumer satisfaction from a given quantity of resources. Most modern economists believe that, compared to other economic systems, a market economy provides greater incentives to work, save, invest, and innovate. The expected result is a higher standard of living. At the same time, many economists acknowledge that some markets may not fit the model of perfect competition. If markets are not competitive, economic analysis indicates that government action may improve economic efficiency. In addition, a market economy may result in a distribution of income that is socially unacceptable. Governments may also adopt policies that reduce earnings or income inequality.

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[14] U.S. Congress. House. Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims. *U.S. Population and Immigration*. Hearings, 107th Cong., 1st Sess, August 2, 2001. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 2001. p. 29-34.

Efficient Labor Markets

In general, competitive labor markets are thought to provide the most efficient allocation of labor (i.e., workers and hours worked).[15] In practice, many labor markets do not fit the model of perfect competition.[16] For example, some employers or workers may be able to influence wages. Some employers may not have sufficient information or equal access to the kind of information needed to make informed decisions about hiring workers. On the other hand, when looking for work, job seekers may not have access to the same information available to employers. Job growth may not be sufficient to employ all persons who want to work.

When labor markets depart from the model of perfect competition government intervention may improve economic efficiency.[17] But government intervention may not be necessary or desirable. In some cases, departures from perfect competition may be self-correcting. In addition, government policies aimed at improving efficiency may fail to achieve their objectives. Or policies that improve efficiency at one point in time may have little or no effect at another point in time.

Changes in U.S. immigration policy might harm the overall allocation of labor if the changes add to total unemployment (e.g., if immigrants leave full- or part-time jobs in their home countries and move to the United States where they are unemployed). Changes in immigration policy might also harm efficiency if ease of entry into the United States is not matched by a similar ease of exit and, perhaps, reentry. On the other hand, economic theory holds that labor mobility can improve the allocation of labor if unemployed workers in another country move to the United States where they are able to find work or if workers move from less productive jobs in their home countries to more productive jobs in the United States.

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[15] The following are the characteristics of a competitive labor market: (1) There are many employers and many workers. Each employer is small relative to the size of the market. (2) Employers and workers are free to enter or leave a labor market and can move freely from one market to another. (3) Employers do not organize to lower wages and workers do not organize to raise wages. Governments do not intervene in labor markets to regulate wages. (4) Employers and workers have equal access to accurate labor market information. (5) Employers do not prefer one worker over another equally qualified worker (i.e., equally qualified workers are "perfect substitutes"). Workers do not prefer one employer over another employer who pays the same wage for the same kind of work. (6) Employers seek to maximize profits, while workers seek to maximize satisfaction. Reynolds, Lloyd G., Stanley H. Masters, and Colletta H. Moser. *Labor Economics and Labor Relations*. 11th ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1998. p. 16-21. [Hereafter cited as: Reynolds et al., *Labor Economics and Labor Relations*.]

[16] Samuelson, Paul A., and William D. Nordhaus. *Economics*. 13th ed. New York, McGraw-Hill, 1989. p. 677.

[17] For a discussion of departures from the model of perfect competition, see: Stiglitz, Joseph E. *Economics of the Public Sector*. 3rd ed. New York, W.W. Norton & Co., 2000. p. 76-85.

The Distribution of Earnings

Efficient labor markets, or improvements in economic efficiency, may improve the allocation of labor, but the improvements may result in a socially unacceptable distribution of earnings. In competitive labor markets, if the supply of unskilled labor increases relative to demand, the result will generally be a more unequal distribution of earnings. On the other hand, if the demand for unskilled labor increases relative to supply, the result will generally be a more equal distribution of earnings.[18] Because wages tend to rise as labor productivity (i.e., the quantity of output per hour) increases, the distribution of earnings may change if the growth in labor productivity is greater in some occupations than in others. Finally, the distribution of earnings may change because of institutional or policy changes, including changes in the minimum wage or the degree of unionization.

Immigration to the United States can affect the distribution of earnings in both the United States and in immigrants' home countries. If skilled workers move to the United States, the distribution of earnings in their native countries may become more unequal, while the distribution of earnings in the United States may become more equal. Conversely, if unskilled workers move to the United States, the distribution of earnings in the workers' native countries may become more equal while the distribution of earnings in the United States may become more unequal.[19]

Governments can reduce earnings inequality directly through progressive taxation, income transfers, and subsidized consumption (e.g., for health care or housing) or indirectly by improving the distribution of earnings-producing human capital (e.g., education and training). Improvements in the distribution of earnings may involve tradeoffs with an efficient allocation of labor (e.g., if taxes or transfer payments affect decisions to work or the number of hours worked).

Immigration and Competitive Labor Markets

In general, individuals may wish to move from one country to another if the expected gain from temporary or permanent immigration exceeds the cost of moving. All else being equal, the expected gain from immigration will generally be greater the larger the differences in earnings between two countries. The expected gain will likely be greater for younger persons, who have more working years to earn higher incomes. In general, the expected cost of moving should be lower the shorter the distance between labor markets. The expected cost of moving should also be less for younger persons, who may have fewer family and other ties to their existing communities. In addition, workers may have greater access to information about differences in wages the shorter the distance between labor markets. Similarly,

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[18] Reynolds, et al., *Labor Economics and Labor Relations*, p. 24-25.

[19] An increase in the relative supply of skilled workers, everything else remaining the same, would reduce the wages of skilled workers relative to the wages of unskilled workers. Conversely, an increase in the relative supply of unskilled workers – again, everything else remaining the same – would reduce the wages of unskilled workers relative to the wages of skilled workers.

employers may have greater information about the supply of labor in nearby labor markets.[20]

Government policies can affect the allocation of labor between countries (e.g., by improving the accuracy and availability of labor market information or by removing barriers or disincentives to employment). But, in a world economy, improving opportunities for employment or easing restrictions on the movement of labor across borders is generally the prerogative of governments in individual countries. Since improvements in economic efficiency may have socially undesirable effects on the earnings of workers in particular occupations, some policymakers may favor policies that limit the overall level of immigration or that limit immigration to workers with specific skills.[21]

Findings

The remainder of this report examines selected characteristics of the agricultural labor force in the United States. First, the report provides an overview of recent trends in the size and composition of the agricultural workforce. Second, the report examines selected demographic and social characteristics of the agricultural labor force, including age, gender, and education. Next, the report examines selected employment characteristics of agricultural workers, including unemployment, self-employment, median earnings, occupation, and union membership. Finally, the report examines additional indicators of economic well-being, including health insurance coverage and poverty status.

For each characteristic, the analysis compares the agricultural labor force with the overall U.S. labor force. Because Mexican-born persons make up the largest portion of foreign-born persons in the agricultural labor force, comparisons of native-born and foreign-born agricultural workers are often limited to a comparison of native-born and Mexican-born workers. *Appendix B* provides extensive detail on each of the characteristics discussed in the text of this report. (The tables in the appendix show details rounded to the nearest thousand. The percentages and other calculations in the text of this report are based on unrounded estimates. Therefore, calculations made from the tables in the appendix may not match the calculations shown in the text.)

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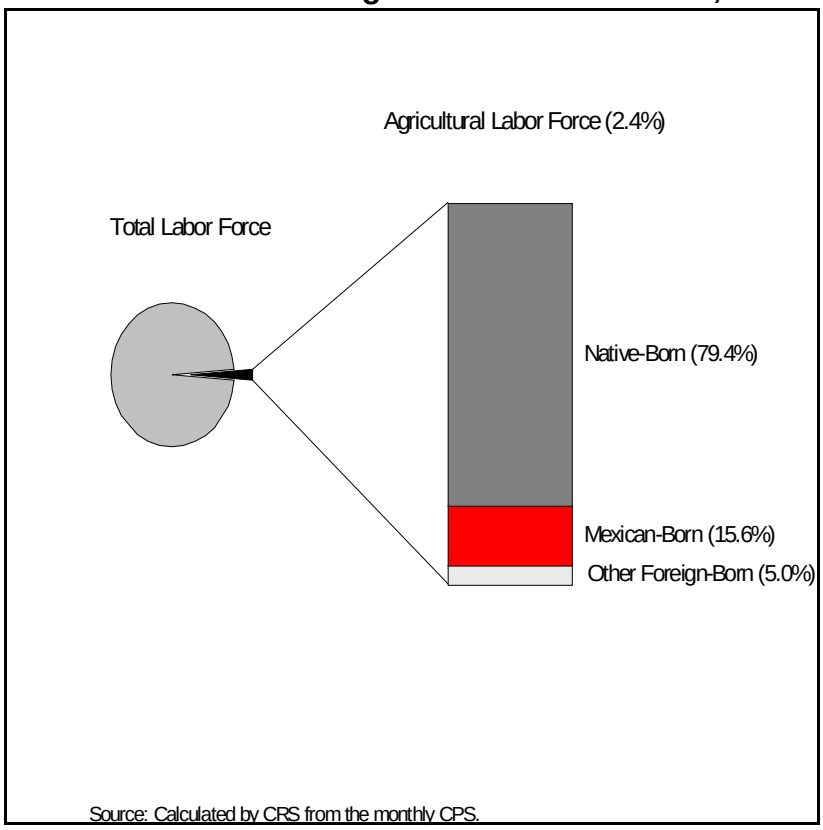
[20] Filer, Randall K., Daniel S. Hamermesh, and Albert E. Rees. *The Economics of Work and Pay*. 6th ed. New York, Harper Collins, 1996. p. 255-62.

[21] For a review of research on the effect of immigration on the wages and employment of native-born workers, see CRS Report 95-408 E, *Immigration: The Effects on Native-Born Workers*, by Linda Levine. p. 5-15. [Hereafter cited as: CRS Report 95-408 E, *Immigration: The Effects on Native-Born Workers*.]

Size and Composition of the Agricultural Labor Force

In 2001, approximately 3.4 million persons were employed in the agriculture industry in the United States, or about 2.4% of the total U.S. labor force. (See **Figure 1**.) Although the U.S. labor force increased by 7.9 million persons from 1996 to 2001, in 2001 there were approximately 340,000 fewer individuals in the agricultural labor force than in 1996.

Figure 1. Composition of the Labor Force: Total Labor Force and the Agricultural Labor Force, 2001



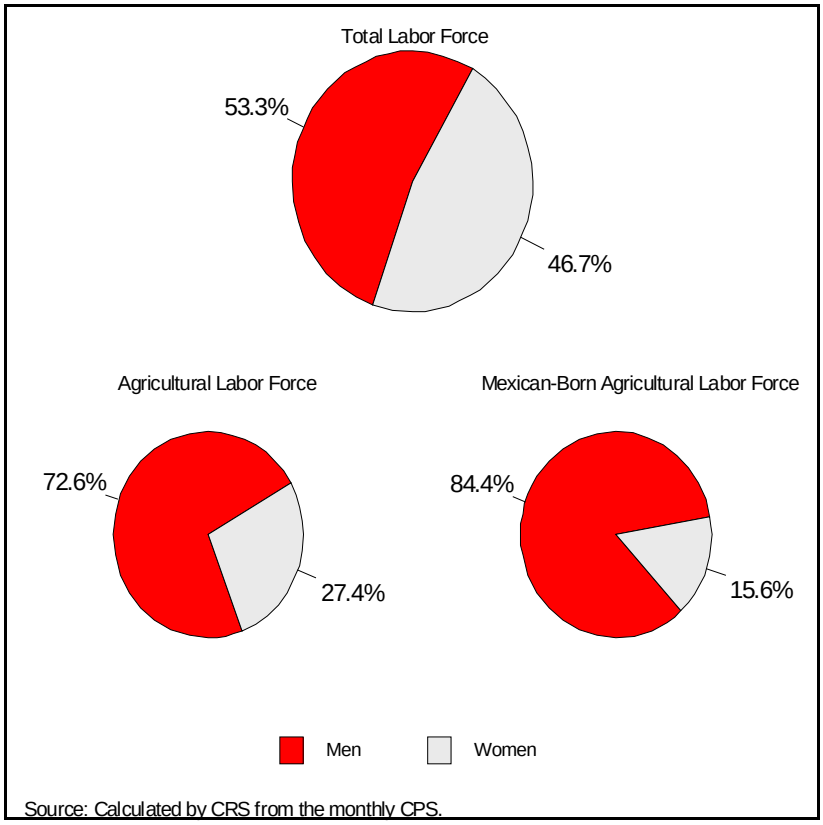
Most persons in the agricultural labor force in the United States are native-born, while most foreign-born persons are Mexican-born. In 2001, native-born persons accounted for 79.4% of the agricultural labor force. Mexican-born persons accounted for 15.6% of the agricultural labor force, and 75.6% of the foreign-born agricultural labor force.

