

USDA to take a look at farm labor

Written by Gothenburg Times
Thursday, 04 April 2013 14:25 -

LINCOLN—During the second half of April, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service will conduct its biannual Agricultural Labor Survey.

The survey will collect information about agricultural labor on Nebraska's farms and ranches.

"The beginning of the growing season is usually the perfect time to look at farm labor," said Dean Groskurth, director of the NASS Nebraska Field Office. "The data that farm operators provide through NASS's Agricultural Labor Survey allow Nebraska and federal policy-makers to establish labor policies based on accurate information and help ensure farmers can get sufficient hired labor for their operations."

USDA and the Department of Labor will use statistics gathered in the Agricultural Labor Survey to help establish minimum wage rates for agricultural workers, administer farm labor recruitment and placement service programs, and assist legislators in determining labor policies.

In the survey, NASS asks participants to answer a variety of questions about hired farm labor on their operations, including total number of hired farm workers, hours worked, and wage rates paid for the weeks of Jan. 6-12 and April 7-13. For their convenience, survey participants have the option to respond online.

"Due to season variations, despite collecting farm labor data twice a year, we provide all data on a quarterly basis," said Groskurth. "This approach helps us ensure that anyone using our data can perform more accurate analyses."

NASS will compile, analyze and publish survey results in the Farm Labor report, to be released on May 21. For more information on NASS surveys and reports, call the NASS Nebraska Field Office at 1-800-582-6443.