

My Neighbors

Hired Farm Work Force Up in 1972



The 1972 hired farm work force, which totaled 2.8 million persons, climbed 7 percent from a year earlier, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports. This marks the second year in a row that the farm work force has increased, following 3 years of steady decline.

The Department based its figures on a study of the hired farm work force prepared by

USDA's Economic Research Service in cooperation with the Bureau of the Census. It included persons 14 years of age and older who did some farm work for cash during 1972.

The increase was caused in part, USDA said, by 1972's overall high level of production, plus increases in farm exports and farm prices. These developments caused farmers to hire the extra labor they needed, and to stabilize their work force in preparation for 1973.

"Casual" workers—those doing less than 25 days of farmwork—numbered 1.1 million a decline of 61,000 from 1971. This is in contrast to 1971's gain of 100,000 "casuals." The "noncasuals"—those doing 25 days or more of farmwork—numbered 1.7 million in 1972, 320,000 more than in 1971, and accounted for most of the farm labor force increase.

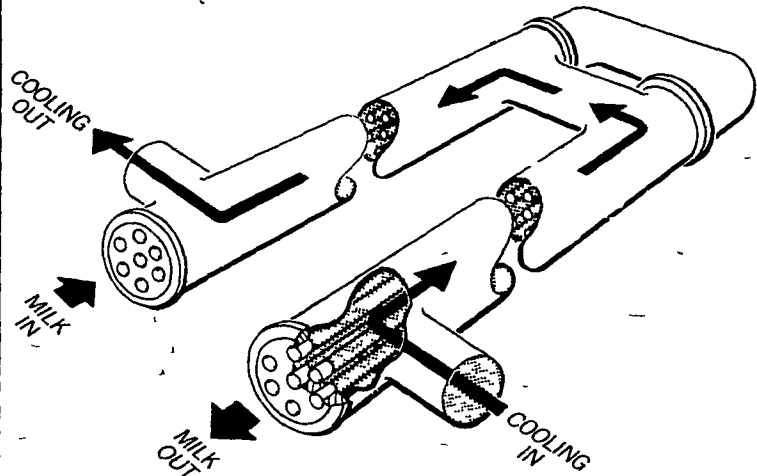
The typical farmworker in 1972 was 23, white, male, and did not live on a farm. He put in 88 days of farmwork, for which he earned an average of \$1,160 in cash wages, or \$13.20 a day. Only 24 percent listed farm wagework as their main occupation. About 7 percent were domestic migrant workers, an increase of 7 percent from 1971 and a reversal of the decline since 1965.

A copy of "The Hired Farm Working Force of 1972," AER 239, is available free on postcard (please include zip code) or telephone (447-7255) request from the Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

Pillars of Hercules

The Pillars of Hercules were not mountains, but the two opposite promontaries, in Europe and in Africa, at the eastern end of the Strait of Gibraltar. Their modern names are Rock of Gibraltar and Jebel Musa.

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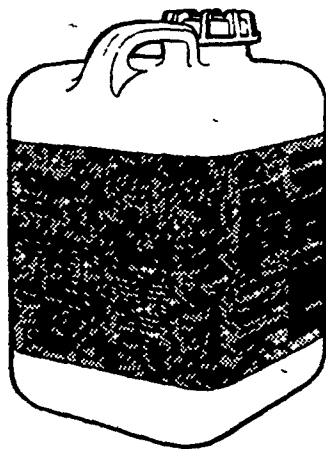


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ED ESHLEMAN'S WASHINGTON REPORT

By closing 274 military bases, the Nixon Administration showed that it is completely serious about including defense spending in its program of budget cuts.

One of the things I have been calling for in the area of spending cutbacks is for a 5 percent reduction in military expenditures by trimming out waste. Obsolete bases and facilities have been high on my list of defense fat which needs to be eliminated.

The reason why closing obsolete bases is vital to cutting military spending is because it means that there will be substantial personnel reductions. This is not to say that we should gloat over people losing their jobs, but the simple fact is that the greatest portion of the \$80 billion defense budget is made up of salaries. Until you are willing to eliminate jobs, both military and civilian, you cannot expect to achieve meaningful cuts in military budgets.

Pennsylvania did pretty well in the present reduction program. Overall, our State stands to gain rather than lose jobs since the Philadelphia Navy Yard will be picking up many of the functions now assigned to the Boston Navy Yard. Other defense installations in Pennsylvania also are taking over functions now carried out in other areas.

But because we made out well this time does not mean that the next cutback will not affect us. And, it seems to me that it is reasonable to expect more such reductions in the future.

What should be our reaction if the reductions do begin to hit closer to home? The question really is one of whether people

are serious when they say that they want to see less money go to the so-called military-industrial complex.

It is somewhat disturbing to see and hear the same politicians, who several months ago were calling the military-industrial complex a threat to our Nation, now crying the blues because defense installations in their State or District are being shut down. You cannot have it both ways. Either you are for cutting back on our national expenditures for defense and are willing to live with the consequences of such cuts, or you are not willing to suffer the consequences and therefore must be satisfied with the defense program as is, waste and all.

Some people, of course, are concerned that closing down these bases will reduce our defense muscle. I am convinced it will not. The 5 percent figure I have talked about is not something lightly taken. It is a figure that represents a reasonable reduction in defense spending that will not affect our defense strength.

The President has tried to make it clear that he does not intend to jeopardize the military muscle which has given us the strength to negotiate successfully with our adversaries in the world. But by closing the 274 obsolete installations, he has also shown that he does not intend to let unneeded military costs go untouched in his attempts to control the budget. The President deserves our support in trying to achieve both goals without sacrificing either.



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