From 1996 to 2001, the number of native-born persons in the agricultural labor force declined by an estimated 389,000. In 2001, the number of Mexican-born persons in the agricultural labor force was approximately the same as in 1996 (530,000 and 533,000 respectively). However, from 2000 to 2001 the number of Mexican-born persons in the agricultural labor force fell from an estimated 611,000 to 533,000.

Demographic and Social Characteristics

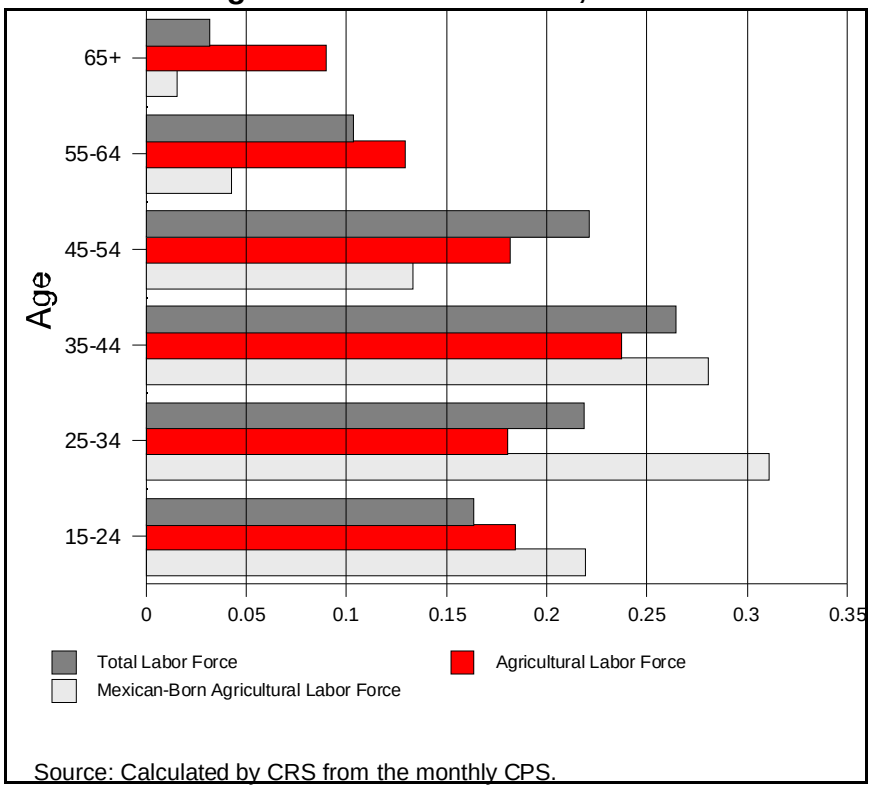
Gender. Compared to the overall labor force, men make up a greater share of the agricultural labor force. A larger share of Mexican-born than native-born persons in the agricultural labor force are men. (See **Figure 2**.) In 2001, men accounted for 53.3% of the total labor force, compared to 72.6% of the agricultural labor force. Among persons in the Mexican-born agricultural labor force, 84.4% were men, compared to 69.9% of native-born agricultural labor force.

Figure 2. Gender of the Total Labor Force, Agricultural Labor Force, and Mexican-Born Labor Force, 2001



Age. The agricultural labor force in the United States has relatively more younger and more older workers than the overall labor force. On the other hand, Mexican-born agricultural workers tend to be younger than the agricultural labor force in general. (See **Figure 3**.)

Figure 3. Age Distribution of the Total Labor Force, Agricultural Labor Force, and Mexican-Born Agricultural Labor Force, 2001

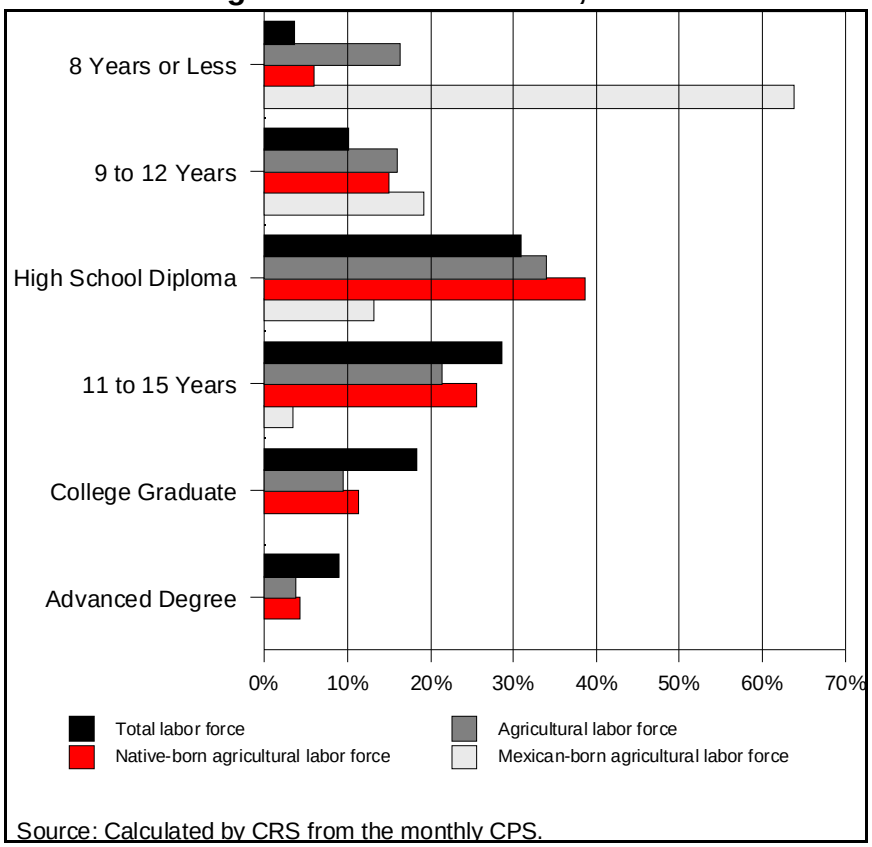


Source: Calculated by CRS from the monthly CPS.

In 2001, the median age of the total labor force was 39 years, compared to 40 years for the agricultural labor force, 42 years for the native-born agricultural labor force, and 34 years for the Mexican-born agricultural labor force. In 2001, 16.3% of the overall labor force was between 15 and 24 years of age compared to 18.4% of the agricultural labor force. On the other hand, 13.4% of the overall labor force was 55 or older, compared to 21.8% of the agricultural labor force. In the Mexican-born agricultural labor force, 53.0% of persons were between the ages of 15 and 34 – compared to 33.5% of the native-born agricultural labor force.

Education. Individuals in the agricultural labor force have fewer years of formal education than the overall labor force. In the agricultural labor force, Mexican-born workers have fewer years of education than native-born agricultural workers.[22] (See **Figure 4**.)

Figure 4. Educational Attainment: Total Labor Force, Agricultural Labor Force, and Native- and Mexican-Born Agricultural Labor Force, 2001



Source: Calculated by CRS from the monthly CPS.

In 2001, 32.0% of persons in the agricultural labor force had not graduated from high school (i.e., had not received a diploma), compared to 13.5% of persons in the total labor force. In the agricultural labor force, however, a significant difference existed between native-born and Mexican-born persons. In 2001, 20.6% of native-born persons in the agricultural labor force had not graduated from high school, compared to 82.7% of Mexican-born persons.

In 2001, 13.0% of persons in the agricultural labor force had a college or advanced degree, compared to 27.2% of persons in the total labor force. Again, among persons in the agricultural labor force, a significant difference existed between native-born and Mexican-born persons: 15.3% of native-born persons in the

[22] To the extent that differences exist in the quality of schooling across countries or among schools within the United States, to employers individuals with the same years of schooling may not be "perfect substitutes." (See footnote 15.)

agricultural labor force had a college degree, compared to 1.1% of Mexican-born persons.

Between 1996 and 2001, the number of persons in the agricultural labor force with less than a high school degree declined by an estimated 202,000. But the number of native-born persons with less than a high school education declined by approximately 227,000 persons. From 1996 to 2001, the number of Mexican-born persons in the agricultural labor force with less than a high school education was essentially unchanged (447,000 an 441,000, respectively). (See **Table B4**.) Thus, over the period, foreign-born persons made up an increasing share of persons in the agricultural labor force who had not graduated from high school.

Employment Characteristics

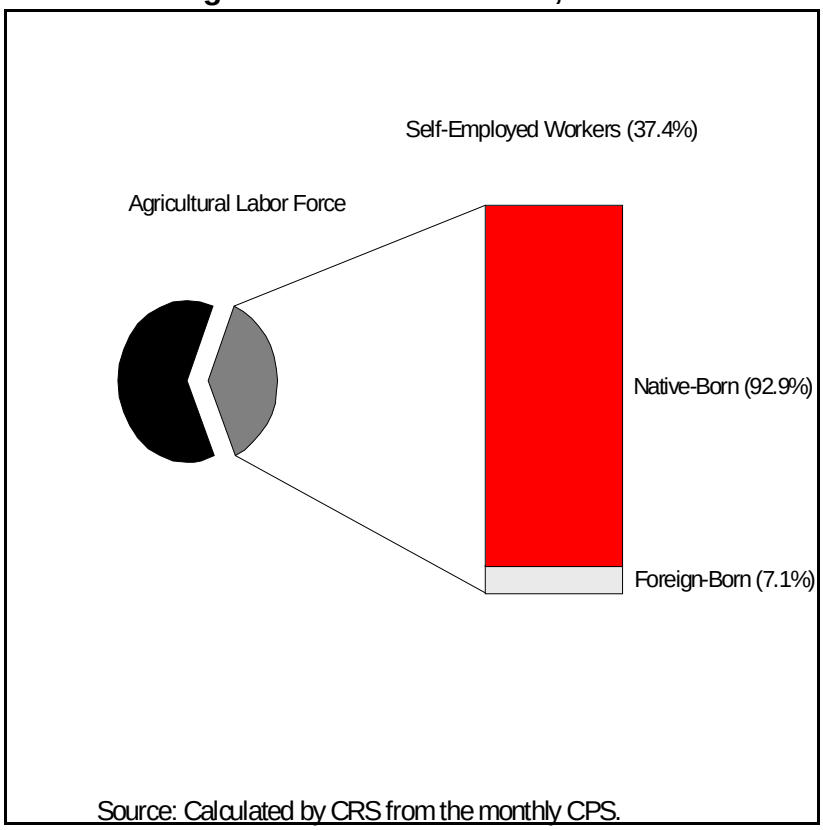
Class of Worker. Most people in the labor force are wage and salary workers. However, many individuals are self-employed in their own business, trade, or profession. The labor force also includes family members who work without pay on a family farm or family business.[23]

In 2001, 92.8% of all persons in the overall labor force were wage or salary workers, while 7.1% were self-employed. The remainder (0.1%) were unpaid family members. In the agricultural labor force, on the other hand, 61.6% were wage and salary workers and 37.4% of all persons were self-employed (1.0% were unpaid family members).

In the agricultural labor force, native-born persons account for the relatively large percentage of self-employed persons. In 2001, 92.9% of self-employed agricultural workers were native-born (recall that 79.4% of agricultural workers were native-born). (See **Figure 5**.)

