

New Hires in Eight North Dakota Agribusiness Industries

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Agribusiness firms are a major source of employment opportunities in North Dakota. Data concerning the number of employees hired in these firms is valuable for students, counselors, educational planners, and others seeking such employment. Employment information can also be valuable for managers of the businesses concerned. This study, as part of a larger manpower needs effort, was conducted to determine the number of employees hired in various occupations in North Dakota agribusiness firms in 1988. This survey did not include most agricultural occupations for which a baccalaureate degree or more is required. Data were also gathered regarding the source of employees, their previous education, and their prior levels of experience.

PROCEDURE

A total of 1,771 agribusiness firms were identified. A sample from each of the eight categories was selected. Managers of the firms were surveyed by direct mail questionnaires during 1989 concerning new hires in 1988. The results of the data were projected to estimate the total number of new hires in each occupation in each of the industry categories. There were no hirings reported for a limited number of occupations.

Grain Handling Industry

The estimated grain industry hirings in 1988 included 214 full-time and 125 part-time employees. A total of 84 of these were employed in general management roles. Twenty-seven others were hired as feed managers or seed plant managers. A very high proportion of those hired were for full-time positions for all categories except general employee, where there were 103 part-time persons hired.

Similar businesses were the source of the majority of the new hires with the exception of general employee and truck driver. Educational levels varied greatly, but very few new employees had college degrees. The largest number had either high school vocational preparation or no special training. With the exception of general employee, the experience category of three or more years had substantially greater numbers.

Implement Dealerships

North Dakota implement dealers hired an estimated number of 156 full-time and 45 part-time employees in 1988. Those full-time estimates included 30 in sales, 30 in parts,

Table 1. Estimated numbers of new employees hired in the North Dakota grain handling industry in 1988.

Occupation	Estimated Numbers of New Hires		
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Total
General manager	36	4	40
Assistant general manager	22	0	22
Station manager	22	0	22
Bookkeeper	9	9	18
Clerical (secretary)	9	9	18
General employee	58	103	161
Truck driver	13	0	13
Feed manager	9	0	9
Seed plant manager	18	0	18
Other	18	0	18
Totals	214	125	339

Number of firms identified = 575

Table 2. Estimated numbers of new employees hired in North Dakota agricultural implement business in 1988.

Occupation	Estimated Numbers of New Hires		
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Total
Manager	6	0	6
Salesperson	30	0	30
Partsperson	30	9	39
Mechanic	33	9	42
Set-up person	27	21	48
Truck driver	15	3	18
Bookkeeper	6	0	6
Clerical (secretary)	3	0	3
Service manager	3	0	3
Other	3	3	6
Totals	156	45	201

Number of firms identified = 205

33 mechanics, and 25 set-up persons. The only occupation with a substantial number of part-time hires (21) was set-up person.

A substantial number of the new hires in these firms came from similar businesses. An exception to this was set-up person, from a variety of sources including farmers and unem-

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ployed persons. The level of education of new hires varied greatly. A majority of the mechanics had completed post-secondary vocational-technical programs. Experience levels were also varied, but the majority of new hires, with the exception of set-up person, were either in the one to three years or three or more years experience categories.

Horticultural Businesses

North Dakota horticultural firms hired an estimated 573 persons in 1988. A large majority of these, 465, were part-time employees, and 185 of the 465 were classified as "other." This probably designated employees who performed a wide variety of tasks.

Employers reported no special training or preparation brought to the job by a large majority of the new hires. High school vocational training, however, was listed for all of the landscape installers reported. A substantial majority of the new hires had no previous experiences for their positions. The data concerning educational level and experience were influenced greatly by the large proportion of part-time employees. The majority of new hires were listed as unemployed prior to being hired.

Table 3. Estimated numbers of new employees hired in the North Dakota horticultural industry in 1988.

Occupation	Estimated Numbers of New Hires		
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Total
Floral designer	29	19	48
Greenhouse worker	10	91	101
Landscape designer	5	0	5
Landscape installer	0	67	67
Lawn sprayer	34	14	48
Nursery worker	5	48	53
Salesperson	5	24	29
Secretary/bookkeeper	0	5	5
Tree mover	5	0	5
Tree pruner/sprayer	5	14	19
Truck driver/delivery	5	0	5
Other	5	183	188
Totals	108	465	573

Number of firms identified = 308

Agricultural Finance Firms

Agricultural finance firms or agencies hired an estimated 109 employees in 1988, of which 80 were classified as full-time. Twenty agricultural representatives, or loan officers, were hired with 18 of these being full-time.

With the exception of clerical workers and bookkeepers, the majority of those hired had baccalaureate degrees. The level of experience of the new hires varied greatly. Those hired as managers had three or more years of experience. At least half of the new employees in each category except "other" had three or more years of experience. The major source of new employees was similar businesses.

Dairy Processing

Firms involved in processing of dairy products in North Dakota hired an estimated 167 new employees in 1988 including 79 full-time and 88 part-time workers.

