

Background Information on the The National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS)¹

Description

The NAWS is the only national information source on the demographic characteristics, and employment, health and living conditions of hired crop workers. The Department of Labor/Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy (DOL/OASP) has conducted it since 1989. The NAWS uses special sampling and survey techniques that accommodate the seasonal and migratory population. In addition, the NAWS methods accommodate the limited English skills and low literacy levels of much of the farmworker population. The NAWS questionnaire is a collaborative undertaking, involving several federal agencies that directly use the results.

The NAWS has replaced Current Population Survey (CPS) and Census data as a source of information on farmworkers because their methodologies increasingly were unable to collect reliable data about this seasonal, mobile population. Indeed, the Census Bureau has informed federal agencies that Census data is not appropriate for farmworker programs. For the 2000 Decennial Census, the Census Bureau used NAWS data to help it determine a strategy for enumerating farmworkers.

The NAWS is used to monitor the supply side of the farm labor market, the data are used to inform immigration and guest worker policy, allocate federal farm worker program funds, and for program design and evaluation. The data also are essential for planning and evaluation of farmworker services. The NAWS is often used to evaluate pending legislation proposals for the impact on farmworkers such as the Agricultural Job Opportunity, Benefits, and Security Act (AgJOBS)

In addition, the NAWS data are crucial for understanding changes in the population that is eligible for assistance via farm worker and farm worker-related programs. The federal government currently allocates approximately \$1.3 billion per year to such programs, including those administered by the departments of Health and Human Services (Migrant Health and Migrant Head Start), Education (Migrant Education) and Labor (National Farmworker Jobs Program).

Today, the DOL/OASP remains responsible for carrying out the survey and making its findings available to other federal government agencies.

Reports using NAWS data

The NAWS is used for a variety of presentations, briefings, and publications. The most recent Department of labor report that is posted is from 2000. The current report is in clearance at DOL. This report series gives an idea of the types of information that is collected by the NAWS. Department of Labor reports can be found at <http://www.dol.gov/asp/programs/agworker/naaws.htm>.

NAWS health data is presented each year at the HRSA sponsored Migrant Stream Forums. Presentations are made to migrant education conferences, DOL migrant advocates conferences, and other federal migrant program forums.

Forthcoming reports:

Three major reports based on the NAWS are forthcoming:

- The ninth report in the DOL report series is in clearance at DOL
- Migrant Education also has a major report forthcoming in 2005 on the Conditions of Migrant Children.
- NIOSH/CDC has a publication in review based on the occupational health information collected in the NAWS.

¹ This document draws heavily on publicly available data on the NAWS include the DOL/NAWS website, the supporting statement for the NAWS' most recent OMB approval and various NAWS derived reports. A list of relevant documents if found at the end of the document.

Exhibit 1: Uses of the NAWS Data

Agency	Use of NAWS Data ²
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Center for Disease Control, Department of Health Services (CDC/NIOSH)	The CDC/NIOSH began partnering with the DOL/OASP in 1999 to collect occupational health and injury data on farm workers ages 14 and above and intends to continue collecting such data via the NAWS through fiscal year 2010
CDC/NIOSH	A second NIOSH collaboration involves the CDC/NIOSH directive for collecting occupational health and injury data on farm workers comes from the Agricultural Occupational Safety and Health Initiative, which was outlined in congressional appropriations Public Law 101-517 in 1990. This initiative is now a part of the CDC/NIOSH base program.
Department of Education / Office of Migrant Education	Office of Migrant Education collaborated with DOL to collect information on children and youth's school and work experience from 2000-2003. This data collection was in response to the President's Child Labor Initiative. Survey results are incorporated in the Department of Education report The Conditions of Migrant Children Report (forthcoming 2005).
Office of Migrant Education	Similarly, in fiscal 2001, the Department of Education's Office of Migrant Education began utilizing NAWS findings as part of an effort to identify and provide educational services for out-of-school migrant youths.
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	EPA works with DOL on pesticide related questions that help the EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs determine training needs.
EPA	Additional EPA has requested analysis of the child and youth supplement data on employment in agriculture to help determine children and youth's exposure to occupational pesticides.
Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce,	Used analysis of NAWS data for locating clusters of farmworkers for logistic preparation for the 2000 Decennial Census.
Employment Training Administration, Department of Labor / (DOL/ETA)	Since 1999, DOL's Employment and Training Administration has used NAWS data in its formula for allocating farm worker training funds across states under Section 402 of the Job Training Partnership Act and Section 167 of the Workforce Investment Act.
DOL/ETA	Requested a report on NAWS information on migrant and seasonal worker housing to better plan its emergency housing services.
Department of Health and Human Services	DHHS will utilize NAWS health insurance data to better understand utilization of Medicaid and State Child Health Insurance Programs (SCHIP) by children of migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

² Most of the uses of the NAWS were drawn for the supporting statement submitted to OMB in 2004.

Bureau of Primary Care, Department of Health and Human Services	In fiscal 2002, the DHHS used NAWS findings to construct enumeration profiles of migrant and seasonal farm workers and their dependents in ten states.
Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS), Department of Health and Human Services	The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Head Start Bureau has also relied on NAWS data to estimate the need for Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs.
Migrant and Seasonal Head Start	NAWS data is one of the sources used to develop and assess appropriate methods for evaluating MSHS
Legal Services Corporation	Uses NAWS data to help determine a method for estimating the service population
Department of Housing and Urban Development	The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) proposed to use NAWS data in fiscal 2004 to better understand the housing situation of migrant and seasonal farm workers.
Commission for Labor Cooperation	Also in 2002, the Commission for Labor Cooperation, which was established under the North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation, made extensive use of NAWS data in its report "Legal Background Paper on Migrants in North America."
National Administrative Offices	National Administrative Office used NAWS findings at the U.S.-Mexico, Government-to-Government meeting in Washington, D.C. "The application of U.S. Labor Law to Migrant Agricultural Issues," and at a public hearing on migrant farm worker issues in Augusta, Maine.
Department of State	In fiscal 2000, NAWS data were utilized at the Department of State conference "Best Practices for Migrant Workers", which was held in preparation for the spring 2001 Summit of Americas.
Presidential Commissions (various)	In addition, various Presidential Commissions have accessed NAWS findings for program evaluation purposes. These include the Commission on Migrant Education, the Commission on Agricultural Workers, and the Commission on Immigration Reform. Moreover, the NAWS provides timely information to Congress on agricultural labor and child labor issues.
General Accounting Office	The General Accounting Office (GAO) has utilized NAWS data in its reports to Congress and the DOL made extensive use of NAWS findings in its December 2000 report to Congress "The Agricultural Labor Market - Status and Recommendations."
Non-federal Uses	A variety of NGOs, foundations, and state agencies make use of the NAWS data for understanding farmworkers. For example, the state of Florida uses NAWS information to estimate migrant and seasonal farmworker housing needs. The state of California has used NAWS data to examine work patterns to better understand pesticide exposure.