[23] More specifically, wage and salary workers are persons who work for a private or public employer. In this report, self-employed persons are persons who are self-employed in an unincorporated business. Unpaid family members are persons who work without pay for 15 hours or more a week on a family farm or business. Persons with more than one job are classified according to the kind of work on their main job.

Figure 5. Class of Worker of the Agricultural Labor Force and Composition of the Self-Employed Agricultural Labor Force, 2001



Source: Calculated by CRS from the monthly CPS.

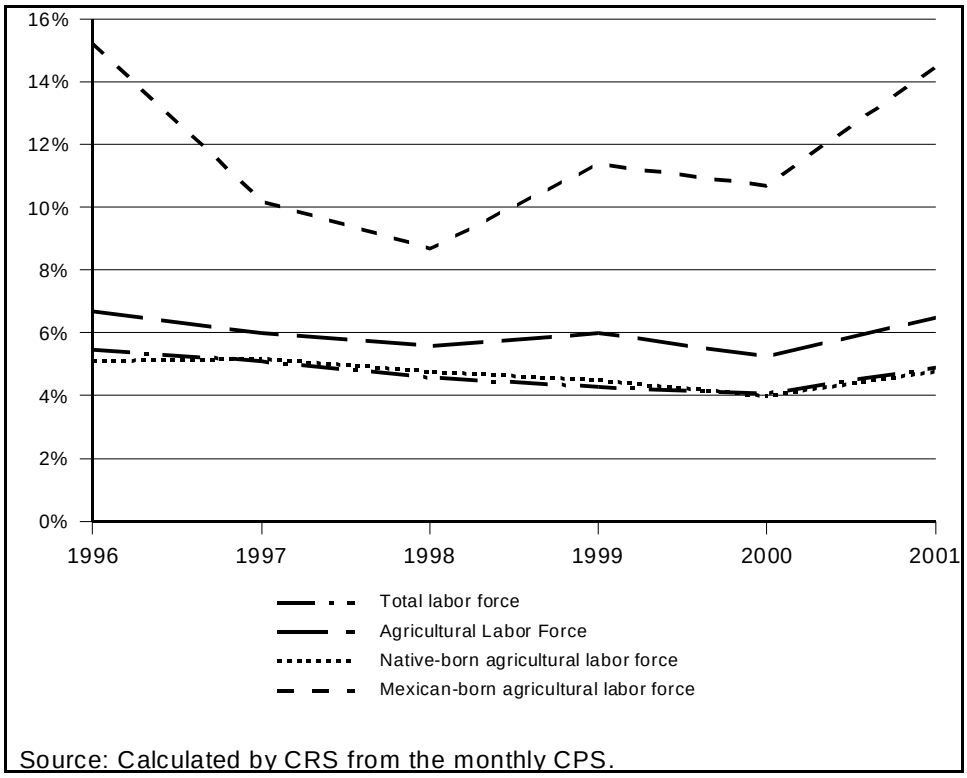
From 1996 to 2001, the share of workers in the total labor force who were self-employed fell from 8.1% to 7.1%. In the agricultural labor force, the share of persons who were self-employed fell from 41.6% to 37.4%.

Several factors may account for the decline in the number of self-employed agricultural workers. A self-employed agricultural worker – who could be an owner, renter, or sharecropper – could retire, take a wage job, or become self-employed in another industry. Another self-employed farmer or an incorporated farm could take over land that had been farmed by a self-employed agricultural worker. A self-employed owner could convert a farm into an incorporated farm. Or, for some agricultural workers, a wage job may become their main job, while farming becomes their second job.

Unemployment. While the size and demographic composition of the labor force provide information on labor supply, unemployment rates provide information on the relative supply of and demand for labor. During the period from 1996 to 2001, the unemployment rate among persons in the agricultural labor force was greater than the national unemployment rate. In addition, among persons in the agricultural labor force, the unemployment rate among foreign- and Mexican-born persons was greater than among native-born persons.

In 2001, when the national unemployment rate was 4.9%, the unemployment rate among persons in the agricultural labor force was 6.5%. However, the difference in unemployment rates was due mainly to higher unemployment among Mexican-born persons in the agricultural labor force. In 2001, the unemployment rate among native-born persons in the agricultural labor force was 4.8%, compared to 14.5% among Mexican-born persons. (See **Figure 6**.)

Figure 6. Unemployment Rates: Total Labor Force, Agricultural Labor Force, and Foreign- and Mexican-Born Labor Force, 1996-2001



Source: Calculated by CRS from the monthly CPS.

The decline in the national unemployment rate from 1996 to 2000 and the increase in the rate from 2000 to 2001 are reflected in changes in the unemployment rate in the agricultural labor force. From 1996 to 2000, both the national unemployment rate and the unemployment rate in agriculture declined by 1.4 percentage points (from 5.5% to 4.1% and from 6.7% to 5.3%, respectively). However, in the agricultural labor force, unemployment declined by a greater amount among Mexican-born persons (4.5 percentage points) than among native-born persons (1.1 percentage points). (See **Figure 6**.) From 2000 to 2001, on the other hand, while the national unemployment rate increased by 0.7 percentage points, unemployment among agricultural workers increased by 1.2 percentage points.

Unemployment increased more among Mexican-born agricultural workers (3.8 percentage points) than among native-born agricultural workers (0.8 percentage points).

Do the higher unemployment rates in the United States among Mexican-born workers imply that immigration harms the allocation of labor? Some evidence suggests that, from 1996 to 1998, unemployment rates in the Mexican-born labor force in the United States were higher than unemployment rates in Mexico. Using definitions of the labor force and unemployment that more closely match the definitions used in the CPS, Martin calculated that the unemployment rates in Mexico for the years 1996 through 1998 were 7.2%, 4.9%, and 4.8%, respectively. These estimates are based on a survey that includes only state capitals and cities of 100,000 or more. The nationwide unemployment rate may have been lower.[24] In metropolitan areas of 100,000 or more in the United States, the unemployment rates in the Mexican-born labor force (i.e., employed and unemployed workers in all industries) for the years 1996 to 1998 were 9.8%, 7.2%, and 6.6%, respectively.

From 1996 and 2000 (i.e., before the rise in unemployment in 2001), the demand for labor in the United States increased faster than the increase in supply (i.e., the number of persons employed increased more than the number of persons in the labor force). An economic slowdown or recession would likely affect the most recently hired, since layoffs commonly begin with the least experienced workers (i.e., "last hired, first laid off").[25] Nevertheless, differences in earnings and job growth are probably better predictors of immigration than differences in unemployment rates.[26] Thus, even if the unemployment rate among Mexican-born persons in the United States is higher than the unemployment rate in Mexico, economic theory maintains that labor mobility improves the overall allocation of resources, since the main economic reason why people move is to improve their economic situation. In addition, a comparison between unemployment rates in Mexico and among Mexican-born workers in the United States does not take into account higher unemployment rates among recent (as opposed to all) immigrants to the United States.[27,28]

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[24] Martin, Gary. Employment and Unemployment in Mexico in the 1990s. *Monthly Labor Review*, v. 123, November 2000. p. 4-5.

[25] Ehrenberg, Ronald G., and Robert S. Smith. *Modern Labor Economics: Theory and Public Policy*. 7th ed. Reading, Mass., Addison-Wesley, 2000. p. 583.

[26] Filer, et al., *The Economics of Work and Pay*, p. 258-60.

[27] Meisenheimer, Joseph R., II. How Do Immigrants Fare in the U.S. Labor Market? *Monthly Labor Review*, v. 115, December 1992. p. 11.

[28] The "frictional" unemployment rate among recent immigrants to the United States may be higher than among long-time immigrants. Frictional unemployment occurs when workers leave one job to look for another job or when persons enter the labor force but have not yet found a job.

Median Earnings of Full-Time Wage and Salary Workers. **Table 1** shows the median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers in the United States for each year from 1996 through 2001.[29] Weekly earnings consist of usual earnings before taxes from an individual's only or main job and include overtime pay, tips, and cash bonuses. A comparison of full-time workers partially controls for differences in hours worked. Because the monthly CPS does not collect information on the current earnings of persons who are self-employed, **Table 1** excludes self-employed workers.

[29] **Table C1** in *Appendix C* shows the median weekly earnings of all wage and salary workers (i.e., both full-time and part-time workers).

Table 1. Median Weekly Earnings of Full-Time Wage and Salary Workers: All Workers and Agricultural Workers, Native-Born, Foreign-Born, and Mexican-Born, 1996-2001

	1996		1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	Number of workers (1000s)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (1000s)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (1000s)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (1000s)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (1000s)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (1000s)	Median weekly earnings
	A. All Wage and Salary Workers											
All Workers	90,949	$481	93,613	$500	95,595	$520	97,616	$550	99,917	$576	99,555	$597
Native-Born	80,854	$500	82,623	$517	83,920	$540	85,489	$565	86,521	$584	85,847	$600
Foreign-Born	10,095	$385	10,990	$400	11,675	$400	12,127	$430	13,397	$443	13,707	$474
Mexican-Born	2,882	$280	3,279	$293	3,529	$308	3,612	$320	3,980	$340	4,109	$358
	B. Agricultural Workers											
Agricultural Workers	1,342	$300	1,364	$300	1,406	$320	1,395	$345	1,501	$350	1,328	$365
Native-Born	935	$330	870	$325	880	$350	887	$382	914	$400	856	$400
Foreign-Born	407	$250	494	$271	526	$277	508	$296	587	$290	473	$310
Mexican-Born	359	$250	424	$263	437	$275	425	$280	484	$280	376	$300

Source: Calculated by CRS from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS).

Table 1 shows that, in 2001, the median weekly earnings of all full-time wage and salary workers ($597) were greater than the median weekly earnings of agricultural workers ($365). The median weekly earnings of native-born agricultural workers ($400) were greater than the median weekly earnings of foreign-born ($310) and Mexican-born agricultural workers ($300).

Table 1 also shows that, between 1996 and 2001, median weekly earnings increased for all groups of workers. In all cases, the increases were greater than the rate of inflation.[30]

Despite the relatively lower median weekly earnings of foreign-born, and especially Mexican-born, agricultural workers in the United States, a net expected gain in earnings is generally the main economic motive for migrating from one place to another (see "Immigration and Competitive Labor Markets" above). In 2000, per capita income in the United States was $34,100, compared to $8,970 in Mexico.[31] Thus, for many Mexican workers, the expected gain from immigration may be significant. In addition, given the proximity of U.S. and Mexican labor markets, the costs of migration may be lower and information about U.S. job opportunities may be greater for Mexican-born workers than for workers from more distant countries.

Even though migration may improve total output and individual satisfaction (i.e., economic efficiency), it may increase earnings inequality in one country while reducing it another. In recent years in the United States the earnings gap between college-educated and less-educated workers has increased.[32] Some researchers suggest that the increased supply of foreign-born workers in the United States has lowered the relative wages of less-educated workers, but that immigration has had less impact on the relative wages of other workers.[33] As shown above, an increasing

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[30] In **Table 1**, the increases, from 1996 to 2001, in median weekly wages range from 20.0% to 27.9% (or, between 3.7% and 5.0% annually). Between 1996 and 2001, the consumer price index for all urban consumers (CPI-U) increased by 12.9% (or 2.5% annually), while labor productivity (output per hour in the business sector) increased by 12.1% (or 2.3% annually). U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, [stats.bls.gov] (as of January 24, 2003). For data on average hourly earnings of farmworkers, see CRS Report RL30395, *Farm Labor Shortages and Immigration Policy*, p. 13-15.

[31] The per capita income figures are calculated in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP). Using the prevailing exchange rate to convert per capita income measured in pesos into per capita income measured in dollars may not give a clear comparison of the standards of living in the United States and Mexico. PPP income provides a standard measure of real income in different countries. World Bank. *World Development Indicators 2001*. Washington D.C., 2001. p. 18-21. Available on the Internet at: [www.worldbank.org, in chapter 1, "World View"] (as of January 24, 2003).