Table 4. Estimated numbers of new employees hired in North Dakota agricultural finance firms in 1988.

Occupation	Estimated Numbers of New Hires		
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Total
President	2	0	2
Vice president	7	0	7
Assistant vice president	7	0	7
Manager (supervisor)	2	0	2
Assistant manager (assistant supervisor)	0	2	2
Agricultural representative (loan officer)	18	2	20
Record-keeping technician	4	4	8
Bookkeeper	11	3	14
Clerical (secretary)	16	16	32
Receptionist	2	2	4
Agricultural insurance agent	4	0	4
Other	7	0	7
Totals	80	29	109

Number of firms identified = 267

Table 5. Estimated numbers of new employees hired in the North Dakota dairy processing industry in 1988.

Occupation	Estimated Numbers of New Hires		
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Total
Manager	3	0	3
Assistant manager	2	0	2
Butter maker	2	0	2
Cheese maker	12	5	17
Cottage cheese maker	2	3	5
Delivery person	5	3	8
Milk receiver	2	21	23
Salesperson	9	2	11
Shipper	0	3	3
Tester	2	3	5
Truck driver (bulk)	15	8	23
Warehouse person	6	2	8
Office personnel	11	12	23
Procurement manager	2	0	2
Other	6	26	32
Totals	79	88	167

Number of firms identified = 49

Responding managers indicated no special training or preparations for these jobs on the parts of most new hires. "No previous experience" was the most often reported category. Except for managers and salespersons, a large proportion of the new hires were classified as previously unemployed.

Meat Processing

North Dakota meat processing firms hired an estimated 106 new employees in 1988, of which 64 were full-time and 42 were part-time. Thirty-one of the full-time hires were meat cutters. The most frequent sources of employees were similar businesses or the unemployed.

Table 6. Estimated numbers of new employees hired in the North Dakota meat processing industry in 1988.

Occupation	Estimated Numbers of New Hires		
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Total
Manager/president	6	0	6
Butcher	3	0	3
Meat cutter	31	15	46
Processor	9	3	12
Sausage/meat trimmer	0	6	6
Locker plant worker	0	6	6
Truck driver	6	0	6
Maintenance worker	0	6	6
Salesperson	6	0	6
Office personnel	3	3	6
Other	0	3	3
Totals	64	42	106

Number of firms identified = 192

With the exception of managers, the amount of previous experience was low. Most new hires had either no experience or one to 11 months experience. The most frequently reported educational preparation was "no special training." Some meat cutters, salespersons, and office personnel had either high school or postsecondary vocational education preparation for their positions.

Livestock Marketing

Most of the new hires in livestock marketing in 1988 were part-time, 119 of 122. Half of these were classified as "other," which indicated workers who had responsibility for many different and varied tasks. "No special training" was the most frequently listed level of preparation. "No experience" was also the most often listed for level of prior experience. The most frequently cited source of new employees was farmers.

Table 7. Estimated numbers of new employees hired in the North Dakota livestock marketing industry in 1988.

Occupation	Estimated Numbers of New Hires		
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Total
Livestock handler	3	47	50
Secretary	0	11	11
Other	0	61	61
Totals	3	119	122

Number of firms identified = 94

Note: No new hires were reported for other occupations.

Veterinary Services

Veterinary firms hired an estimated 31 new employees in 1988. Veterinarians were not included in this study. Seven of the new hires were animal technicians who were reported as having postsecondary level educational preparation. Most other new hires had no special training, and they often had no prior experience. Animal technicians were either recent graduates or worked in similar businesses.

Table 8. Estimated numbers of new employees hired in North Dakota veterinary businesses in 1988.

Occupation	Estimated Number of New Hires		
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Total
Animal technician	7	2	9
Veterinary assistant	5	3	8
Secretary/bookkeeper	0	2	2
Animal handler	0	7	7
Other	2	3	5
Totals	14	17	31

Number of firms identified = 81

Note: Survey did not include number of veterinarians hired.

SUMMARY

The eight North Dakota agribusiness industries surveyed included 1,771 firms who hired an estimated total of 1,648 new employees in 1988. This included 718 full-time and 930 part-time workers. The proportions of part-time workers was very high in the horticulture and livestock marketing business.

The source of new employees, especially those hired for full-time work, was frequently similar businesses. Part-time workers in the livestock marketing business were more likely to be farmers or previously unemployed persons.

The experience level varied greatly, with those hired for managerial positions having the most previous experience. In some occupations the number of workers with no previous experience was high.

The level of education also varied, but few of the workers hired for these occupations had college degrees with the exception of agricultural finance firms. This survey, however, did not include agencies hiring agricultural workers in many of the positions normally requiring college degrees. Occupations such as those in research, secondary or postsecondary teaching, extension, and several government agencies were not included. Thus, these data do not reflect the need for college-educated workers in agriculture.

REFERENCES

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