

Census Shows Farm Workers Up

For the second year in a row, the number of paid farm workers has gone up—reaching 2.8 million in 1972.

The reason? Overall high production last year, plus stepped-up farm exports and higher farm prices. This, reports the USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS), created the need for more labor in '72 and encouraged farmers to stabilize their work force for '73.

From the annual Census

survey of the hired farm working force - those 14 years of age or older who did some farm work for wages during the year - ERS found:

Most workers were young, with a median age of 23. . .most were white - 85 percent. . . 3 out of 4 were male. . .and nearly 3 out of 4 were nonfarm residents.

They averaged 88 days of farm wagework a year at \$13.20 a day, totaling \$1,160 for the year.

Fewer than a fourth of the hired farm working force was engaged chiefly in farm work for a living. Of those who were, 367,000, were year-round workers and were the most fully employed and the highest paid, averaging 306 days of farm wagework for which they earned \$4,358.

More than half were not in the labor force most of the year. These were primarily housewives and students.

Some 184,000 persons - about 7 percent of the total hired farm working force - were domestic migratory workers. The increase over 1971's 172,000 persons marked the first rise in nearly 10 years.

Regionally, 41 percent of the hired farm working force lived in the South, 8 percent in the Northeast, 26 percent in the North Central States, and 25 percent in the West.

Of the 2.8 million paid farm workers, nearly 1.6 million did farm wagework only, about 32,000 more than in 1971.

ERS compared averages for 1967-69 and 1970-72 and found:

The total number of persons doing farm work for wages had gone down more than 8 percent.

There were nearly 7 percent fewer workers putting in 250 or

Comfort Big Selling Point For Soft Contact Lenses

Soft contact lenses, one of the latest developments in the eye-care field, are somewhat of an enigma

"The very characteristics that make soft contact lenses so comfortable also make them very susceptible to damage and contamination," says Dr. John F. Schwartz, president of the Pennsylvania Optometric Association

Dr. Schwartz noted that soft lenses sometimes are called gel lenses or wet lenses and said he "just wanted to set the record straight" on the "hydrophilic" lens as they are called in the optometric profession.

"Much of the information patients hear about this type lens is not true," Dr. Schwartz said "Although the hydrophilic lens is quite an advancement, it is not a

more days of farm work for wages; 5 percent fewer in the 75- to 249-day bracket; and nearly 11 percent fewer workers putting in less than 75 days

Total man-days of farm wagework declined by nearly 8 percent.

cure-all for all contact lens problems."

Dr. Schwartz noted, for instance, that soft lenses must not be worn by some patients who have certain types of astigmatism and this type lens should not be used while swimming because they can become contaminated by the chlorine water they absorb and hold against the cornea of the eye. In addition, they do have a shorter life expectancy than the "non-flexible" lens

"However," he added, "there are many benefits which the soft lens offers."

Primarily, he said, there is evidence that the soft lens causes very little lid sensation, even on the first day of wear, a traditionally difficult day for the new lens-wearer.

Also, he pointed out, few soft lens wearers experience what is known as "spectacle blur," a condition common to those who wear glasses immediately after removing "non-flexible" contact lenses.

"One other factor which tends to make the soft lens a worthwhile investment," Dr. Schwartz said, "is that there is less danger involved in over-wearing them."

But, Dr. Schwartz concluded, "the best single advantage inherent in the soft lens is comfort

"There just isn't anything like the soft lens for comfort," he said, "and this one very important matter, for many wearers, is enough to convince many people that the added cost is well worth the investment."

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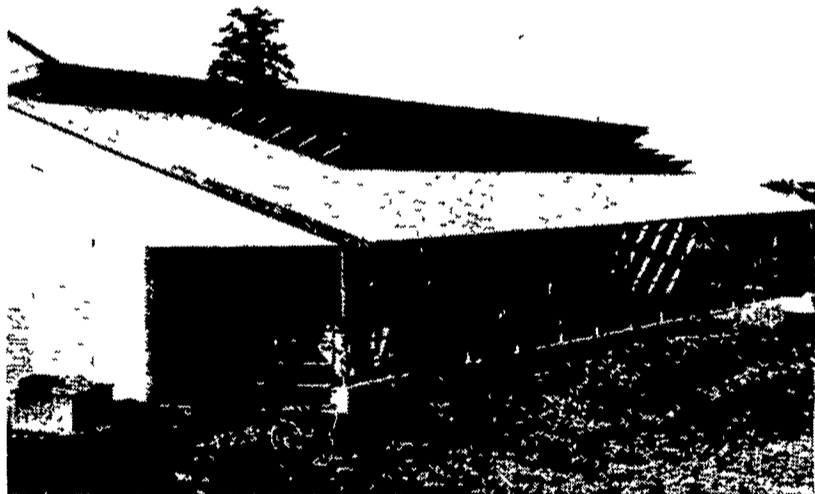
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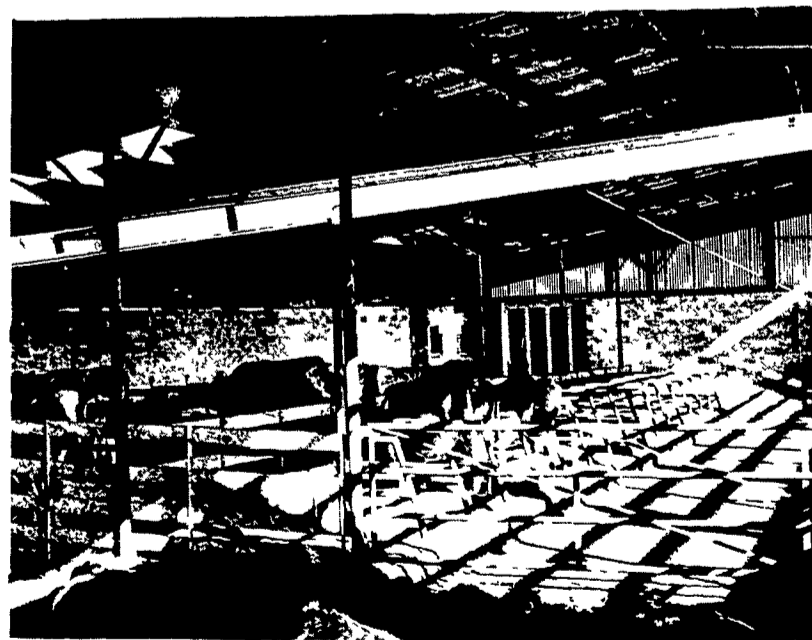


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