[32] For a comparison of average earnings for male and female workers by level of education, see CRS Report 95-1081 E, *Education Matters: Earnings by Highest Year of Schooling Completed*, by Linda Levine. p. 1-2.

[33] According to Borjas et al., from 1980 to 1995 the increased supply of foreign-born workers with less than a high school education accounted for between 27% and 55% of the relative decline in the earnings of workers with less than a high school degree compared to

(continued...)

portion of persons in the agricultural labor force with less than a high school education are foreign-born. Thus, less educated prior immigrants may be one group whose wages are affected by the immigration of workers who have not finished high school.[34] In other words, increasingly, less educated immigrants may be competing with one another for jobs.

Occupation. Occupation is an important indicator of individual earnings. Workers in the agriculture industry are under-represented in managerial, professional, and technical occupations. In the agriculture industry, a greater share of native-born than foreign-born persons are employed in these occupations.

In 2001, 30.9% of persons in the total labor force were employed in "managerial and professional specialty" occupations, compared to 6.4% of persons in the agricultural labor force.[35] In the agriculture industry, 7.5% of native-born workers were employed in "managerial and professional specialty" occupations, compared to 1.5% of foreign-born workers.[36] Similarly, in 2001, 28.9% of persons in the total labor force were employed in "technical, sales, and administrative support" occupations, compared to 7.5% of persons in the agriculture industry.[37] Again, among agricultural workers, 9.0% of native-born workers were employed in these

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[33] (...continued)
workers who had graduated from high school. According to the same study, immigration accounted for between 3% and 7% of the decline in the earnings of high school graduates relative to the earnings of college graduates. Borjas, George J., Richard B. Freeman, and Lawrence F. Katz. How Much Do Immigration and Trade Affect Labor Market Outcomes? *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, no. 1, 1997. p. 62. For a discussion of this and other studies and of different approaches to studying the labor market effects of immigration, see CRS Report 95-408 E, *Immigration: The Effects on Native-Born Workers*, p. 5-15.

[34] Two different studies concluded that a 10% increase in the number of immigrants reduced the wages of immigrants by 4% and 2%, respectively. Smith, James P. and Barry Edmonston, Editors. *The New Americans: Economic, Demographic, and Fiscal Effects of Immigration*. Washington, National Academy Press, 1997. p. 142, 223. Another study indicated that in cities with large increases in the proportion of immigrants (between 1985 to 1990), immigration reduced the wages of laborers and lower-skilled service workers by no more than 3%. Card, David. Immigration Inflows, Native Outflows, and the Local Labor Market Impacts of Higher Immigration. *Journal of Labor Economics*, v. 19, 2001. p. 56-57.

[35] "Managerial and professional specialty" occupations include "executive, administrative, and managerial" occupations and "professional speciality" occupations. These two categories of occupations include jobs such as business executives, financial managers, hotel and restaurant managers, purchasing agents, and public administration officials as well as engineers, doctors, nurses, lawyers, and teachers.

[36] In 2001, the estimated number of Mexican-born agricultural workers in managerial occupations was fewer than 5,000. Therefore, the percentage of Mexican-born workers in managerial jobs was not calculated.

[37] "Technical, sales, and administrative support" occupations include the following categories: "technicians and related support occupations," "sales," and "administrative support." Technicians include lab technicians, x-ray technicians, licensed practical nurses, and computer programmers. "Administrative support" includes occupations such as secretaries, payroll clerks, shipping clerks, dispatchers, and computer operators.

occupations, compared to 1.3% of foreign-born workers and 0.8% of Mexican-born workers.

Compared to the overall economy, in the agriculture industry there are relatively fewer jobs in production, service, and operator occupations. In 2001, 1.3% of jobs in the agriculture industry were "precision production, craft, and repair" jobs, compared to 11.0% of jobs among all industries.[38] And 2.4% of jobs in the agriculture industry were "operator, fabricator, and laborer" occupations, compared to 13.1% of jobs in the overall economy.[39] Finally, in 2001, 0.3% of jobs in the agriculture industry were service jobs, compared to 13.7% of jobs in all industries.[40]

The distribution of occupations in the agriculture industry is affected by the disproportionate number of self-employed agricultural workers. In 2001, 82.1% of occupations in the agriculture industry were "farming, forestry, and fishing" occupations. These farming occupations include farmworker occupations such as harvest workers, migratory workers, farm hands, poultry dressers, and ranch hands. But they also include farm managers and supervisors. As noted above, in 2001, 37.4% of agricultural workers were self-employed. **Table 2** shows the effects of removing self-employed agricultural workers from the distribution of occupations. Removing self-employed persons from the calculations increases the percentage of managerial occupations in agriculture from 6.4% to 7.8% and reduces the percentage of farming occupations from 82.1% to 75.6%.

Median Earnings by Occupation. In competitive labor markets, relative earnings may change for different reasons. First, the supply of workers to an occupation may increase relative to the supply of workers to other occupations, in which case employment in that occupation will generally rise and earnings will generally fall relative to employment and earnings in other occupations. Second, the demand for workers in an occupation may increase relative to the demand for workers in other occupations, in which case both employment and earnings in that occupation will generally rise relative to other occupations. Third, relative earnings in an occupation may rise if labor productivity in that occupation increases relative to labor productivity in other occupations. Finally, relative earnings may change because of institutional or policy changes (e.g., a change in the degree of unionization or an increase in the minimum wage). In practice, all of these conditions may change simultaneously, but to a different degree, making it difficult to identify the exact causes of a change in the distribution of earnings.

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[38] "Precision production, craft, and repair" occupations include jobs such as automobile, truck, and farm equipment mechanics, telephone installers, brick layers, and carpenters.

[39] "Operators, fabricator, and laborer" occupations include the following categories: "machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors," "transportation and material moving occupations," and "handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers."

[40] "Service" occupations include jobs such as cooks, waiters and waitresses, nursing aides, janitors and cleaners, and family child care providers. Service occupations also include "protective service" and "private household" occupations. Protective service occupations include police officers, firefighters, and security guards. Private household occupations include child care workers, housekeepers, and cooks.

Table 2. Occupational Distribution: All Employed Workers and Agricultural Workers, Including and Excluding Self-Employed, 2001

Occupation	Including self-employed	Excluding self-employed
	A. Total employed	
Managerial and professional specialty	30.9%	30.8%
Technical, sales, and administrative support	28.9%	29.6%
Service occupations	13.7%	13.9%
Precision production, craft, and repair	11.0%	10.4%
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	13.1%	13.7%
Farming, forestry, and fishing	2.4%	1.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%
	B. Agricultural workers	
Managerial and professional specialty	6.4%	7.8%
Technical, sales, and administrative support	7.5%	10.4%
Service occupations	0.3%	0.5%
Precision production, craft, and repair	1.3%	2.0%
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	2.4%	3.8%
Farming, forestry, and fishing	82.1%	75.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Calculated by CRS from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS).

Note: Details may not add to totals because of rounding.

Table 3 shows median earnings by occupation for full-time wage and salary workers from 1996 to 2001 (self-employed workers and unpaid family members are excluded).[41] **Table 3** separates farmworker occupations from other farming occupations (i.e., the data for farming occupations exclude farmworker occupations, which are treated separately). For a discussion of the differences between farming and farmworker occupations, see the discussion in the section entitled "Occupation" above.

The analysis of data in **Table 3** is complicated by the small size of the employment estimates for service, precision production, and operator occupations in the agriculture industry. In these occupations, small changes in the number of persons employed result in large percentage changes in employment. Therefore, these occupations are not included in the analysis in this section of the report.

[41] **Table C2** in *Appendix C* shows median earnings by occupation for all wage and salary workers (i.e., both full-time and part-time workers).

Table 3. Median Weekly Earnings of Full-Time Wage and Salary Workers by Occupation, 1996-2001

	1996		1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	Number of workers (1000s)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (1000s)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (1000s)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (1000s)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (1000s)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (1000s)	Median weekly earnings
	A. All wage and salary workers											
All Workers	90,949	$481	93,613	$500	95,595	$520	97,616	$550	99,917	$576	99,555	$597
Managerial and professional specialty	27,225	$712	28,254	$742	29,304	$769	30,702	$800	31,455	$838	32,150	$865
Technical, sales, and administrative support	26,121	$442	26,797	$454	27,372	$479	27,386	$481	28,252	$500	28,143	$520
Service occupations	9,965	$300	10,184	$314	10,592	$326	10,837	$340	11,020	$358	11,156	$378
Precision production, craft, and repair	11,022	$540	11,497	$550	11,691	$570	11,926	$600	12,163	$600	12,054	$630
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	15,106	$395	15,341	$400	15,082	$406	15,182	$430	15,411	$441	14,559	$464
Farming, forestry, and fishing (excluding farmworkers)	914	$316	945	$318	954	$320	1,052	$356	1,027	$360	1,008	$378
Farmworkers	595	$260	595	$268	602	$277	531	$300	589	$300	485	$315
	B. Agricultural workers											
All Workers	1,342	$300	1,364	$300	1,406	$320	1,395	$345	1,501	$350	1,328	$365
Managerial and professional specialty	80	$577	75	$576	99	$621	98	$700	98	$730	93	$749
Technical, sales, and administrative support	107	$344	102	$346	107	$385	105	$385	99	$402	118	$428
Service occupations	17	$320	12	$320	13	$270	8	$342	6	$346	(a)	(a)
Precision production, craft, and repair	37	$425	31	$400	39	$420	34	$450	51	$410	29	$450
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	41	$340	73	$350	61	$346	60	$360	73	$375	65	$400
Farming, forestry, and fishing (excluding farmworkers)	471	$320	484	$310	487	$320	561	$350	591	$353	539	$375
Farmworkers	589	$260	588	$269	601	$277	527	$300	582	$300	480	$315

Source: Calculated by CRS from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS).

Note: Details may not add to totals because of rounding.

[a] The estimated number of persons is fewer than 5,000.

The data in Panel A of **Table 3** show that, from 1996 to 2001, employment of full-time wage and salary workers increased in all occupations except farmworker occupations. Median weekly earnings increased in all occupations. In all occupations, earnings increased more than employment.

In the agricultural industry, from 1996 to 2001, employment increased in the following occupational categories: managerial, technical, and farming occupations. Employment declined in farmworker occupations. In both 1996 and 2001 an estimated 1.3 million persons were employed in the agriculture industry. From 2000 to 2001, however, employment declined by an estimated 173,000. Most of this decline occurred among farmworkers (102,000) and farming occupations (52,000). As was the case with all industries, in the agricultural industry earnings in all occupations increased more than employment (recall that service, precision production, and operator occupations are not included in this analysis).[42]

Despite the decline in the employment of full-time wage and salary workers in agriculture from 2000 to 2001, from 1996 to 2000 full-time employment increased by an estimated 159,000. From 1996 to 2000 employment increased in managerial and farming occupations, but declined in technical occupations. Employment in farmworker occupations was essentially unchanged. Median weekly earnings increased in all occupations. These findings suggest different combinations of changes in labor supply, demand, and productivity. To some degree, labor productivity may have increased in all occupations. In addition, the results suggest that, in farmworker and technical occupations, the relative supply of and demand for labor were essentially unchanged. In managerial and farming occupations, the results suggest that both the supply of and demand for labor increased.

Interpreting the data in **Table 3** requires some caution. First, separating the effects of changes in relative supply and demand, changes in productivity, and institutional or policy changes is beyond the scope of this paper. Second, the broad categories of occupations include many specific occupations. Therefore, what is true for a number of occupations grouped together may not be true for specific occupations within that group. Third, the data in **Table 3** represent the entire United States. What is true for the nation as a whole may not be true for local labor markets in individual states or regions. For example, the overall demand for labor or the demand for particular skills may increase relative to supplies in one state or region, but the situation may be different in another state or region. Finally, **Table 3** shows median weekly earnings for full-time wage and salary workers. What is true for median earnings may not be true for earnings at the top or bottom of the earnings distribution. Similarly, what is true for full-time workers may not be true for full-time and part-time workers combined.

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[42] The data in **Table 3** are for full-time workers. Some full-time workers may have become part-time workers. **Table C2** in *Appendix C* shows that, compared to 2000, an estimated 78,000 fewer persons were employed in 2001 – compared to an estimated 362,000 fewer persons employed full-time. From 2000 to 2001, the number of persons employed in the agriculture industry declined by an estimated 175,000 persons – compared to a decline of 173,000 full-time workers. From 2000 to 2001, the number of farmworkers declined by approximately 121,000 – compared to a decline of 102,000 full-time farmworkers.

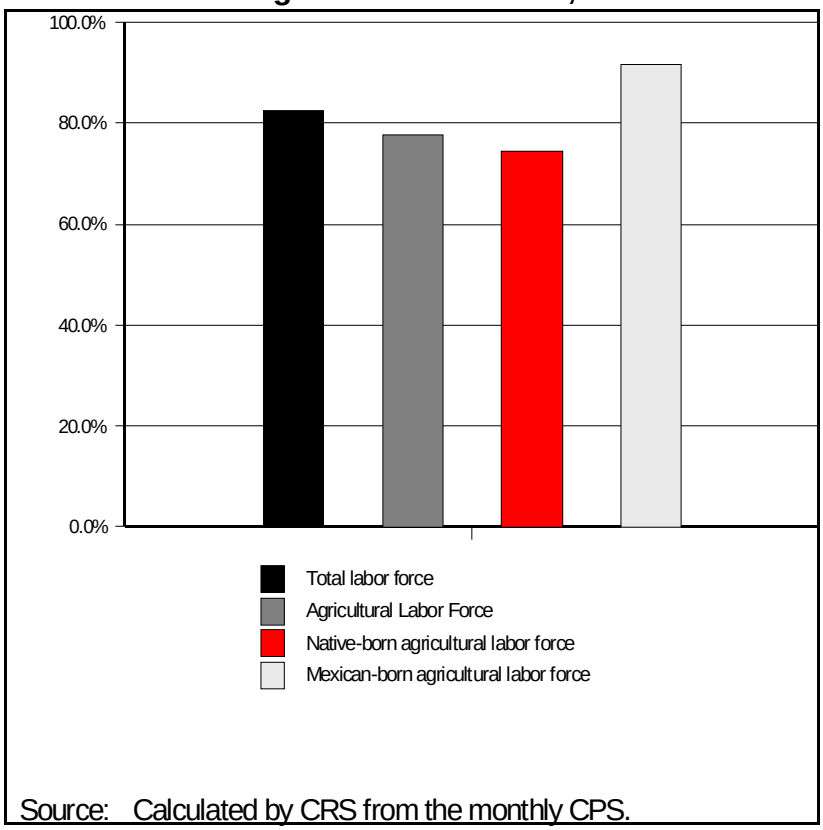
Union Membership. Agricultural workers are less likely than all workers to belong to a union or, if they are not members of a union, to be covered by a union or employee association contract. In 2001, 1.7% of agricultural workers were members of a union (2.1% were covered by a union contract), compared to 13.5% of all workers who were union members (14.8% of all workers were covered by a union contract).[43]

Full-Time and Part-Time Work. A common indicator in labor market analysis is the percentage of workers employed full-time. In this report, a full-time worker is someone who usually works 35 or more hours a week at all jobs.

Workers in the agriculture industry are somewhat less likely than all workers to work full time. Among workers in the agriculture industry, however, Mexican-born workers are more likely than native-born workers to work full time. In 2001, 77.7% of workers in the agriculture industry held full-time jobs, compared to 82.5% of all workers. Among workers in agriculture, 91.6% of Mexican-born workers were employed full-time, compared to 74.5% of native-born workers. (See **Figure 7**.)

[43] Evidence suggests that union workers in the United States receive wages that are approximately 10-20% higher than the wages of comparable nonunion workers. As noted above in the discussion of *The Distribution of Earnings*, in addition to relative changes in supply and demand, the degree of inequality may change because of policy or institutional changes. Unions may either reduce or increase earnings inequality. For example, if unions raise the wages of workers with above average wages, the effect of unions would be to increase inequality. Evidence indicates that unions do more to reduce than to increase inequality. Freeman, Richard B. How Much Has De-Unionization Contributed to the Rise in Male Earnings Inequality? In Danziger, Sheldon, and Peter Gottschalk, eds. *Uneven Tides: Rising Inequality in America*. New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1993. p. 139.

Figure 7. Full-Time Employment: Total Labor Force, Agricultural Labor Force, and Native-and Mexican-Born Agricultural Workers, 2001



Multiple Jobholders. Compared to the overall labor force, agricultural workers are less likely to hold multiple jobs. Among agricultural workers, foreign-born workers are less likely than native-born workers to hold more than one job. In 2001, 5.4% of all workers held more than one job, compared to 4.8% of workers in the agriculture industry. Among workers in the agriculture industry, 5.5% of native-born workers held multiple jobs, compared to 1.5% of foreign-born workers.[44]

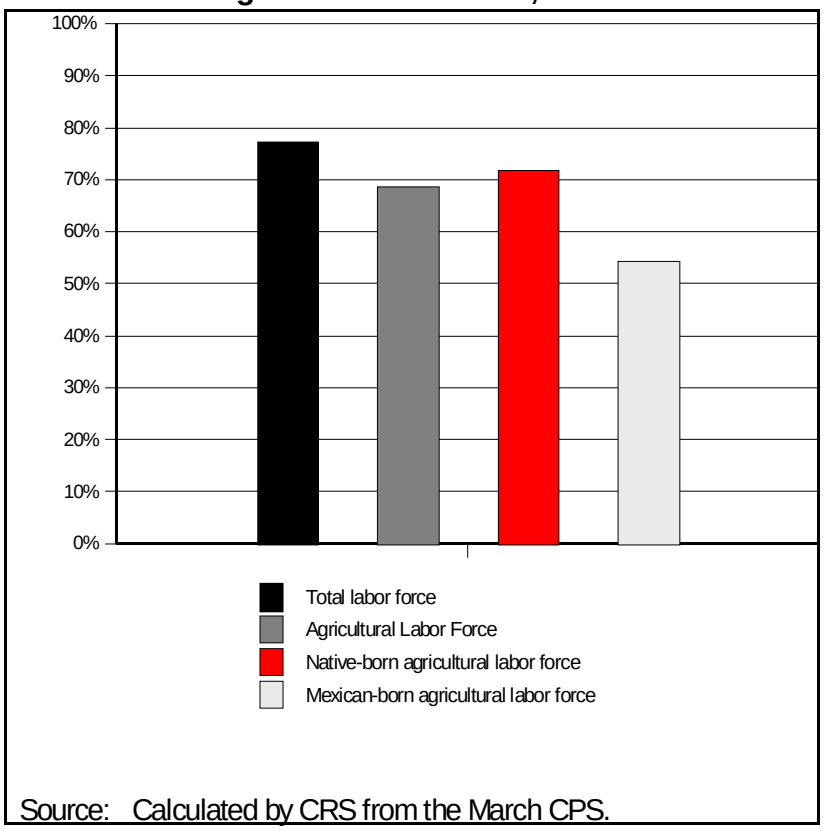
Other Indicators of Economic Well-Being

The previous findings in this report are from the monthly CPS. Each March, however, the CPS includes additional questions on the number of weeks worked, health insurance coverage, poverty status, and other questions about individual and family income. These questions gather information for the previous year. The final section of this report examines data from the March CPS for years 1997 to 2002 to provide additional information on the economic well-being of agricultural workers for the years 1996 to 2001.

[44] In 2001, the estimated number of Mexican-born agricultural workers holding multiple jobs was fewer than 5,000. Therefore, the percentage of multiple jobholders was not calculated.

Weeks Worked Annually. Family income is affected by individual hourly wages, the number of hours worked, the number of workers in a family, and the amount of income from sources other than the labor market. Annual income is affected by the number of weeks worked. **Figure 8** shows the percentage of workers who worked year-round in 2001. A year-round worker is someone who works at least 50 weeks during the year. During the year, a person who works year-round may work full-time, part-time, or both.

Figure 8. Percentage of the Labor Force Employed Year-Round: Total Labor Force, Agricultural Labor Force, and Native- and Mexican-Born Agricultural Workers, 2001



Source: Calculated by CRS from the March CPS.

Figure 8 shows that workers in the agriculture industry are less likely than workers in the total labor force to work year-round and that Mexican-born workers in the agriculture industry, are less likely than native-born workers to work year-round. In 2001, 68.8% of workers in the agriculture industry worked year-round, compared to 77.3% of workers in the economy as a whole. Among workers in the agriculture industry, 54.4% of Mexican-born workers worked year-round, compared to 71.9% of native-born workers.

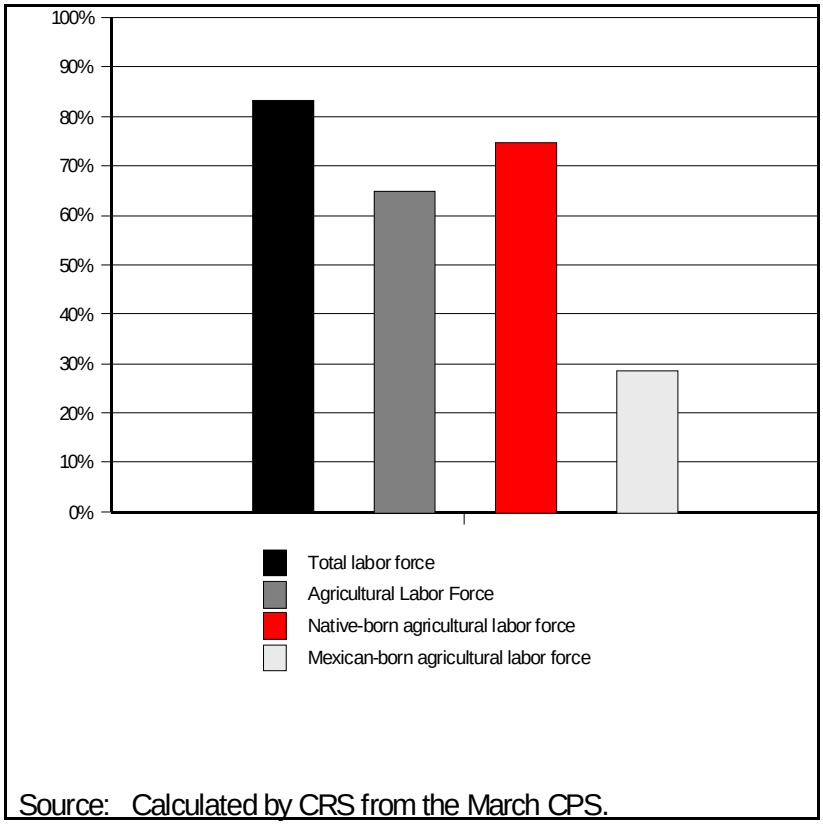
Reflecting the tightening national labor market from 1996 to 2000, the percentage of workers employed year-round increased in the overall economy as well as in the agriculture industry. Among all workers, the percentage of workers employed year-round increased from 74.6% to 78.4%. Among workers in the agriculture industry, the percentage of workers employed year-round increased from

66.3% to 70.5%. Reflecting the increase in unemployment from 2000 to 2001, the percentage of year-round workers declined from 78.4% to 77.3%. (Among agricultural workers, the percentage of year-round workers declined from 70.5% to 68.8%, but the change was not statistically significant.)

Health Insurance Coverage. **Figure 9** shows the percentage of persons in the labor force in 2001 who were covered by health insurance. Health insurance coverage includes employer-provided health insurance, privately purchased insurance, and insurance coverage under different public programs (e.g., Medicare Medicaid, veterans coverage, or other kinds of government coverage). An individual may be covered by more than one kind of insurance plan.

Compared to all workers, a smaller percentage of workers in the agriculture industry have health insurance coverage. Among workers in the agriculture industry, foreign-born and Mexican-born workers are less likely than native-born workers to have health insurance. In 2001, 83.1% of all persons in the labor force had health insurance, compared to 64.8% of agricultural workers. Among agricultural workers, 74.6% of native-born workers were covered, compared to 28.5% of Mexican-born workers.

Figure 9. Percentage of the Labor Force with Health Insurance: Total Labor Force, Agricultural Labor Force, and Native- and Mexican-Born Agricultural Labor Force, 2001

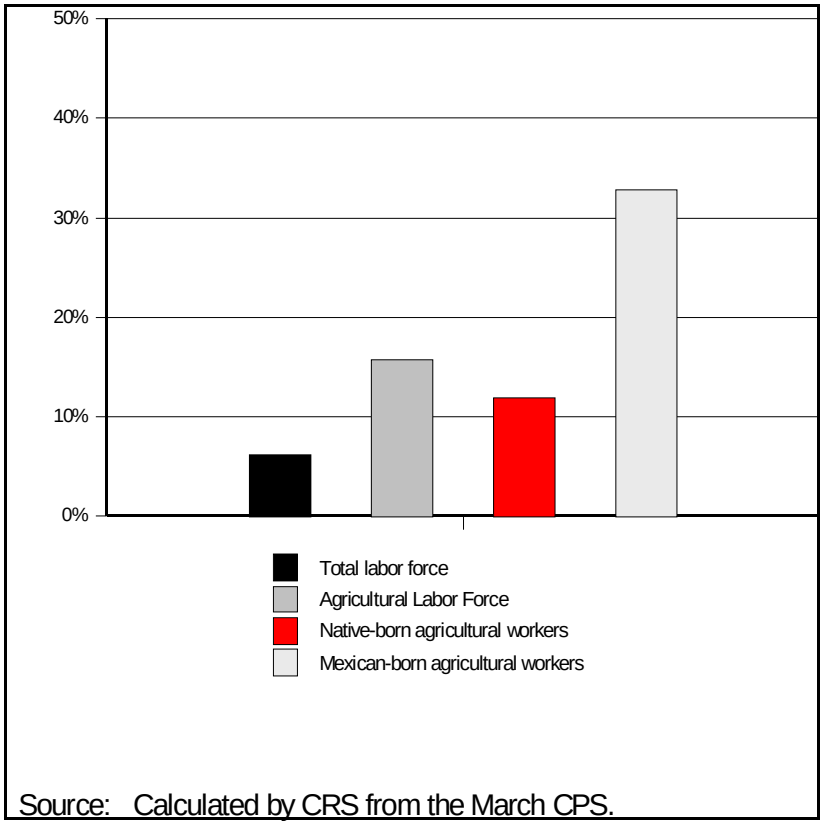


Source: Calculated by CRS from the March CPS.

Poverty. Finally, **Figure 10** shows the percentage of persons in the labor force with annual incomes below the official poverty thresholds. Under the official definition of poverty, a person is considered poor if his or her family money income is below the poverty threshold for that size family. Noncash benefits – such as food stamps, public housing, Medicare, and Medicaid – are not included in a family's money income.

Figure 10 shows that persons in the agriculture industry are more likely than all persons in the labor force to have annual incomes below the official poverty thresholds. Among workers in the agriculture industry, Mexican-born workers are more likely to live in poverty than native-born workers. In 2001, 15.8% of workers in the agriculture industry had annual incomes below the poverty threshold, compared to 6.2% of the total labor force. Among workers in agriculture, 32.8% of Mexican-born workers lived in families with incomes below the poverty thresholds, compared to 11.9% of native-born workers.

Figure 10. Percentage of the Labor Force below Poverty: Total Labor Force, Agricultural Labor Force, and Native- and Mexican-Born Agricultural Labor Force, 2001



Source: Calculated by CRS from the March CPS.

Appendix A: Data and Methodology

The analysis in this report is based on data from the Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is a monthly survey conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of the U.S. Department of Labor. The monthly CPS is the main source of labor force statistics for the nation, including data on monthly unemployment rates. The CPS collects a wide range of social, demographic, and labor market data, such as information on age, gender, race, level of education, family size and composition, marital status, occupation, industry, and earnings. Each month, about 59,000 households are interviewed, either in person or by phone. About 9,000 households are not eligible to be interviewed and about 3,200 are not interviewed. Thus, about 46,800 households are currently interviewed each month.

The monthly survey collects information for approximately 94,000 persons ages 15 and over. Each month one-fourth of the CPS sample is asked questions about current earnings. The CPS sample is representative of the civilian noninstitutional population; it does not include persons on active duty in the Armed forces or persons in institutions such as nursing homes or correctional facilities. The survey collects information on persons who are temporarily absent from a surveyed household and who have no other usual address. These persons include individuals who are on vacation, away on business, and college students. The survey includes civilian noninstitutional persons living in group quarters. (Group quarters are living quarters where residents share common facilities. Examples may include group homes, fraternities, or sororities.)[45]

The BLS defines the labor force as the sum of employed and unemployed persons. Unemployed persons are individuals who are not working but who are available and looking for work. Employed persons are individuals who are working for a private or public employer, are self-employed, or who work 15 hours or more per week as unpaid workers on a family farm or business. Also counted as employed are persons who are temporarily absent from work because of illness, bad weather, vacation, job training, labor-management dispute, childcare problems, maternity or paternity leave, or other family or personal reasons. BLS defines wage and salary workers as persons who work for a private or public employer and self-employed persons whose business is incorporated (i.e., these persons are paid employees of a corporation). Because BLS does not collect earnings information on self-employed persons, in this report wage and salary workers are individuals employed by private or public employers.[46]

Each March, the CPS includes a supplement to the basic questions. The supplement includes questions about individual and family income, sources of income, weeks worked, and health insurance coverage. These questions refer to the

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[45] U.S. Department of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Employment and Earnings,* v. 48, January 2001. p. 232, 241. U.S. Department of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Current Population Survey: Design and Methodology*. Technical Paper 63, March 2000. p. 1-1, 3-7-3-9, 5-4.

[46] Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Current Population Survey: Design and Methodology,* p. 5-3 – 5-5.

previous year. Thus, in this report, the information in **Figures 8 to 10** in the text and **Tables B11 to B13** in *Appendix B* for 1996-2001 are from the March supplements for 1997-2001. The sample for the March supplement includes military personnel who live in a household with at least one civilian adult.[47] The estimates from the March CPS for 2000 and 2001 use sample weights based on the 2000 decennial census.

In this report, the data shown from the basic monthly CPS are annual monthly averages. The monthly data for each year from 1996 to 2001 were combined to calculate annual monthly averages. The analysis in the report focuses on the labor market characteristics of persons age 15 and over who are in the labor force.

The CPS sample is weighted to represent the civilian noninstitutional population. Official BLS labor force statistics use a "composite" weight that is not available in the public use files for years before 1998. For consistency, this report uses a "final" weight for all years from 1996 through 2001. (A different weight is used for the analysis of earnings.) The difference in weights has a minimal effect on the percentage calculations in this report.

Beginning in January 1994, the monthly CPS began to ask households questions about citizenship; i.e., where individuals were born, how long they have lived in the United States, and whether foreign-born persons have become citizens. Because of uncertainty about the reliability of responses to these questions for 1994 and 1995, this report begins with data for 1996.

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[47] Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Current Population Survey: Design and Methodology*, p. 11-3.

Appendix B. Data Used in Analysis

This appendix provides the absolute numbers used to calculate the percentages discussed in the text of this report. The tables are presented in the same order as the discussion in the text.

Table B1. Size of the Total and Agricultural Labor Force, 1996-2001

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
	A. Total labor force (1000s)					
All Workers	134,713	137,079	138,856	140,289	141,811	142,642
Native-Born	120,268	121,651	122,662	123,710	124,042	124,126
Foreign-Born	14,445	15,428	16,194	16,579	17,769	18,516
Mexican-Born	3,887	4,278	4,618	4,537	4,948	5,208
	B. Agricultural labor force (1000s)					
Agricultural Workers	3,765	3,683	3,655	3,558	3,549	3,425
Native-Born	3,108	3,016	2,910	2,808	2,779	2,719
Foreign-Born	656	667	745	750	770	705
Mexican-Born	530	522	596	602	611	533

Source: Calculated by CRS from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS)

Notes: Estimates include both employed and unemployed persons in the labor force, ages 15 and over. Details may not add to totals because of rounding.

Table B2. Gender of Total and Agricultural Labor Force, 1996-2001

(in thousands)

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
	A. Total labor force					
All Workers						
Men	72,489	73,675	74,559	75,017	75,730	76,083
Women	62,224	63,404	64,297	65,272	66,081	66,559
Total	134,713	137,079	138,856	140,289	141,811	142,642
Native-Born						
Men	63,945	64,486	64,925	65,308	65,235	65,161
Women	56,323	57,165	57,738	58,402	58,807	58,966
Total	120,268	121,651	122,662	123,710	124,042	124,126
Foreign-Born						
Men	8,544	9,189	9,634	9,709	10,495	10,922
Women	5,901	6,239	6,559	6,869	7,274	7,594
Total	14,445	15,428	16,194	16,579	17,769	18,516
Mexican-Born						
Men	2,727	2,983	3,221	3,115	3,379	3,526
Women	1,160	1,295	1,397	1,423	1,568	1,682
Total	3,887	4,278	4,618	4,537	4,948	5,208
	B. Agricultural labor force					
Agricultural Workers						
Men	2,825	2,770	2,765	2,641	2,612	2,486
Women	940	913	890	917	937	939
Total	3,765	3,683	3,655	3,558	3,549	3,425
Native-Born						
Men	2,271	2,205	2,128	2,010	1,969	1,901
Women	838	811	782	798	810	818
Total	3,108	3,016	2,910	2,808	2,779	2,719
Foreign-Born						
Men	554	565	637	631	644	585
Women	102	102	108	119	127	120
Total	656	667	745	750	770	705
Mexican-Born						
Men	464	448	517	514	518	450
Women	66	74	78	88	92	83
Total	530	522	596	602	611	533

Source: Calculated by CRS from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS).

Notes: Estimates include both employed and unemployed persons in the labor force, ages 15 and over. Details may not add to totals because of rounding.

Table B3. Age Distribution of the Total and Agricultural Labor Force, 1996-2001

(in thousands)

Age	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
	A. Total labor force					
15-24	21,837	22,123	22,628	22,952	23,432	23,285
25-34	33,835	33,397	32,893	32,131	31,671	31,140
35-44	36,596	37,352	37,602	37,924	37,846	37,624
45-54	26,420	27,591	28,436	29,405	30,456	31,532
55-64	12,154	12,688	13,288	13,714	14,067	14,655
65 and over	3,871	3,927	4,009	4,162	4,340	4,407
Total	134,713	137,079	138,856	140,289	141,811	142,642
	B. Agricultural labor force					
15-24	710	706	736	689	647	631
25-34	813	775	765	696	687	616
35-44	858	850	836	828	826	812
45-54	605	590	617	611	620	619
55-64	422	427	408	434	445	442
65 and over	356	335	293	300	324	305
Total	3,765	3,683	3,655	3,558	3,549	3,425
	C. Native-Born agricultural labor force					
15-24	593	584	586	532	504	494
25-34	585	561	534	483	445	416
35-44	689	687	651	634	618	613
45-54	515	487	502	494	511	513
55-64	380	377	354	380	391	391
65 and over	346	320	283	284	309	291
Total	3,108	3,016	2,910	2,808	2,779	2,719
	D. Foreign-Born agricultural labor force					
15-24	117	122	150	157	143	138
25-34	228	215	230	213	241	199
35-44	170	163	185	193	208	199
45-54	90	103	116	117	109	105
55-64	41	50	54	53	53	51
65 and over	10	14	10	16	15	14
Total	656	667	745	750	770	705
	E. Mexican-Born agricultural labor force					
15-24	103	104	132	142	119	117
25-34	191	183	200	177	209	166
35-44	140	131	142	157	167	149
45-54	68	72	88	86	72	71
55-64	25	29	29	31	36	22
65 and over	(a)	(a)	(a)	9	8	8
Total	530	522	596	602	611	533

Source: Calculated by CRS from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS).

Notes: Estimates include both employed and unemployed persons in the labor force, ages 15 and over. Details may not add to totals because of rounding.

[a] The estimated number of persons is fewer than 5,000.

Table B4. Educational Attainment Among Persons in the Total and Agricultural Labor Force, 1996-2001

(in thousands)

Years of Education	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
	A. Total labor force					
8 Years or Less	5,104	5,151	5,061	4,983	5,137	5,003
9-12 Years [a]	14,179	14,412	14,812	14,388	14,291	14,255
High School	43,549	44,511	44,346	44,226	44,187	43,914
1-3 Years of College	37,985	38,211	38,529	39,354	40,196	40,714
Bachelors' Degree	22,887	23,555	24,339	25,121	25,610	26,026
Advanced Degree	11,010	11,239	11,768	12,216	12,391	12,731
Total	134,713	137,079	138,856	140,289	141,811	142,642
	B. Agricultural workers					
8 Years or Less	662	630	636	649	611	555
9-12 Years [a]	635	632	647	570	541	540
High School	1,275	1,246	1,239	1,165	1,193	1,157
1-3 Years of College	739	743	691	728	757	727
Bachelors' Degree	334	303	320	341	322	323
Advanced Degree	119	128	122	105	126	122
Total	3,765	3,683	3,655	3,558	3,549	3,425
	C. Native-Born agricultural workers					
8 Years or Less	254	236	207	206	176	157
9-12 Years [a]	533	519	512	438	411	403
High School	1,194	1,151	1,119	1,053	1,068	1,051
1-3 Years of College	705	708	656	687	703	693
Bachelors' Degree	311	283	302	328	304	301
Advanced Degree	111	117	114	97	116	114
Total	3,108	3,016	2,910	2,808	2,779	2,719
	D. Foreign-Born agricultural workers					
8 Years or Less	408	394	428	444	435	398
9-12 Years [a]	102	113	135	132	130	137
High School	81	95	120	113	125	107
1-3 Years of College	33	34	35	40	53	34
Bachelors' Degree	24	19	18	13	18	21
Advanced Degree	7	11	8	8	9	8
Total	656	667	745	750	770	705
	E. Mexican-Born agricultural workers					
8 Years or Less	373	344	382	389	377	340
9-12 Years [a]	74	89	105	105	104	101
High School	52	61	83	78	87	69
1-3 Years of College	20	19	19	26	32	18
Bachelors' Degree	10	6	(c)	(c)	8	(c)
Advanced Degree	(c)	(c)	(c)	(c)	(c)	(c)
Total	530	522	596	602	611	533

Source: Calculated by CRS from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS).

Note: Details may not add to totals because of rounding.

[a] Estimates include persons who completed 12 years of school but who have not received a diploma or GED.

[b] Estimates include persons with a GED.

[c] The estimated number of persons is fewer than 5,000.

Table B5. Class of Worker: Total and Agricultural Labor Force, 1996-2001

(in thousands)

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
	A. Total labor force					
Wage and Salary Workers	123,029	125,384	127,482	129,237	130,980	131,893
Self-Employed	10,815	10,845	10,605	10,355	10,166	10,078
Unpaid Family Member	195	182	153	146	146	142
Total	134,038	136,411	138,241	139,738	141,292	142,113
	B. Total agricultural labor force					
Wage and Salary Workers	2,136	2,116	2,223	2,178	2,237	2,110
Self-Employed	1,565	1,509	1,387	1,333	1,269	1,281
Unpaid Family Member	64	58	45	47	42	34
Total	3,765	3,683	3,655	3,558	3,549	3,425
	C. Native-Born agricultural labor force					
Wage and Salary Workers	1,579	1,534	1,552	1,513	1,542	1,496
Self-Employed	1,469	1,425	1,314	1,250	1,196	1,189
Unpaid Family Member	61	57	45	45	41	34
Total	3,108	3,016	2,910	2,808	2,779	2,719
	D. Foreign-Born agricultural labor force					
Wage and Salary Workers	557	582	671	665	696	614
Self-Employed	96	85	74	83	74	91
Unpaid Family Member	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)
Total	656	667	745	750	770	705
	E. Mexican-Born agricultural labor force					
Wage and Salary Workers	475	482	557	557	573	488
Self-Employed	54	40	39	44	37	45
Unpaid Family Member	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)
Total	530	522	596	602	611	533

Source: Calculated by CRS from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS)

Notes: Estimates include both employed and unemployed persons in the labor force, ages 15 and over. Details may not add to totals because of rounding. The estimates of the number of persons in the total force are not the same as labor force estimates in other tables because of missing data on class of worker.

[a] The estimated number of persons is fewer than 5,000.

Table B6. Number of Employed and Unemployed Persons in the Total and Agricultural Labor Force, 1996-2001

(in thousands)

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
	A. Total labor force					
All Workers						
Employed	127,262	130,125	132,459	134,236	135,957	135,702
Unemployed	7,452	6,954	6,397	6,053	5,854	6,940
Total	134,713	137,079	138,856	140,289	141,811	142,642
Native-Born						
Employed	113,831	115,654	117,134	118,459	118,954	118,175
Unemployed	6,437	5,997	5,529	5,251	5,089	5,952
Total	120,268	121,651	122,662	123,710	124,042	124,126
Foreign-Born						
Employed	13,430	14,471	15,325	15,777	17,003	17,528
Unemployed	1,015	957	868	802	766	988
Total	14,445	15,428	16,194	16,579	17,769	18,516
Mexican-Born						
Employed	3,513	3,964	4,318	4,273	4,677	4,865
Unemployed	374	313	301	265	271	343
Total	3,887	4,278	4,618	4,537	4,948	5,208
	B. Agricultural labor force					
Agricultural Workers						
Employed	3,512	3,462	3,452	3,346	3,360	3,203
Unemployed	252	221	203	212	189	222
Total	3,765	3,683	3,655	3,558	3,549	3,425
Native-Born						
Employed	2,950	2,860	2,770	2,681	2,667	2,588
Unemployed	159	156	140	127	112	131
Total	3,108	3,016	2,910	2,808	2,779	2,719
Foreign-Born						
Employed	563	602	683	665	693	615
Unemployed	93	65	62	85	77	90
Total	656	667	745	750	770	705
Mexican-Born						
Employed	449	468	544	533	545	456
Unemployed	81	53	52	68	65	77
Total	530	522	596	602	611	533

Source: Calculated by CRS from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS).

Notes: Estimates include both employed and unemployed persons in the labor force, ages 15 and over. Details may not add to totals because of rounding.

Table B7. Occupations of Employed Total and Agricultural Workers, 1996-2001

(in thousands)

Occupation	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
	A. Total employed					
Managerial and professional specialty	36,538	37,740	39,073	40,554	40,974	41,884
Technical, sales, and administrative support	37,802	38,428	38,794	39,132	39,649	39,250
Service occupations	17,382	17,767	18,154	18,170	18,568	18,619
Precision production, craft, and repair	13,622	14,155	14,461	14,614	14,897	14,862
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	18,272	18,449	18,388	18,264	18,408	17,780
Farming, forestry, and fishing	3,645	3,587	3,588	3,502	3,460	3,308
Total	127,262	130,125	132,459	134,236	135,957	135,702
	B. Agricultural workers					
Managerial and professional specialty	195	206	215	216	211	204
Technical, sales, and administrative support	234	226	211	218	222	240
Service occupations	29	25	21	15	16	10
Precision production, craft, and repair	40	34	39	36	54	41
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	59	87	82	77	90	77
Farming, forestry, and fishing	2,956	2,885	2,884	2,783	2,767	2,630
Total	3,512	3,462	3,452	3,346	3,360	3,203
	C. Native-Born agricultural workers					
Managerial and professional specialty	179	194	197	199	204	195
Technical, sales, and administrative support	228	222	205	210	208	232
Service occupations	24	21	16	13	11	7
Precision production, craft, and repair	30	25	25	25	40	30
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	51	64	53	59	70	56
Farming, forestry, and fishing	2,438	2,336	2,273	2,174	2,135	2,068
Total	2,950	2,860	2,770	2,681	2,667	2,588
	D. Foreign-Born agricultural workers					
Managerial and professional specialty	16	12	18	17	7	9
Technical, sales, and administrative support	5	(a)	6	8	14	8
Service occupations	5	(a)	(a)	(a)	5	(a)
Precision production, craft, and repair	10	9	14	11	14	11
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	8	23	29	18	20	22
Farming, forestry, and fishing	517	549	611	609	632	562
Total	563	602	683	665	693	615
	E. Mexican-Born agricultural workers					
Managerial and professional specialty	7	(a)	6	(a)	(a)	(a)
Technical, sales, and administrative support	(a)	(a)	(a)	5	7	(a)
Service occupations	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)
Precision production, craft, and repair	8	5	8	9	12	6
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	8	22	22	14	18	17
Farming, forestry, and fishing	422	433	501	500	501	424
Total	449	468	544	533	545	456

Source: Calculated by CRS from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS).

Note: Details may not add to totals because of rounding.

[a] The estimated number of persons is fewer than 5,000.

Table B8. Union Membership and Union Coverage Among Agricultural and All Workers, 1996-2001

(in thousands)

	1996		1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	A. Union membership											
	1. All wage and salary workers											
	Member	Total Employed	Member	Total Employed	Member	Total Employed	Member	Total Employed	Member	Total Employed	Member	Total Employed
All Workers	16,274	112,360	16,118	114,918	16,211	116,730	16,477	118,963	16,258	120,786	16,289	120,708
Native-Born	14,830	100,457	14,611	102,086	14,737	103,185	14,910	104,981	14,600	105,486	14,573	104,976
Foreign-Born	1,445	11,902	1,506	12,832	1,474	13,545	1,566	13,982	1,658	15,299	1,716	15,732
Mexican-Born	309	3,280	291	3,708	318	3,977	325	4,039	370	4,430	356	4,612
	2. Agricultural workers											
Agricultural	32	1,746	36	1,719	27	1,752	43	1,735	38	1,846	28	1,671
Native-Born	13	1,299	21	1,176	12	1,194	20	1,195	21	1,220	15	1,142
Foreign-Born	19	447	16	544	15	558	22	540	17	626	14	530
Mexican-Born	14	391	11	462	10	461	15	451	11	518	10	422
	B. Union coverage											
	1. All wage and salary workers											
	Covered	Total Employed	Covered	Total Employed	Covered	Total Employed	Covered	Total Employed	Covered	Total Employed	Covered	Total Employed
All Workers	18,164	112,360	17,932	114,918	17,918	116,730	18,182	118,963	17,944	120,786	17,878	120,708
Foreign-Born	16,542	100,457	16,245	102,086	16,282	103,185	16,421	104,981	16,104	105,486	15,991	104,976
Native-Born	1,622	11,902	1,688	12,832	1,636	13,545	1,761	13,982	1,840	15,299	1,887	15,732
Mexican-Born	344	3,280	332	3,708	351	3,977	368	4,039	406	4,430	394	4,612
	2. Agricultural workers											
Agricultural	37	1,746	40	1,719	32	1,752	48	1,735	46	1,846	34	1,671
Foreign-Born	17	1,299	22	1,176	16	1,194	25	1,195	25	1,220	17	1,142
Native-Born	20	447	18	544	16	558	23	540	21	626	17	530
Mexican-Born	15	391	12	462	10	461	16	451	13	518	14	422

Source: Calculated by CRS from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS).

Notes: Union members are wage and salary workers who belong to a labor union or an employee association similar to a union. Covered workers include union members as well as workers who are not union members but whose jobs are covered by a union or an employee association contract.

Table B9. Number of Full-Time and Part-Time Employed Total and Agricultural Workers, 1996-2001

(in thousands)

	1996			1997			1998			1999			2000			2001		
	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Total
	A. Total employed																	
All Workers	103,620	23,642	127,262	106,392	23,734	130,125	108,572	23,886	132,459	110,450	23,786	134,236	112,447	23,510	135,957	111,949	23,753	135,702
Native-Born	92,168	21,663	113,831	93,957	21,697	115,654	95,347	21,787	117,134	96,755	21,705	118,459	97,556	21,398	118,954	96,630	21,545	118,175
Foreign-Born	11,451	1,979	13,430	12,434	2,037	14,471	13,225	2,100	15,325	13,696	2,081	15,777	14,890	2,113	17,003	15,320	2,208	17,528
Mexican-Born	3,078	435	3,513	3,497	467	3,964	3,815	503	4,318	3,826	447	4,273	4,215	462	4,677	4,344	521	4,865
	B. Agricultural workers																	
Agricultural Workers	2,629	883	3,512	2,618	844	3,462	2,644	809	3,452	2,558	788	3,346	2,607	753	3,360	2,487	715	3,203
Native-Born	2,127	823	2,950	2,082	779	2,860	2,018	751	2,770	1,956	725	2,681	1,970	697	2,667	1,929	659	2,588
Foreign-Born	502	60	563	536	66	602	626	57	683	602	63	665	637	56	693	559	56	615
Mexican-Born	406	43	449	427	41	468	507	37	544	490	43	533	503	42	545	417	38	456

Source: Calculated by CRS from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS).

Note: Details may not add to totals because of rounding.

Table B10. Number of Employed Total and Agricultural Workers Who are Multiple Jobholders, 1996-2001

(in thousands)

	1996		1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	Multiple Jobholders	Total Jobholders	Multiple Jobholders	Total Jobholders	Multiple Jobholders	Total Jobholders	Multiple Jobholders	Total Jobholders	Multiple Jobholders	Total Jobholders	Multiple Jobholders	Total Jobholders
	A. Total employed											
All Workers	8,078	127,262	8,201	130,125	7,962	132,459	7,827	134,236	7,577	135,957	7,311	135,702
Native-Born	7,553	113,831	7,622	115,654	7,383	117,134	7,254	118,459	6,992	118,954	6,712	118,175
Foreign-Born	525	13,430	580	14,471	579	15,325	572	15,777	585	17,003	600	17,528
Mexican-Born	85	3,513	100	3,964	100	4,318	95	4,273	111	4,677	113	4,865
	B. Agricultural workers											
Agricultural Workers	177	3,512	180	3,462	161	3,452	164	3,346	163	3,360	153	3,203
Native-Born	166	2,950	173	2,860	155	2,770	157	2,681	153	2,667	143	2,588
Foreign-Born	11	563	7	602	7	683	7	665	10	693	9	615
Mexican-Born	6	449	(a)	468	(a)	544	(a)	533	(a)	545	(a)	456

Source: Calculated by CRS from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS).

Note: Details may not add to totals because of rounding.

[a] The estimated number of persons is fewer than 5,000.

Table B11. Annual Weeks Worked Among Persons in the Total and Agricultural Labor Force, 1996-2001

(in thousands)

Weeks Worked	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
	A. Total labor force					
0-9 Weeks	7,618	7,293	6,858	7,044	6,573	7,314
10-19 Weeks	3,997	3,863	3,640	3,648	3,332	3,460
20-29 Weeks	6,011	6,000	5,518	5,622	5,450	5,780
30-39 Weeks	5,833	5,718	5,575	5,261	5,293	5,688
40-49 Weeks	11,004	10,638	10,278	10,458	10,356	10,612
50-52 Weeks	101,246	103,920	106,733	108,873	113,090	111,624
Total	135,709	137,432	138,602	140,904	144,094	144,478
	B. Agricultural labor force					
0-9 Weeks	340	271	305	299	310	343
10-19 Weeks	133	135	102	108	77	111
20-29 Weeks	178	179	209	200	236	176
30-39 Weeks	214	182	188	194	141	187
40-49 Weeks	304	273	275	292	237	238
50-52 Weeks	2,300	2,171	2,270	2,317	2,383	2,322
Total	3,470	3,209	3,350	3,409	3,384	3,376
	C. Native-Born agricultural labor force					
0-9 Weeks	250	234	249	234	211	256
10-19 Weeks	105	77	87	80	49	91
20-29 Weeks	130	119	144	133	140	117
30-39 Weeks	132	125	122	113	90	116
40-49 Weeks	200	181	190	199	164	145
50-52 Weeks	1,953	1,799	1,847	1,877	1,897	1,856
Total	2,769	2,535	2,639	2,637	2,551	2,581
	D. Foreign-Born agricultural labor force					
0-9 Weeks	90	36	57	65	99	87
10-19 Weeks	29	58	15	28	28	20
20-29 Weeks	48	60	65	68	96	59
30-39 Weeks	82	56	66	80	52	71
40-49 Weeks	104	92	85	92	73	92
50-52 Weeks	348	371	423	439	486	466
Total	701	674	711	773	834	795
	E. Mexican-Born agricultural labor force					
0-9 Weeks	83	28	33	53	78	77
10-19 Weeks	21	33	15	26	21	16
20-29 Weeks	39	51	54	56	78	46
30-39 Weeks	63	50	42	74	45	65
40-49 Weeks	84	75	70	82	67	82
50-52 Weeks	276	276	319	352	399	343
Total	566	514	535	643	687	630

Source: Calculated by CRS from the March Current Population Survey (CPS).

Note: Details may not add to totals because of rounding.

Table B12. Number of Persons in the Total and Agricultural Labor Force With and Without Health Insurance, 1996-2001

(in thousands)

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
	A. Total labor force					
With Health Insurance	112,271	112,620	113,848	116,578	120,704	120,053
Without Health Insurance	23,438	24,812	24,754	24,326	23,390	24,425
Total	135,709	137,432	138,602	140,904	144,094	144,478
	B. Total agricultural labor force					
With Health Insurance	2,361	2,077	2,190	2,353	2,252	2,188
Without Health Insurance	1,109	1,132	1,160	1,056	1,132	1,188
Total	3,470	3,209	3,350	3,409	3,384	3,376
	C. Native-Born agricultural labor force					
With Health Insurance	2,117	1,860	1,952	2,066	1,973	1,926
Without Health Insurance	652	675	687	570	577	655
Total	2,769	2,535	2,639	2,637	2,551	2,581
	D. Foreign-Born agricultural labor force					
With Health Insurance	244	217	238	287	279	262
Without Health Insurance	457	457	473	486	555	533
Total	701	674	711	773	834	795
	E. Mexican-Born agricultural labor force					
With Health Insurance	175	142	165	222	199	180
Without Health Insurance	391	372	370	421	489	450
Total	566	514	535	643	687	630

Source: Calculated by CRS from the March Current Population Survey (CPS).

Note: Details may not add to totals because of rounding.

Table B13. Number of Persons in the Total and Agricultural Labor Force Below the Official Poverty Level, 1996-2001

(in thousands)

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
	A. Total labor force					
Below Poverty Level	9,814	9,724	9,373	9,192	8,461	9,020
At or Above Poverty Level	125,895	127,708	129,228	131,712	135,632	135,458
Total	135,709	137,432	138,602	140,904	144,094	144,478
	B. Total agricultural labor force					
Below Poverty Level	563	482	593	541	471	533
At or Above Poverty Level	2,907	2,727	2,756	2,868	2,913	2,843
Total	3,470	3,209	3,350	3,409	3,384	3,376
	C. Native-Born agricultural labor force					
Below Poverty Level	288	316	421	309	267	308
At or Above Poverty Level	2,481	2,218	2,218	2,327	2,283	2,273
Total	2,769	2,535	2,639	2,637	2,551	2,581
	D. Foreign-Born agricultural labor force					
Below Poverty Level	275	165	172	232	204	225
At or Above Poverty Level	426	509	539	541	630	569
Total	701	674	711	773	834	795
	E. Mexican-Born agricultural labor force					
Below Poverty Level	231	139	146	206	189	207
At or Above Poverty Level	335	375	388	437	498	423
Total	566	514	535	643	687	630

Source: Calculated by CRS from the March Current Population Survey (CPS).

Note: Details may not add to totals because of rounding.

Appendix C. Median Weekly Earnings of All Wage and Salary Workers

Table C1 shows median weekly earnings of all full-time and part-time adult wage and salary workers, in contrast to **Table 2**, which shows the median weekly earnings of wage and salary workers employed full-time. Similarly, **Table C2** shows median weekly earnings of all full-time and part-time workers by occupation.

Table C1. Median Weekly Earnings of Wage and Salary Workers: All Workers and Agricultural Workers, Native-Born, Foreign-Born, and Mexican-Born, 1996-2001

	1996		1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	Number of workers (1000s)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (1000s)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (1000s)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (1000s)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (1000s)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (1000s)	Median weekly earnings
	A. All workers											
All Workers	112,360	$415	114,918	$433	116,730	$460	118,954	$480	120,786	$500	120,708	$515
Native-Born	100,457	$425	102,086	$444	103,185	$470	104,977	$481	105,486	$500	104,976	$530
Foreign-Born	11,902	$344	12,832	$350	13,545	$365	13,977	$400	15,299	$400	15,732	$420
Mexican-Born	3,280	$270	3,708	$280	3,977	$300	4,038	$300	4,430	$320	4,612	$338
	B. Agricultural workers											
Agricultural Workers	1,746	$260	1,719	$274	1,752	$280	1,735	$300	1,846	$315	1,671	$330
Native-Born	1,299	$269	1,176	$280	1,194	$300	1,195	$320	1,220	$338	1,142	$350
Foreign-Born	447	$250	544	$258	558	$272	540	$288	626	$280	530	$300
Mexican-Born	391	$250	462	$250	461	$270	451	$280	518	$280	422	$300

Source: Calculated by CRS from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS).

Note: Details may not add to totals because of rounding.

Table C2. Median Weekly Earnings of All Wage and Salary Workers by Occupation, 1996-2001

	1996		1997		1998		1999		2000			
	Number of workers (1000s)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (1000s)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (1000s)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (1000s)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (1000s)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (1000s)	Median weekly earnings
	A. All wage and salary workers											
All Workers	112,360	$415	114,918	$433	116,730	$460	118,954	$480	120,786	$500	120,708	$515
Managerial and professional specialty	30,958	$673	31,957	$692	33,102	$712	34,691	$750	35,378	$769	36,192	$800
Technical, sales, and administrative support	34,280	$368	34,891	$384	35,379	$400	35,511	$410	36,124	$440	35,959	$450
Service occupations	16,080	$231	16,387	$240	16,594	$254	16,826	$270	16,953	$280	17,172	$300
Precision production, craft, and repair	11,622	$520	12,076	$533	12,274	$554	12,472	$577	12,716	$600	12,658	$600
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	17,483	$359	17,673	$365	17,443	$384	17,514	$400	17,642	$400	16,883	$420
Farming, forestry, and fishing (excluding farmworkers)	1,157	$277	1,188	$280	1,195	$288	1,277	$320	1,242	$320	1,238	$340
Farmworkers	780	$238	746	$240	743	$250	663	$275	732	$280	608	$280
	B. Agricultural workers											
All Workers	1,746	$260	1,719	$274	1,752	$280	1,735	$300	1,846	$315	1,671	$330
Managerial and professional specialty	97	$511	86	$500	107	$621	109	$673	115	$673	114	$673
Technical, sales, and administrative support	165	$280	158	$280	162	$320	170	$300	158	$315	190	$333
Service occupations	22	$295	20	$250	25	$245	14	$270	14	$210	6	$315
Precision production, craft, and repair	42	$400	31	$400	40	$420	35	$450	56	$400	33	$440
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	50	$320	81	$325	71	$320	69	$340	82	$360	70	$383
Farming, forestry, and fishing (excluding farmworkers)	597	$280	605	$280	605	$286	682	$315	700	$320	656	$346
Farmworkers	772	$240	738	$240	741	$250	657	$275	723	$280	602	$280

Source: Calculated by CRS from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS).

Note: Details may not add to totals because of rounding.